

EVALUATION REPORT

SANTA MONICA COLLEGE

**1900 Pico Boulevard
Santa Monica, California 90405-1628**

**A Confidential Report Prepared for
The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association for Schools and Colleges**

**This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited
Santa Monica College from March 23 through March 25, 2004**

Guy F. Lease, Ed.D., Chair

**SANTA MONICA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
Comprehensive Evaluation Visiting Team**

March 22-25, 2004

Dr. Guy F. Lease (CHAIRPERSON)

Superintendent-President
Lake Tahoe Community College

Dr. Michele Nelson

Trustee
Palomar Community College District

Mr. James Austin

Vice Chancellor – Business Services
Grossmont-Cuyamaca CCD

Dr. Janet Portolan

Vice President, Educational Support and
Planning
Fullerton College

Ms. Carmen Guerrero

Professor, Business
Oxnard College

Dr. Diane Scott-Summers

Vice President, Student Services
Diablo Valley College

Dr. Audre Levy

President
Los Angeles Southwest College

Dr. Patricia Spencer

Superintendent/President
Victor Valley College

Dr. Lori Gaskin (Team Assistant)

Vice President, Academic Affairs and
Student Services
Lake Tahoe Community College

Ms. Maria Sugranes

Director, Library Services
Santa Ana College

Ms. Gail Levy

Associate Professor
Leeward Community College

Dr. Frederick Trapp

Administrative Dean
Long Beach City College

ACCREDITATION EVALUATION REPORT FOR

SANTA MONICA COLLEGE

Comprehensive Evaluation Visit
March 23-March 25, 2004

Committee Chair: Guy F. Lease

Summary

On March 22-25, 2004, a 12-member evaluation team visited Santa Monica College to validate the college's 2004 Institutional Self-Study for Reaffirmation of Accreditation and determine a recommendation to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The team arrived on the afternoon of March 22, 2004, for a team orientation meeting and to begin the in-depth review of the college's self study report.

The team found that all previous recommendations of the 1998 visiting team were addressed in the self study. During the visit the 2004 team developed several of its own recommendations as well as a number of commendations. None of these recommendations are classified in the "non-compliance" category, despite the seriousness with which the team believes these issues are to the future of the college.

Santa Monica College is a large, urban comprehensive single-college district serving a diverse student population that peaked in 2002/2003 with almost 34,000 students. The college is located on a very compact 40-acre campus in the middle of the city and has five satellite campuses nearby. In 1988 Santa Monica College opened its first satellite campus in the former Douglas Museum and Library complex at the Santa Monica Airport. Two years later the second satellite campus opened at the former Madison Elementary School site. In 1998 the college opened its prestigious Academy of Entertainment and Technology at still another satellite location.

More recently, in 2001 the college moved some of its operational services to a newly acquired office building a few blocks from the main campus. This provided additional student services space on the main campus for the instructional services department and relieved a distinctly overcrowded administrative services area. In 2002, the college acquired two additional properties. The college purchased a four-story downtown office building to serve as the permanent home for Emeritus College, a highly popular program for seniors that opened in the fall of 2003. In addition, the college acquired the Bundy site at the Santa Monica Airport that is scheduled to open for classes in the fall of 2004 or spring 2005.

The college recently completed an \$80 million modernization program including a new science complex, a reconfigured business building, and a \$20 million expansion of the college library. In March 2002, the college successfully passed a \$160 million safety and

modernization bond issue to upgrade and enhance facilities. There are bold plans for future capital improvements on the main campus and the Bundy site that will allow the college to recover completely from the devastating effects of the 1994 Northridge earthquake and to meet the growing needs for instructional, student services, and support space for the college.

The college experienced a 35 percent increase in student enrollment between 1997-98 and 2002/2003. However, as a result of the state's financial crisis and the subsequent mid-year revenue cuts proposed for the California community colleges by Governor Davis in December 2002 coupled with the even larger cuts the governor proposed for the 2003-2004 state budget, the Board of Trustees took action in the spring of 2003 to address the potential financial crisis. Course offerings for fall 2003 were reduced by 27 percent and this reduction carried over to the 2004 spring semester. Several academic programs were discontinued, full-time tenured faculty were laid off or retired early, classified employees were also laid off or vacancies were not replaced, and a number of student services were reduced. Enrollment in the 2003-2004 academic year is down by approximately 7,000 students compared to 2002-2003. Some of these actions resulted in discord between members of the various constituent groups on campus and the administration, and in a perception that the college's decision-making processes are not reflective of the collegewide planning process.

Almost a full year after these reductions were made the team found a college still experiencing deep-seated resentment and tension among the various constituent groups. There is a clear interest in having the administration convene a collegewide representative group to develop and implement concrete strategies and governance processes to improve communication and professional relationships. The team strongly urges the administration to initiate such an activity in order to create a campus climate characterized by collegiality and mutual respect for the long-term benefit of the institution's ability to serve its stated mission.

Despite the reductions that have already been made, the college faces a lingering financial crisis that must be addressed in the 2004-2005 fiscal year. With such a significant loss of full-time equivalent students in 2003-2004, the college must recover these enrollments or face catastrophic revenue reductions next year. The college has a recovery plan in place and the team found a campus aware of the plan and prepared to implement it with great confidence that it will be successful.

The college engages in a number of activities that directly relate to the identification of student learning outcomes. Institutional research plays an important role in the planning efforts of the college and in the assessment of its effectiveness in providing quality educational programs and services. However, the college's dialogue has not yet reached the stage of defining, explicitly stating, and assessing student learning outcomes at the course, program, and degree/certificate levels. This dialogue must begin in earnest in the near future in order for the campus to gather the data necessary to continue to improve its instructional and student services programs.

The college faces many significant challenges in the near and mid-term future. Despite these challenges, the team found members of the board, faculty, staff, administrators and students who take great pride in the instructional and student services programs of the college and in

the ongoing success of student achievement factors such as transfers, graduation rates, and other student success measures. It is the hope of the team that these recommendations will serve to assist the college in focusing its efforts on institutional improvement and the long-term best interests of its students, faculty, staff, and the communities the college serves.

Introduction

On March 23-25, 2004, an evaluation team of 12 members visited Santa Monica College in accordance with the policies and procedures established by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. In advance of the visit, the team reviewed the institutional self study, the college's catalog and other supporting documents, and the report of the previous team. Each member was asked to write a preliminary review of the standards to which he or she was assigned. For two and one-half days the team held on-campus meetings with individuals and groups; conducted interviews of administrators, faculty, support staff, and students; examined files, reports, and documents; observed classes and facilities; and attended on-campus meetings. In total the team had almost 300 faculty and staff contacts, visited classes on all the college's sites, and talked with students across the campus. In addition, the team held two open sessions that were attended by a large number of the college community.

Santa Monica College, originally known as "Santa Monica Junior College," opened its doors in 1929 with 153 students. By fall 2002 enrollment exceeded 34,000 students; however, just one year later, due to California's state budget crisis, enrollment in the fall of 2003 had dropped to approximately 27,000.

The college, which began by holding classes in Santa Monica High School, is now located on a 40-acre campus at 1900 Pico Boulevard, and has five satellite campuses.

Since it first opened, Santa Monica College has been headquartered at three locations. Classes were moved from the high school to an old elementary school building across the street. When a 1933 earthquake rendered that building unsafe, classes were held in a village of wooden-framed tents affectionately nicknamed "Splinterville." Finally, the college moved to its present site in stages beginning in 1948.

Although the main campus houses the majority of its students and programs, the limitations of a 40-acre campus has forced the college to look to off campus locations to accommodate ongoing as well as emerging programs.

In 1988, Santa Monica College opened its first satellite campus at the Santa Monica Airport and two years later, the second satellite campus opened at the former Madison Elementary School site. In February 1998 the college opened its prestigious Academy of Entertainment and Technology at a third off-campus location.

In 2002, the college acquired two additional properties. Planning for the development of a 10.4-acre site near the Santa Monica Airport at Centinela and Airport Avenue is currently underway, with occupancy of the first building scheduled for fall 2004 or spring 2005. The college also purchased a four-story office building at 1227 Second Street to serve as the permanent home for Emeritus College, a highly popular program for seniors. Emeritus College moved to the new building in fall 2003.

The 1994 Northridge earthquake, which damaged multiple buildings on the main campus and destroyed others, served as a catalyst for several building projects and improvements to the campus. The college recently completed an \$80 million modernization program, including a new \$35 million science complex (replacing a building destroyed in the earthquake) which opened in fall 1999, a \$20 million expansion of the Santa Monica College library which re-opened in fall 2003, new computers and telecommunications networking, and a completely reconfigured business building. These projects were made possible by Proposition T, a bond measure approved by local Santa Monica and Malibu residents, and earthquake restoration and other funds from the federal and state governments.

In March 2002, Santa Monica passed Measure U, a \$160 million safety and modernization bond issue to upgrade and enhance its facilities. The funds will be put to a variety of uses including technology improvements at the main and satellite campuses, renovation of Santa Monica College's Main Stage Theater to meet modern teaching standards, a new Student Services & Administration Center, replacement of the Liberal Arts Building, and construction of a new addition to the Science Complex for nursing, environmental sciences, earth sciences, math, and related programs.

Today Santa Monica College is the west side's leading job trainer and the nation's undisputed leader in transfers to the University of California system, including to UCLA. Additionally, Santa Monica College's reputation for quality attracts students from more than 105 countries around the world, and currently more international students choose Santa Monica College to begin their higher education than almost any other community college in America. The tuition international students pay helps support Santa Monica College in its efforts to recruit and retain an outstanding faculty and support staff.

Over the past six years the college has experienced both unusual growth and sudden contraction. Between 1998 and 2002, college enrollment increased by 35 percent and the college increased its full-time faculty and its classified staff accordingly. However, due to the very serious state budget crisis that threatened to significantly reduce funding to the California community colleges in December 2002 and January 2003, the college initiated a major contraction in the spring of 2003. Courses for that semester were reduced by 7.5 percent and for the fall 2003 semester by 27 percent. Enrollment dropped from a high near 34,000 in the fall of 2002 to near 27,000 in the fall of 2003. To address budget concerns for the 2003-2004 academic year, the college also discontinued several academic programs, offered retirement incentives, terminated the employment of classified staff, and significantly reduced services. Disagreements over the processes used for the discontinuance of programs and the budget development overall significantly impacted the process and timing of the self study as well as dominated the discussions the team held on campus during the visit. The team found many various, often conflicting, perspectives on controversial issues.

Since the previous accreditation team's visit the college has experienced a major setback in its attempts to establish and maintain adequate reserves to ensure the stability of the college. The college ended the 2002-2003 fiscal year with undesignated reserves below one percent and during the 2003-2004 fiscal year found itself once again on the chancellor's "watch list." The college has an enrollment recovery plan and, if it is successful, in 2004-2005 the college

will be able to restore its reserves, many of the programs and services that have been reduced, and the financial security it needs to effectively serve its large and diverse student body. There is a plan for further reducing the college's expenditures if enrollment does not return and surpass 34,000 students in the coming year.

The self study report was developed with the participation of faculty, staff, administrative, and student representatives, although many participants elected to withdraw from the study in the midst of its development in protest to the budget decisions made in 2003. Although the governing board was not directly involved in the development of the self study, the board closely followed the self study process and received drafts prior to the final adoption of the self study in January 2004. Due to problems with membership on the standard committees, the final report was completed later than scheduled and resulted in a final edit being completed primarily by the vice president of academic affairs (co-chair of the study) over the semester break. Campus constituents were given only a few days to review the final document but subsequently had the option of providing additional comments in writing to the visiting team prior to its arrival. The Academic Senate elected to submit comments upon the arrival of the team. This letter and many other comments during the visit indicated there were some on campus who disagreed with the final editing and the resulting tone of the report.

Despite several serious problems identified by the team, and in the self study itself, the team found a highly dedicated faculty, administration, and staff, and an exceptionally well-satisfied student body. It was truly inspirational to talk to student leaders who were universal in their appreciation for the instructional and student services the college provided to them. However, the team also found a college with deep-seated problems related to governance, communication, and trust. While there are many excellent governance and planning processes in place at Santa Monica College, there are problems with poor communication between campus constituent groups, inadequate funding and a lack of adequate reserves, inaccurate and conflicting financial data, linking and evaluating planning processes and outcomes, and a lack of focus on student learning outcomes. All of these were addressed in the exit report to the campus and in the recommendations of the team.

The team's experience at Santa Monica College was both very positive and very negative. Friendly college staff provided invaluable logistical support and warm hospitality throughout the visit. There was a strong sense of pride among all college constituencies as well as genuine concern for the success and welfare of students. Students expressed appreciation for the quality of the education they were receiving. The negative encounters emanated from the constant expression of pain constituent group leaders and administrators had experienced for several years, but particularly in the past year, as the college struggled to deal with the lack of state support and adequate resources to maintain the programs and services that had previously existed.

Despite the problems encountered, the evaluation team commends Santa Monica College for its dedication and commitment to providing a quality learning environment and student support services. In particular, the team wishes to express the following overall commendations:

1. The college is to be commended for a very strong instructional program with a wide range of curriculum designed to meet the very diverse needs of its students. The instructional programs are characterized by ongoing attention to review and improvement related to student learning. The faculty's dedication and commitment to teaching and its focus on the mission of the college, despite internal and external challenges, is to be commended as well.
2. The program review process is well-defined, well-understood, valued, and valuable as a means of ensuring ongoing, regular evaluation of programs for the purpose of dialogue, reflection, and improvement.
3. The college is to be commended on the comprehensive and vibrant number of student services programs and the staffs of these programs who show an exceptionally strong commitment to the success of the students.
4. The college is to be commended on the variety of programs and projects designed to increase retention, persistence, and success of targeted students including first-time students, black students, Latino students, female and reentry students, EOPS students, DSPS students, students involved in club and Associated Students activities and probationary students to name a few. The college demonstrates a strong commitment to the success of its students and the students feel that commitment.
5. The college is to be commended for a transfer program that enables the college to transfer more students to the University of California than any community college in the United States. The commitment to transfer is a source of pride on this campus and is prevalent throughout the college community.
6. The college is to be commended for its support of student and club activities. The college's student activity hours provide a valuable opportunity for students to share cultural, intellectual, academic, transfer, and governance information on a regular basis.
7. The college is to be commended for its development of unique and diverse facilities that are tailored to specific communities within the district, such as the Emeritus College for the large and active senior community.
8. The superintendent/president has a local, state, and national presence that has resulted in the successful passage of two major bonds to rebuild the campus and expand it to allow the college to meet its mission in the future. She has increased grant funding for the college and successfully advocated for equalization funding that will bring millions of dollars to this campus. The team commends her efforts to rebuild the capacity of Santa Monica College to maintain its preeminent role in higher education.
9. The college has an excellent data mart available to the campus from the research office and effectively uses research and data in support of operational planning and action.

To assist the college in ensuring continued success, the team identified seven major recommendations. None of the recommendations is considered in the “non-compliance” category as defined in the Commission standards. These recommendations are listed below and individually at the end of the most appropriate standard.

Recommendations

1. The team recommends the college initiate an institutionwide dialogue about student learning outcomes and processes to facilitate learning. This dialogue should lead to documented implementation and results of a cyclical process of learning outcomes development, systemic assessment, and institutional and programmatic improvement.
2. To implement the college’s shared vision, the team recommends the college devise an integrated multi-year planning cycle to include instructional and student services programs, human resources, facilities, technology, and equipment. Annual budgets and resource development should be derived from this multi-year plan.
3. The team encourages the college in the strongest terms possible to pursue strategies that will result in a financial system that will produce clear, reliable, timely, and transparent reports in which all constituents can have full faith and confidence.
4. The team recommends the college consider establishing a reserve for contingency sufficient to maintain stability and meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences.
5. To ensure the economic viability of the institution, the team recommends the college must focus on developing and implementing the enrollment recovery plan, while concurrently developing the specific contingency plans to address alternative enrollment and economic scenarios.
6. The team recommends the college clarify, develop, document and regularly evaluate the roles of individuals and constituent groups in college governance and decision-making structures and processes to ensure their effective participation and communicate the processes and outcomes to the college community as the basis for continued improvement.
7. The team recommends that the college develop and implement concrete strategies and processes to improve communication and professional relationships in order to create a campus climate characterized by collegiality and mutual respect.

Standard I Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

Responses to the Recommendations from the Previous Team

There were no recommendations from the previous team that required a response in Standard I.

I A. Mission Statement

Observations

The college has a statement of mission that defines the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning.

Through interviews and minutes of meetings of the Collegewide Coordinating Council and the Board of Trustees the team was able to validate that the college periodically revisits the vision, mission, and goals statements through a public and inclusive process. It was apparent that the broad language mission statement is intended to guide the institutional planning and decision-making processes.

In 1995 the Board of Trustees for Santa Monica College adopted new vision, mission, and goals statements that identify objectives that define the institution, form the foundation for institutional planning and direct the college's future development. It is the policy of the college to review and revise as appropriate the vision and mission statements at least every six years. In 2002 the Collegewide Coordinating Council took the responsibility for the review; and prior to adoption of the current statements, distributed a draft of the revised statements to all college constituencies represented on the Collegewide Coordinating Council. This review was conducted under the college's governance and decision-making process. The Collegewide Coordinating Council adopted the revised statements in May 2002 and the Board of Trustees adopted the statements at its regular meeting in August 2002. All are published in the Santa Monica College Catalog each year and can be found on the college website. The college presents evidence of broad participation in the development of both of its mission statements. (I A.1, 2, 3, and 4.)

The mission statement focuses on creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body and fostering an open exchange of ideas. As an outgrowth of the 2002 revision of the mission statement, a focus group representing all college constituencies developed a series of planning issues to guide the creation of specific institutional objectives. This ultimately led to the approval of 35 specific institutional objectives that were approved and included in the 2002-2003 update of the Master Plan for Education. The team noted that this Master Plan for Education is not a long-range master plan but more of annual plan focused on specific objectives for an academic year.

The program review process has guidelines that specifically require that the department discuss how the goals and objectives of the college are integrated into the program. The

Academic Senate Joint Information Services Committee uses the mission and goals as a guide for allocating resources to meet various departments' technology needs.

Conclusions

The college meets the standards regarding mission and the use of a mission statement to guide planning and decision making. The college demonstrates a clear vision of its educational mission and purpose. The team noted a consistent focus on the college vision of "Changing Lives Through Excellence in Education" by faculty, administration, classified staff, and students. The mission statement and this vision are intended to be the cornerstones of the Master Plan for Education.

The mission statement has led to the development of six institutional goals and numerous objectives that shape college policies and priorities as expressed in the Master Plan for Education. There is evidence that the various collegewide governance and decision-making bodies routinely consider these documents in the planning of academic and student services programs. However, when college resources were threatened by the fiscal crisis in the State of California, there were those who questioned the effectiveness of this process. The January 2003 announcement of the governor's 2003-2004 budget and 2002-2003 mid-year funding reductions resulted in the Board of Trustees discontinuing five vocational programs and subsequently laying off three tenured faculty members while five others accepted early retirement incentives. This led to campuswide concerns as to whether the mission statement was appropriately considered by the administration and Board of Trustees as the central focus in the decision-making process. The team interpreted the decision to discontinue vocational programs in 2003 was made to ensure the college had the capacity to remain fiscally solvent. In a letter to the president of the Academic Senate dated September 2, 2003, the Board of Trustees wrote, "Based on all data available, as well as careful review and understanding of both the short-range and long-range budget climate, the Board took the only action possible to protect the interests of students and the quality of instruction at this college." There was also concern expressed that the administration and the Board of Trustees were making important decisions without meaningful input from constituent groups. In its response, the Board replied, "Since early January, the Board of Trustees has been actively involved with the college administration as well as the college constituency groups and has received suggestions or recommendations on how to proceed through this budgetary crisis. The actions taken by the Board are based on a careful evaluation of information and advice."

It appears to the team that the college meets the standard but the necessity to discontinue these programs created a distraction that created unfortunate friction throughout the campus community and ultimately resulted in the expression of this distrust throughout the accreditation review process.

I B. Institutional Effectiveness

Observations

The college has identified the need for a *systematic process* to articulate and assess student learning outcomes and the teaching-learning process and then to use the assessment results on student learning for improvement. While it appears that a dialogue has been occurring on a limited basis at the department- and program-level, there is no evidence of a collegewide commitment to a planning cycle for student learning outcomes that would include an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation.

To its credit, the college has engaged in some sporadic initiatives that have been launched to probe student learning. The Specialized Curriculum Optimizing Retention in Education (SCORE) discussions by counseling, math and English faculty illustrate that interest. Those discussions were initially instigated by campus research but need to be extended to include the continued systematic collection of direct evidence about student learning and achievement. There is a thorough discussion in Standard II of the self study about the efforts to address student learning and achievement.

In some cases there was episodic use of research about general student experiences at the institution, which sparked campus discussion and has formed the basis for grant proposals. Examples include:

- First-Time Student Study
- Student Retention Task Force
- Student Enhancement and Educational Research (SEER) Project about counseling-based interventions for probationary students
- Student Success Project, the study of students eligible for English 1 and their success in popular liberal arts courses
- Student Success in Short-term Classes

However, there has been inconsistent discussion of the findings, use in the planning and decision-making processes, and sometimes incomplete or no implementation of the findings and recommendations. Present resource shortfalls of the district have substantially reduced the time and funding to pursue such research.

The data mart available to the campus is impressive and many good research products have been produced. In interviews the systematic use of these resources to guide faculty evaluations (TIMS report), inform program review and plan schedules was evident. A report of Partnership for Excellence (PFE) outcomes was available and has been produced faithfully, but it is not clear how it was *used* systematically in planning over multiple years.

The program review process has been recently changed in an effort to promote a more reflective response from the department being reviewed. The meeting that was observed was an impressive effort to stimulate the dialogue about educational effectiveness. It holds some

promise as an arena in which faculty could address assessment of student learning outcomes. (I B.1.)

Santa Monica College has established goals to improve its effectiveness that are consistent with the college's mission statement. These goals are published in the Master Plan for Education. Most of these goals are measurable. The intention of the college is to use the Collegewide Coordinating Council as the central planning committee. The council is made up of the leadership of all college constituencies to ensure the planning process is broad based and offers appropriate opportunities for input. In the development of the annual objectives, departments submit suggestions to the appropriate vice presidents, who then submit a revised list of objectives to the Collegewide Coordinating Council. Committees and governing groups may also submit objectives. The council then annually develops the Master Plan for Education that includes specific action plans that are designed to improve institutional effectiveness and to guide the allocation of resources. The team confirmed the college's compliance with this standard through its review of the 2002-2003 update of the Master Plan for Education. This centralized method of planning assumes the established goals will be integrated throughout the college; however, there is no formal process for evaluating whether this occurs.

The college also has at least three other pivotal plans that are produced through broad based participation and focus on institutional improvement. The Comprehensive Facility Master Plan was developed as a result of an outside consultant's assessment of the current condition of the college's buildings to determine which were most in need of replacement. The Master Plan for Technology is developed annually by the Academic Senate Joint Information Services Committee (whose function is to assess academic computing needs) and the District Technology Committee (whose function is to integrate the academic computing priorities with the technology needs of Student Services, administrative services, and the college's overall infrastructure). Finally, the annual budget plan is the expression of these planning activities in terms of resources allocation. (I B.2.)

Campus interviews and documents reviewed confirmed the college does not have a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the on-going planning and resource allocation processes. The self study indicates the intention of the Collegewide Coordinating Council to complete a self-evaluation of its membership, structure, agenda development process, leadership, and meeting schedule; however, the team was unable to identify a formal process designed to assess the college's progress toward achieving its stated goals through the use of an on-going and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation. (I B.3.)

Although the team was able to validate the kinds of data and criteria that were used for the decision to discontinue instructional programs and to reduce the administrative and classified workforce, the campus community was unable to agree upon the implications or conclusions that could be drawn from those facts. The processes used and the decision itself were the issues that dominated many parts of the self study and much campus activity and energy for over a year, and continue at this time. Concerns about the issues were repeated in campus interviews with faculty leaders and others during the visit. The Board of Trustees' letter of

September 2003 to the Academic Senate president makes it clear that the board believes it heard and considered the alternatives the faculty proposed in lieu of program discontinuance but did not choose to implement those ideas. Nevertheless, that has not persuaded some from persisting in the assertion that they were not heard or listened to by either the senior administrators or the board. (I B.4, 6, and 7.)

There was a noticeable lack of documents to consult for the purpose of validating the use of research to guide mid- to long-range planning as opposed to operational planning and decision making where research data is routinely used.

The self study discussion was unclear as to how research was used to assess institutional effectiveness. Upon request, documents were produced and interviews substantiated that there were evaluation reports used to stimulate interventions for the purpose of increasing the numbers of degrees and certificates awarded and exploring reasons for students not being as successful as the PFE target goals would require.

With the reduction of staff dedicated to research it is unclear if the web data mart asset, many standard reports, and tailored research services can be sustained. Clearly, the college needs to rebuild its research capability as discussed in the self study.

Conclusions

The self study states, “Measuring student learning outcomes is an integral part of the educational process and something the college will need to address in the foreseeable future.” The self study discussion and the college’s planning activities are more focused on student achievement factors than on student learning. The college acknowledges that it is not yet at the point of having a systematic process in place to address the intent of the standards with respect to student learning outcomes. The college concluded and the team concurs that the institution needs to devise and implement a process for assessment activities that is clear about the distinctions among student achievement, college performance, and student learning outcomes.

While many on campus believe there are program- or department-level discussions ongoing about teaching and learning, there is no tradition of memorializing those discussions or the follow-up changes that are made.

The college planning process provides opportunities for constituent input to annual objectives but is often not articulating those in measurable terms. While the Collegewide Coordinating Council has been successful in some areas of making the collegewide planning process inclusive and effective, it has been hampered by logistical challenges, the inconsistent attendance of some members, and a perception that the recommendations of this group are not always heard by the administration. There is a perception on the campus that the planning activities do not always drive the resource allocation decisions. The self study concludes and the team agrees that the Master Plan for Education is not really a long-range master plan, but instead is more of an annual set of activities and objectives. The college

could benefit by expanding its planning efforts to create a true Master Plan for Education that links the various planning activities of the Collegewide Coordinating Council, the annual budget, the Master Plan for Technology and the Comprehensive Facility Master Plan.

The institution needs to expand its conceptualization of institutional effectiveness to include organizational performance, student achievement, and student learning outcomes. The college needs to foster a culture of evidence by which it develops performance measures and routine data collection and consideration so that major planning and decision-making activities are disciplined by data and reflective consideration.

In general the college meets the standard for institutional mission and effectiveness, but for an institution of this size and complexity, it needs a long-range vision that would guide the annual planning the college now conducts. This long-range plan could more effectively tie together the budget process with the objectives in the document now entitled the Master Plan for Education as well as the Master Plan for Technology and the Comprehensive Facility Master Plan. In addition, the college is not meeting the standard with respect to evaluating the efficacy of the planning processes. The institution needs to create and implement a routine process to evaluate its planning, resource allocation, and research models.

Recommendations

1. The team recommends the college initiate an institutionwide dialogue about student learning outcomes and processes to facilitate learning. This dialogue should lead to documented implementation and results of a cyclical process of learning outcomes development, systematic assessment, and institutional and programmatic improvement. (I A.1; I B; I B.1 and 3; II A.1.a and c; II A.2.a, b, e, f, h, i; II A.3 and 6; II.A.6.a; II B; II B.4; II C; II C.2; III A.1.c; IV B.2.b.)
2. To implement the college's shared vision, the team recommends the college create a long-range comprehensive master plan to include instructional and student services programs, human resources, facilities, technology, and equipment. Annual efforts to improve the institution, budgets and resource development should be derived from this multi-year plan. The college must include in such an integrated comprehensive planning structure the means to evaluate the model and assure itself of the model's effectiveness. (I B; I B.3, 4, 6, 7; II A; II A.1.a; II A.2.e and f; II B.3 and 4; II C; II C.2; III A.6; III B; III B.2; III B.2.a and b; III C.2; III D.1.a, b, c, d; III D.3; IV B.2.b.)

Standard II

Student Learning Programs and Services

Responses to the Recommendations from the Previous Team

Two of the recommendations presented to the college by the 1998 accreditation team were related to the Student Learning Programs and Services standard.

The first recommendation stated:

Since enlarging the scope of Contract Education is one of the current objectives of the Educational Master Plan, serious and timely consideration should be given to the program's continued development.

In its 2000 Midterm Report, the college's commitment to contract education, renamed the Workforce and Economic Development Program, was evident in its creation of three administrative positions and its lease of an off-campus facility to house the program. During the 1999-2000 fiscal year training was provided to 1,588 individuals in a wide variety of workforce development areas. Additionally, over 7,000 participants benefited from the program through workshops, seminars, career fairs, and presentations. This level of activity continued into 2000-2001, during which time the college had eight contracts and grants worth over \$2 million.

Beginning in the 2001-2002 academic year, because of the economic downturn and an over-reliance on a few large short-term contracts, the program's initial level of operation could not be sustained. Twenty-four staff members were let go and the program's activities were moved to another campus facility. However, four new staff members have recently been hired and several alternatives have been explored to revitalize this workforce development program including:

seeking more diverse and/or smaller contracts rather than pinning the future of the program on a few large ones;
raising the cost per participant;
processing contracts through the college's Continuing Education and Community Services unit, which has not been profitable for the past four years but has the organizational structure to promote and implement short-term job training programs; and
partnering with credit programs, such as nursing, to create more procurement opportunities and a wider customer base.

Such changes have already produced \$1,555,167 in contracts that serviced 703 participants in 2002-2003.

What started out as a very promising program to fulfill the college's mission to help students and incumbent workers prepare for successful careers and changing workforce needs was severely downsized due to the prevailing economic conditions in the state. The program's

director, however, is optimistic that the initial level of operations can be regained with more aggressive entrepreneurial and collaborative approaches. It is too early to tell how successful these approaches will be, but the restructuring efforts seem to be working and appear to be the foundation for sustained viability of the program.

A second recommendation provide by the 1998 accreditation team stated:

With the College's emphasis on increased access and use of technologies, and a self-identified need for remodeled and/or expanded library facilities, the team recommends that careful consideration be given to future budget allocations that support library and information resources.

The response to the recommendation notes the efforts undertaken to improve library services. Principally, the library building has been remodeled and expanded with a \$20 million project, which by all accounts will serve the college and its students well for the foreseeable future. Access to technology has been enhanced with the provision of 216 computers workstations for students and a dedicated "hands-on" bibliographic instruction classroom. The 1,000+ patron reader seats have access to data and electrical connections as well. There were efforts to address issues of materials collection growth and understaffing in the immediate years following the 1998 accreditation team visit. Progress was made; however, new budget realities have limited the ability of the college to sustain this growth. At this point, the college's budget does not support additional funding to increase the library's collection.

II A. Instructional Programs

Observations

The college provides a wide array of educational programs, which meet the multiple missions of the college and uphold its integrity as an institution of higher education. These instructional programs are of high quality and are tailored to meet the varied educational needs of the diverse student body and community served by the college. Evidence of this includes the following programs offered by the college:

academic and occupational course offerings in over 50 different disciplines,
thirty-six Associate in Arts degrees across a broad spectrum of disciplines,
twenty-five Career Certificates in a wide range of occupational areas,
six short-term Certificates of Completion,
community service/extension programs,
noncredit courses,
workforce development through contract education,
dual enrollment opportunities for students from surrounding feeder high schools,
noncredit Emeritus College tailored to the educational needs of the older adult population in the community, and
targeted programs for the large number of international students hosted by the college.

There is also diversity in the means of delivery of these courses and programs including online classes, short-term classes, internships and cooperative work experience, study abroad programs, and a service-learning program. This tailored and multi-faceted approach to course delivery is addressing the varied learning opportunities sought by students. Evidence of this can be found in the college's distance education program which has grown from 4 courses in 1999 to nearly 100 courses in 2004.

To further serve the unique educational needs of its community (and to address the space constraints on the main campus), the college has established four satellite campuses located within a several mile radius of the main campus. These off-site locations provide decentralized as well as targeted educational programs to the college's service area. A newly acquired fifth satellite campus will become operational in 2004-2005.

Transfer is the stated goal of approximately one-half of the students enrolled at the college. For years, the college has had the highest number of transfers to the University of California system and the institution continues to maintain this distinction. Further, transfer rates from the college to the California State University system and private universities in the region are equally as strong. In order to retain students, promote student success, and assist them in the transfer process; Student Services personnel work very closely with instructional faculty. This collaboration has resulted in a host of formal articulation agreements with institutions of higher education statewide as well as across the nation.

Also, the college has instituted programs for many diverse groups, e.g., Black Collegians, Latino Center, The Women's College, and Scholars Program that aid in the goals of

retention, success, and transfer. Evidence of this is found not only in the college's strong transfer rates overall, but also in the fact that the college has led the California community colleges in the number of African American and Latino/Hispanic transfers to the campuses of the University of California and the California State Universities.

Given that the institution is a community college with an open-admission policy, there are many students who have difficulties coping with college-level work. The college also has programs for "at-risk" students, and basic math, English, and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses for underprepared students and non-native speakers of English (e.g., Student Success Program and Specialized Curriculum Optimizing Retention in Education Project). In recognition of the varied learning styles of its students, faculty utilize diverse teaching/learning strategies in the classroom including the more traditional approaches of lecture, laboratory experiences, and discussion as well as collaborative group work and learning communities.

Because of recent budgetary constraints, the college has had to implement reductions in all its instructional programs. In noncredit education, basic skills and short-term vocational offerings were reduced, and ESL classes were suspended and/or transferred to the Santa Monica Unified School District. Although the Emeritus College recently moved into a new facility, its classes for older adults have been cut by 25 percent. The weekly teacher contact hours allocated for these free, noncredit classes have been reduced 59.23 percent from fall 2002 to fall 2003. The Community Services/Extension not-for-credit, fee-based classes were reduced as well. However, as expected, the focus of intense concern has been on the college's credit offerings. In comparing fall 2002 credit offerings with fall 2003, the weekly teacher contact hours were cut 27.64 percent. In May 2003, the Board of Trustees voted to end five occupational programs (Architecture, Public Safety, Recreation, Tourism/Hospitality, and Transportation Technology) thereby displacing approximately 500 students. In spite of these deep cuts, the college has continued to maintain its focus on its mission of providing programs to "... prepare students for successful careers, develop college-level skills, enable transfer to universities, and foster a personal commitment to lifelong learning."

The Academic Senate Joint Curriculum Committee evaluates and acts upon all new courses and educational programs as well as proposed modifications to existing courses and programs. As stated in the self study and confirmed by the team, the curriculum approval process is a model faculty-centered process. The Academic Senate Joint Program Review Committee oversees the review of all of the college's 67 programs including instructional and student services programs and college support operations. These reviews are staggered in a six-year cycle. For occupational programs, the Academic Senate Joint Occupational Education Committee and the Vocational and Technical Education Act Committee also assist the Program Review Committee in its review. With all these oversight committees, the review of courses and programs is occurring formally and regularly, as well as informally and continuously at the program level itself.

The Institutional Research and Assessment Offices provide much student achievement data (e.g., retention rates, success rates in the next level courses, grades, placement test scores, persistence, etc.) to the faculty, department chairs, and administrators on which to base their

programmatic decisions. Students are being tracked very closely as they progress through degree and certificate programs and from the developmental to the college-level English and math courses. The college has used such data to identify student retention issues and has initiated projects to develop intervention strategies and procedures, and to train faculty in student-centered pedagogy. Some of these initiatives, however, have had to be suspended because of budgetary constraints.

Departments have started to hold conversations about student learning outcomes that address what and how much students are learning in the courses and programs they take and to make the transition from instructional objectives to learning outcomes at the course level. For example, the Physical Science, Mathematics, and English Departments have developed common exit examinations for some of their courses to ensure students attain a standard level of competency before they progress on to subsequent courses. On an institutional level, the Beta Project was initiated in 2002-2003 to promote collegewide dialog on the meaning, purpose, development, and use of student learning outcomes. This initiative was put on hold that same year as the college's attention and resources were concentrated on the impending budget crisis. The self study articulates the following plan of action relative to student learning outcomes: "The Academic Senate Joint Curriculum and Program Review committees will study the relationship between course objectives and student learning outcomes; provide guidelines for identification and development of student learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates, and degrees; provide leadership in assessing student achievement of those outcomes; and study the relationship between student learning outcomes and assessment results, using the latter to make improvements." (II A.1, II A.2.)

The college catalog contains the institution's "Philosophy of A.A. Degree" statement. Embodied within this statement is the value of "...preparing students for participating in society as independent, educated adults." This belief is further supported by the college's mission statement that describes the institution's commitment to preparing students "...to contribute to the global community as they develop an understanding of their personal relationship to the world's social, cultural, political, economic, technological, and natural environments." To support this mission, the "Philosophy of A.A. Degree" statement sets forth reasons why students need to take a minimum of 18 units of general education in natural science, social science, humanities, language and rationality (English and mathematics), and American cultures in order to obtain a degree. Although the college does not have an informational competency requirement for the A.A. degree, a task force is working to add such a competency to the existing list. As stated in the self study and confirmed by the team, the curriculum process relies on the expertise of the faculty to determine the appropriateness of each course for inclusion in the general education curriculum.

In addition to the general education core, the college's A.A. degrees have a focused study area as a major. The catalog describes the degrees and certificates in terms of their purpose, content, and required and recommended courses. (II A.3, II A.4.)

All of the college's occupational programs have advisory committees comprised of industry representatives to ensure relevance and currency of the curriculum. Some of the college's occupational programs are defined by outside accrediting or regulatory agencies, and all

students successfully completing these programs meet or exceed the technical and professional competence requirements of these agencies. All programs request and receive student achievement data from the Institutional Research Office to support their programmatic decisions. Of particular challenge to occupational programs is the difficulty in tracking students once they leave the program and in conducting longitudinal studies on job placement and success in the workforce. As is the case with all other instructional programs, the college's occupational programs undergo the regular program review process every six years. However, an institutionalized biennial program review is required by the state for all occupational programs. As discussed in the self study and affirmed by the team, the Academic Senate Joint Program Review Committee has not formalized such a process as of yet. (II A.5.)

The college maintains and updates its website, catalog, schedule of classes, and other documents describing its courses, programs, and transfer policies so that students receive accurate and current information. To improve and clarify curriculum and program transfer requirements with California State University and University of California campuses, the college has participated in various projects and associations to make the transition to four-year institutions easier for community college students (e.g., IMPAC, Transfer Center, ASSIST, student degree audit program). The college's high transfer rate attests to its successful transfer efforts.

Sample course outlines of record examined by the team contain clear course objectives, teaching methodologies, skills to be developed, and critical thinking concepts applicable to the course. These outlines are a guide for faculty as they develop course syllabi and serve as guidelines for the faculty as they seek to strike an appropriate balance between their individual approach to course content and the courses' common learning objectives.

In the face of the difficult decision to eliminate five occupational programs in spring 2003, the college demonstrated its commitment to institutional integrity with regard to making appropriate arrangements for the students impacted by these program closures. (II A.6.)

In the self study, the college lists a range of documents containing its policies related to academic freedom and responsibility, student academic honesty, and specific institutional beliefs. The college has engaged in dialog on these issues and has put into place guidelines and structures to address these areas of institutional integrity. Recent efforts have focused on providing a more comprehensive and coordinated approach in dealing with student misconduct, academic dishonesty, and discipline through the establishment of a Student Judicial Affairs team. A rise in the number of discipline cases has been noted and the college has stated its plan to conduct a study to determine the cause(s) for this rise and to develop strategies to address this concern. (II A.7.)

Conclusions

The college is commended for a very strong instructional program with a wide range of programs designed to meet the varied educational needs of its students. The faculty's dedication and commitment to teaching and the college's focus on its mission, despite internal and external challenges, is to be commended as well. Courses are diverse in their

offerings, sequenced carefully where appropriate, and offered in sufficient numbers that students can complete their programs in a timely manner. The programs reflect attention to the comprehensive mission of the college by offering transfer, basic skills, occupational, noncredit, community services, contract education, distance education, work experience, and targeted instruction to address unique educational interests within the community. The college is lauded for The Academy of Entertainment and Technology (AET) as an excellent example of responding to the specialized job market of Los Angeles. Additionally, the college is commended for its distance education program and the growth this program has experienced, its range of offerings, and the support for faculty in developing and delivering online courses.

Santa Monica College's strong reputation as a transfer institution is evident by the attention to articulation agreements, the myriad of support programs for transfer students, the stated expectations of students when they matriculate, and the actual transfer rates. The college is further recognized for its efforts and success in serving as an effective access point and pipeline for historically underrepresented groups to pursue higher education. In addition, a strong connection between instruction and student services is evident by the large number of collaborative special support programs and interventions focused on student success.

Part of the success of the instructional programs is due to the strength of the program review process. The college is commended for a process that is well defined, well understood, valued and valuable as a means of ensuring ongoing, regular evaluation of programs for the purpose of dialogue, reflection and improvement. The depth of review by faculty and staff at the department level and the subsequent response of the Program Review Committee are substantial and of consequence. The process is characterized by seriousness of purpose and effort throughout. The outcomes of the review produce recommendations valuable for program improvement and, potentially, as significant guidance for the college planning and resource allocation process. As an adjunct to the program review process, the college is encouraged to pursue its plan to implement the biennial program review of occupational programs.

Another organizational structure that functions well is the Curriculum Committee. The review and approval process is well defined, appropriate, and comprehensive. Clear guidelines regarding the scope and expectations of the committee, the use of online directions and forms, and the assistance provided to faculty developing courses and programs make the committee an effective, participatory decision-making body on campus.

There is little evidence that a collegewide dialog has begun about student learning outcomes and the manner in which these are identified, assessed, and used for continual programmatic improvement. The general education philosophy statement in the college's catalog contains hints of student learning outcomes (e.g., writing and speaking, problem solving, and critical thinking skills) and a few departments have initiated efforts to implement learning outcomes (principally at the course level). Further, the college has a high-capacity MIS system that allows for the production of a great deal of student achievement data. As yet, the data has not focused on student learning outcomes nor is the data directly linked to the planning process in any significant and systematic way.

The college seems to recognize the need to identify and make clear the student learning outcomes across the spectrum of educational offerings. Evidence of this awareness includes the delineation of three action plans within this standard which focus on the institution's intent to address, define, and articulate student learning outcomes for the college's general education core curriculum, instructional programs, and courses. The college is urged to give priority to its plan to have the Academic Senate Joint Curriculum and Program Review committees develop a plan and provide leadership for the development of student learning outcomes at all levels and across all programs and to link that effort to assessment and improvement of instruction. Of particular note, in the anticipated process of restoring programs to previous levels of services, the college may want to take that opportunity to consider the role of learning outcomes in helping to determine which programs will best serve the students in the future. In support of this endeavor, the college is encouraged to provide adequate resources to the newly-constituted Research Office to help identify and assess measurable student learning outcomes at all levels.

With the exception of addressing student learning outcomes in a comprehensive, institutionwide manner, the college meets and exceeds most aspects of the standard.

II B. Student Support Services

Observations

The college has a vibrant and comprehensive Student Services unit that is responsive to the multi-faceted needs of its student body. There are a variety of programs and services in place to provide support to students as they pursue their educational goals. Several programs are specifically designed to attract, retain, and transfer students, particularly students from targeted, underrepresented populations. A sampling of the college's array of programs and services follows and attests to the institution's commitment to both challenge students and support them as they strive to attain their educational objectives:

- TRIO: Student Support Services
- CalWORKS
- Adelante Program
- Black Collegians Program
- Center for Students with Disabilities
- Career Services Center
- International Education Center
- Pico Partnership on the Move
- Women's Center

To ensure the provision of high quality student support services, the various programs that comprise student services are routinely evaluated through the college's program review process. Additionally, this six-year review process is augmented by annual assessments in many of the student services program areas. Integration of technology into student support areas has improved the quality of the services provided particularly in the academic

counseling process (e.g., student educational planning, degree audits, document imaging of transcripts and records, on-line counseling).

As a consequence of collegewide budget cutbacks, student support services and programs have suffered critical reductions over the course of the past year. Program staff has been reduced, on-campus and off-campus services have been trimmed, hours have been cut, and new programs have been put on hold. Despite these fiscal realities, the team found Student Service personnel to be fully committed to providing accessible, quality programs and services and their resolve to serving students unshaken. Additionally, the Student Services unit has developed an aggressive and energetic recovery plan to reverse the trend in loss of services and students emanating from the recent cuts that were instituted. This recovery plan serves as an effective foundation for prioritized program regrowth. (Standard II B.1.)

The primary documents and sources of student services information are the college catalog, schedule of classes, and website. For the most part, general college information, requirements, policies, and references to other related documents can be found in one of the three aforementioned sources of information. However, the catalog was found to be missing important information (such as the academic freedom statement, specific information on student fees, academic calendar, sexual harassment policy) and to have an incomplete index for user reference. Additionally, the organization of the catalog was found to be difficult to follow. (II B.2.)

Access to services has been a major goal for departmental staff. Student support services are spread throughout the campus in pod-like clusters. Despite facility limitations and constraints, related services are logically congregated and efforts have been made to utilize space in the most effective manner possible. Access is enhanced by a strong focus on web-based services. Students now have the ability to apply, be oriented, enroll, receive counseling, and purchase textbooks online. Most of the college's on-campus student services offices maintain fairly traditional hours of operation. Effort has been made to maintain a student services presence at the college's satellite campuses. In some off-site locations, admissions, counseling, and bookstore services are provided to students.

The college provides a variety of experiences to encourage students to participate in the governance process and other activities on campus. Students serve as members of key participatory governance committees including the Academic Senate Joint Curriculum Committee, the Collegewide Coordinating Council, and the Budget Committee. There are over 70 student clubs on campus and an active student government, which nurtures an environment of personal and civic responsibility as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development. A student activity hour is scheduled three times a week to provide the time and opportunity for students and staff to work together in clubs, committees, and events. This dedicated time is used productively to foster cultural, civic, academic, and governance engagement among the student body and to help them have a richer college experience.

The Counseling Department provides an impressive array of services for students. These services are decentralized with dedicated counselors assigned to the myriad of special support programs offered in student services. For example, counselors are assigned to and located within such programs as Associated Students, Latino Center, African American

Collegian Center, Center for Students with Disabilities, and the like. The Counseling Department has been responsible for creating a strong support system for a wide array of student needs including support in the areas of retention, persistence, student success, probation, and transfer. Further, a strong partnership exists between the counseling and instructional faculty that has led to collaborative initiatives to address student support needs and foster student success (e.g., the Student Success Project and the Specialized Curriculum Optimizing Retention in Education program).

The college's diverse student body (with historically underrepresented groups accounting for over 60 percent of the student population) serves in and of itself to promote student understanding of and appreciation for diversity. Further, the plethora of student activities, clubs, and events and the active presence of such programs as EOPS, Center for Students with Disabilities, Latino Center, African American Collegian Center, and the Women's Center foster a climate of awareness, understanding, and acceptance. On the instructional side, the college has instituted an American Cultures requirement for the A.A. degree. This requirement is satisfied by coursework that exposes students to at least three ethnic groups.

The college's Assessment Center regularly conducts studies to ensure that the assessment instruments it uses to advise student on appropriate placement in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics are effective and minimize bias. Studies that have been undertaken include course placement accuracy and student satisfaction, disproportionate impact, and cut scores determination. Additional studies are planned in the areas of disproportionate impact, cut scores validity, and the relationship between assessment scores placement, student retention, persistence, and success.

The college maintains student records in accordance with state code and secures them in full compliance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and state regulatory guidelines. Computerized data retention of student records is subject to stringent storage and security protocols. Access to student records is limited by position and function and is closely monitored to protect confidentiality and the students' right to privacy. (II B.3.)

Student support services are evaluated through a multi-faceted process to ensure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. This evaluative process includes program review, state or federal reporting mandates requiring an assessment of the program, programmatic assessments conducted for particular purposes, and periodic student satisfaction surveys. These processes have yielded much useful data and generated student services initiatives to address some of the findings. The college is currently unable to reliably track student utilization of services. The manner in which the college evaluates student support services to assure their adequacy in meeting the unique student needs at the satellite campuses is unclear. There is little evidence to indicate that the evaluation of student support services is conducted in a manner that provides evidence that they contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes. (II B.4.)

Conclusions

The college meets and in many areas exceeds the standard regarding student support services. The college is commended for providing a broad array of high quality and innovative student support services to meet the needs of its diverse student body. The team found the Student Services unit to be student-focused, embracing, eager to serve, and committed to cultivating an environment of acceptance and support for all students. Despite a facilities situation which is less than satisfactory and a recent round of budget reductions that have impacted services to students, the team encountered vibrant programs, motivated students, and dedicated staff. The college should take great pride in the efforts and accomplishments of the faculty, staff, and administrators involved with student services. Evidence of the effectiveness of the support programs provided through student services includes:

- the college's strong presence as a premier transfer institution;
- its special programs aimed at understanding the array of academic challenges confronting students and developing strategies to address such issues as probation, student success, retention, and persistence;
- targeted support programs and learning communities for at-risk students and underrepresented groups; and
- provision of services through a variety of delivery modalities.

Facilities limitations have forced student services to occupy any available space across all areas of the campus. To the extent possible efforts have been made to cluster services and programs. Despite these efforts, the programs and services remain decentralized and difficult to locate. Thus, there continues to be a need to inform students of the valuable and prolific student support resources available to them at the college and to counter location and facilities challenges with marketing efforts that encourage students to seek out the services. This appears to be a short-term problem as the college has received funding through the passage of a bond to construct a new student services building that will provide comprehensive support services under one roof.

The Student Services unit has developed a thorough recovery plan to assist the college in regaining the approximately 7,000 students that it lost this year due to budget cuts. Student services is lauded for proactively developing the strategies needed to recapture enrollment and phase in the necessary services to accommodate this regrowth.

While the college provides student information in a number of accessible documents and sources including the website, the catalog holds a central place in the provision of information to students. The team notes that the catalog should be restructured to be more organized, user friendly, comprehensive, and intuitive in its structure. An action plan stemming from the self study notes that Academic Affairs Department and Students Affairs Department will review the organization and content of the catalog (in both its print and electronic formats). These departments are encouraged to undertake this effort in the near future.

Like most community colleges, providing comprehensive student services during evening hours, on weekends, on-line, and at all satellite sites is a difficult task, especially when resources are limited. While it appears that the cuts to campus-based programs will be gradually reversed as enrollment recovery proceeds, it is unclear if the college has a defined plan for service recovery and enhancement at the various satellite locations.

Historically, student services professionals have had difficulty documenting and measuring their value and impact on student learning due to lack of research data. They have primarily relied on anecdotal stories and illusive intermittent measurements. The new demand for evidence that the utilization of support services contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes will be an evolutionary process for most student service units. The college must begin working to understand and define the relationship between support services and student learning outcomes in order to improve the effectiveness of these services. Toward this goal, the college is also encouraged to develop systems that will allow for consistent tracking of the support services used by students and to identify student needs and utilization of services across all instructional sites (i.e., satellite locations).

II C. Library and Learning Support Services

Observations

The self study presents strong evidence that there are sufficient library and learning support services to support the institution's instructional programs. The self study identifies multiple library services including the addition of a new library building that facilitates the college's educational offerings. Specifically, the new facility provides access to computers, group study rooms, and seating arrangements designed to accommodate a variety of study preferences. In addition to the main library, branch facilities have been sited at various locations on and off campus. The library has made a significant effort to make resources available to both on campus and distance education students. The library web site has well documented instructions on how to establish online access accounts and provides a variety of electronic services such as the email-based reference resource "Ask a Librarian." Resources are accessible for students with disabilities.

Selection of library materials is done by librarians who involve faculty formally and informally in the selection and de-selection process. However, there is no collection development policy that provides overall guidance to this process. The self study notes inadequacies of the materials collection. The collection is smaller due to planned de-selection of materials. The budget for materials has not increased substantially since the last accreditation. No books have been purchased this academic year. The acquisition of electronic books and databases supports on-campus students as well as distance education students and those at off-campus sites.

The library has developed multiple strategies to provide library instruction and information competency to students. Credit classes are offered along with training sessions and orientations. These efforts have been geared toward enhancing information competency on the part of students as well as faculty. Additionally, library instruction is embedded into the

Counseling 20, Student Success Seminar course. In 2001, the college received a Fund for Instructional Improvement grant to develop information competency curriculum. The grant had specific objectives. It is not clear if the objectives were met, particularly since lack of funding has precluded offering sections of the information competency course developed through this grant. The self study notes the efforts of a History Department faculty member who conducted her own research effort to see if the information competency instruction affected student outcomes. There is a plan to discuss strategies for including information competency as a graduation requirement.

Understaffing, particularly classified support staff, is a serious concern since it has affected the hours the library is open and accessible. The library has had to cut back nearly 20 hours per week of service. This situation has been exacerbated by the physical expansion of the library building, which brings with it more supervision needs to address the growth in space and services. The library will have difficulty meeting the staffing requirements given current fiscal constraints.

The self study does not contain any mention of external agreements for library services. Team interviews with library staff revealed that students participating in the college's Scholars Program are provided library privileges at UCLA.

The self study lists an impressive number of computer laboratories and specialized classrooms available to students. These resources are located throughout the campus (including the library) and are accessible to students either through open lab time or during scheduled class times for specialized programs. Computer lab hours have been reduced as a consequence of budget constraints. Management of the labs is the responsibility of Academic Computing, part of Information Technology services. Software licensing allows for a standard platform for students. Computer hardware and software is recommended by departments to the Academic Senate Joint Information Services Committee. These recommendations are based on departmental planning. The Information Technology Department is interested in centralizing the computer labs or creating more general labs.

Technical support for online courses is outsourced to eCollege, a vendor that provides assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Faculty who decide to enhance their course work with some web based tools such as chat rooms or threaded discussions can use eCompanion, also available from the same vendor. The self study notes a decline in use of eCompanion. The switch from one vendor to eCompanion may account for this.

The Media Services Department was not mentioned in the self study, probably due to the fact that the department was reorganized during the course of the study. Media Services now reports to Distance Education. It offers reprographic services, audio visual equipment support to classrooms, and media production services. The department has a web site that outlines its services. A faculty lab is located in the Media Center. The Distance Education office will be moving to the Media Services area this year.

Tutoring services are available throughout the college via Learning Resource Centers. These centers have been decentralized across campus in an effort to provide greater cohesion

between the students using the particular center and the disciplines served by that center. As an adjunct to this decentralization, most of the learning/tutoring centers have been reorganized to report directly to their discipline. Learning Resource Center materials are purchased from recommendations of subject discipline faculty and staff. A web page has been created to market the services provided through the Learning Resource Centers. The availability of cross discipline tutorial services is not widely known among students. With the recent reductions in state funding, some centers have seen staffing decreases. There is no formal tracking of student usage of the centers and policies on student use of these resources vary from one center to the next. There continues to be ongoing discussions on campus about the merits of centralization of tutoring and learning support services versus the current model of decentralization.

The Learning Resource Centers do not have materials online. Students must come to campus to access resources provided through the centers. Although the tutoring function seems by nature to be one requiring face-to-face interaction, there are discussions regarding the need for tutorial assistance to online students.

Technology training has been available to all faculty and staff through the services of two Educational Computer Specialists. This program included training on Microsoft Office applications, web authoring, e-mail, distance learning support software, and more. However, the budget reductions eliminated these positions and the program. An action plan in this standard calls for the reinstatement of the technology training program.

Adequate maintenance and security is provided for the library and the tutoring centers through contracts and service agreements. The Information Technology Department is responsible for internal computer security. The self-study notes the increasing age of computer equipment on campus. Maintenance on older equipment will become an issue given the present budget situation. (II C.1.)

The self study states that the library and learning support services are part of the college's institutionalized program review process. Library user satisfaction surveys are conducted periodically and provide feedback that is used for planning purposes. While the library has developed a technology plan, it does not have a strategic plan. The Learning Resource Centers have conducted informal evaluations and surveys. Academic Computing conducts student surveys periodically. There is no evidence to suggest that the library and learning support services systematically evaluate their services toward the goal of contributing to the achievement of student learning outcomes. (II C.2.)

Conclusions

The college's library and learning support services meet this standard. The new library building is impressive. The library is to be commended for continuing to provide services in temporary facilities and for fulfilling the promise of improved services via a new building. During the course of the accreditation visit, many team members noted the high volume of utilization of the facility. This is a rewarding sight for the library staff. The college should be proud to have a facility that rivals those of university libraries. Care should be taken to

maintain the building and equipment particularly as the facility ages. It is suggested that the library enlist the assistance of the Associated Students in regard to sensitizing students to the care that should be taken when using this fine facility.

The library collection needs attention. A collection development policy needs to be formulated. This policy should guide efforts at building the collection with special attention to targeting deficient areas. The library lost its book budget this academic year. That situation must be addressed immediately. However, given the current budget situation it would be prudent to engage in planning for alternative sources of funding through partnerships, competitive grants, and the college foundation.

Library hours have been cut significantly due to a freeze in classified hiring. Consideration is being given at the Collegewide Coordinating Council level of the need to address this issue. Part of the regrowth and recovery plans the college has formulated must include restoration of staffing and library hours (particularly during weekends).

There appears to be an institutional commitment to integrate information competency into the curriculum. However, the current budget situation has stifled the budding initiatives in this area. The college is encouraged to provide the resources necessary to revitalize this aspect of the educational process. Library faculty and instructional faculty are encouraged to continue building on the early partnerships that were developed toward the goal of information competency integration into the curriculum.

The college is to be commended for responding to students' computer needs and making lab access a priority. However, there are now concerns about maintaining the labs throughout the campus. Some labs have newer technology and others do not. There does not seem to be plans in place to address the technology obsolescence factor as time goes on. The Information Technology Department is interested in centralizing some of the labs. That may be a sound strategy that needs to be validated through assessment of the current practices. Another technology issue is the reintroduction of the training program. Consideration should be given to reinstatement of training initiatives as part of the college's regrowth and recovery process.

Support for distance education and web based learning seems to be readily available to faculty. Faculty who teach online and/or use web based learning as well as distance education students should be assessed periodically to ascertain their level of satisfaction with the learning management system. The self study notes plans to that effect and also plans for development of criteria for selection of other support systems. An apparent decline in the use of web-based learning, the services of eCompanion, is probably attributable to a change in the software. The Distance Education office should validate this and continue to provide assistance to faculty during the transition period.

Media Services is a vibrant and productive source of support to faculty. The Reprographics Department is extremely productive and offers high-end services such as web submission of print jobs from faculty desktops (on campus and from home). Media Services is now part of Distance Education. This reorganization should assist faculty by creating one unified center

for media and online support. Media Services participates in program review, formulates annual goals, and conducts user surveys. Long-range plans include outfitting all classrooms in new buildings with computer and media equipment. Consideration should be given to equipping classrooms in older buildings with such technology.

Although the college is to be commended for its efforts in providing tutoring services for students in the Learning Resource Centers, tutoring services need to command the full attention of appropriate faculty, staff, and administration. There seems to be no overall coordinated plan for tutorial services. The issue of centralization versus decentralization has been discussed for an extended period of time. The self study notes five action items regarding tutoring. Resolution should be brought to this issue with an understanding that whatever solutions are implemented, they will be evaluated in a given time period. It seems that more effort needs to be made to reach students who need tutoring intervention to succeed in their classes at the basic level. There are issues regarding the disparate standards and policies in place at the various centers. Consideration should be given to discussions that will lead to consensus on a given level of standards and on consistent policies across all centers.

For the past few years the library has been focused on planning for the new building. The planning has delivered a magnificent structure that effectively serves the college and its students well into the future. Planning for the building has precluded other long range planning and assessment. The library should formulate a strategic plan in which a vision for future services should be delineated. Assessment of services must be an ongoing practice to insure continuous improvement. The library is making progress in this regard through the administration of user surveys. Additionally, the library will undergo program review this year. This is the perfect opportunity to launch a systematic planning and evaluation cycle. The program review process should begin the cycle, but there should be continuous assessment and planning throughout the intervening years. Further, student learning outcomes must be an integral part of such a process and the library must participate in dialog, research, and programmatic initiatives to understand its role and function in contributing to the achievement student learning outcomes.

Additionally, there seems to be only anecdotal evidence of the effect that tutoring/learning services have on student success. Systematic data acquisition and analysis of student learning outcomes related to the provision of these support services must form the basis for programmatic improvement and planning for the Learning Resource Centers.

Ultimately there must be an attempt to provide evidence that the library and the tutoring/learning centers make a difference in and contribute to student learning.

Recommendations

See Recommendation 1 in Standard I.

See Recommendation 2 in Standard I.

Standard III Resources

Responses to the Recommendations from the Previous Team

There were no recommendations from the previous team that required a response in Standard III.

III A. Human Resources

Observations

Santa Monica College is proud of its faculty, staff, and administration. The college goes to great lengths to ensure the employment of highly qualified personnel whose training and experience enable them to make significant contributions to the success of the college and its students. A combination of state standards and locally developed regulations set the criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel. The college adheres to these standards and regulations in its hiring practices. Faculty report having an appropriate role throughout the faculty hiring process. The self study indicates the administrative regulation concerning the hiring of part-time faculty is “not consistently adhered to, due largely to the cumbersome nature of the process.” Interviews indicate two separate perspectives to resolving this issue. The vice president of human resources reported the process needs to be revised to a less cumbersome model while others expressed the perspective that the process just needs to begin earlier.

The self study indicates the evaluation processes for full- and part-time faculty are set forth in local and state regulations and the faculty collective bargaining agreement. Concern was expressed in the self study that the process for full-time faculty evaluations is flawed due to the lack of timely information for use in the evaluation and problems of compliance with the stated procedures. Another concern noted in the self study related to the timeliness in conducting part-time faculty evaluations. Statements in the self study and follow-up team interviews indicate the student evaluations are “often too late in the semester, thereby precluding inclusion in the evaluations for a given year.” Department chairs are evaluated through the faculty evaluation process, but are not provided with structured evaluative feedback in their chair role. The evaluation of regular classified staff is delineated in the collective bargaining agreement. Classified managers are evaluated on an inconsistent basis. A proposed new process for the evaluation of this group of employees is under discussion. Academic administrator evaluations follow a process established by the superintendent/president. Through the self study process the college developed five plans of action that address the issues identified with the evaluation processes used for the various employee groups.

The self study indicates that attention is paid to student learning outcomes throughout the evaluation process for faculty despite the absence of a formal statement of such in the evaluation guidelines.

The Academic Senate has recently adopted a revised code of ethics for faculty. Administrators and classified managers have also recently adopted a code of ethics based on the faculty code. The classified employees bargaining unit has taken the position that the adoption of a code of ethics must be a negotiated item and has not, to date, adopted such a code. A plan of action articulated in the self study states that the classified employee organizations will develop a code of ethics for this employee group. Discussions among the faculty are now focused on the consequences of breaching the established code of ethics. (III A.1.)

Through the 2001-2002 academic year, the college clearly maintained a sufficient number of qualified full-time faculty. A period of robust hiring of full-time faculty preceded the serious fiscal crisis that began in 2002-2003. Over the past two years, the dramatic decrease in state funding has forced the college to defer the replacement of some vacant positions and discontinue five vocational programs that resulted in a formal layoff of tenured faculty. A further consequence of the budget cuts experienced across all program areas of the college has been the loss of classified staff, managers, and administrators due to layoffs, attrition, and a hiring freeze. (III A.2.)

College personnel policies and procedures exist in a variety of forms and documents, including board policy, administrative regulations, collective bargaining agreements, and the Personnel Commission Merit Rules. The Academic Joint Personnel Policies Committee is charged with the regular review and update of relevant Board policies and administrative regulations. Concern has been expressed regarding the process for new policy development as well as the ready availability of existing policies in a central repository. (III A.3.)

As stated in the self study, the college is “committed to employing and maintaining a diverse workforce and has increased the representation of traditionally underrepresented groups.” The college’s hiring practices as well as its support systems and practices create an environment whereby equity and diversity are valued and embraced. The team validated this commitment during its visit. (III A.4.)

The college provides a myriad of opportunities to its faculty and staff for professional growth and development including flex activities, sabbatical leaves, department-sponsored workshops and training, on-line professional development resources, and until recently, technology training. The recent budget cuts have temporarily limited the college’s ability to continue providing such a comprehensive professional development program. (III A.5.)

The hiring prioritization process for full-time faculty is well established and involves the Collegewide Coordinating Council. There is a less formal process for the prioritization and hiring of other employees. With the exception of full-time faculty hires, there was limited evidence to conclude that human resource planning is formally integrated with institutional planning and resource allocation. Further, it was not apparent that the college has in place a process for systematically assessing human resources and using this assessment as part of the foundation for institutional improvement. (III A.6.)

Conclusions

The college has done a good job of identifying a number of issues regarding human resources. The 19 plans of action delineated in the self study are appropriate areas needing attention. While some of those issues appear to have already been addressed, the college is encouraged to carry out the plans that it has identified as being important to the institution as a whole.

No evidence was found to indicate that dialog has begun as to how the evaluation processes can be revised to assess the manner in which faculty and others directly responsible for student learning contribute to the students' achievement of learning outcomes. The college should integrate this issue into the campuswide dialog that must occur regarding student learning outcomes.

Campus climate is of concern to the team. The degradation of collegiality and the lack of trust and respect are evident across the employee groups. As discussed in Standard IV, the college is asked to seriously focus energy, time, and attention to the goal of rebuilding professional relationships among faculty, staff, and administration.

The college must focus time and attention to the overarching theme of planning and how this impacts human resources. Serious effort must be made to meld together the existing informal and formal practices of near-term planning toward the goal of creating a broad-based, integrated institutional planning process. This integrated process should include a systematic and frequent assessment of human resource needs and a method for incorporating the outcomes of this assessment into a holistic plan for institutional improvement.

III B. Physical Resources

Observations

The college's physical resources, which include facilities, equipment, land, and other assets support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness. The college provides unique and diverse physical resources to address the multiple unique and diverse communities it serves.

To provide safe and sufficient facilities the college has effectively pursued multiple avenues of funding, including Certificates of Participation (COPs); local general obligation bonds (Proposition T and Measure U); Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding; and California Community Colleges capital construction, hazardous materials removal, and scheduled maintenance resources. The college has used this broad spectrum of resources to provide facilities that meet the educational needs of the institution and the communities of the district. The Emeritus College and the Academy of Entertainment and Technology are both examples of facilities that have been acquired and developed to serve a targeted student population.

There is evidence the institution has in place the facilities-related staff, resources, and organizational structures and processes to produce and support institutional effectiveness.

However, the current California fiscal crisis has challenged the institution's ability to allocate sufficient resources to all areas of the college, including the facilities maintenance, custodial, and operations areas. The self study discusses the challenge of maintaining, cleaning and operating the existing facilities inventory due to the current California fiscal crisis, and it discusses the implications of adding even more facilities without the prospect of additional operating funds.

The college plans, builds, and upgrades or replaces its physical resources in a manner that assures effective utilization and the continuing quality necessary to support its programs and services. To quantify the prioritization of facilities maintenance projects the college utilized an outside consultant, 3D/I, to technically evaluate the condition of all existing facilities. The 3D/I analysis and subsequent recommendations resulted in a more quantitative and prioritized facilities maintenance and replacement program.

The college has a sophisticated automated work order system that electronically generates work orders for preventative maintenance.

The college ensures that the physical resources at all locations where it offers courses, program and services are constructed to assure access, safety, security, and a healthful learning and working environment. However, it is not clear the college is providing adequate resources for the maintenance and cleaning of these same facilities. The inadequacy of maintenance and cleaning was especially noted at the airport facility. The Custodial Department has implemented a team-cleaning program that maximizes the ability of a constricted staff to maintain an acceptable level of cleanliness. The custodial and grounds departments are hampered by a lack of adequate equipment and the inability to acquire replacement equipment through the college's budgeting process.

The planning process for facilities complies with the appropriate building related access codes and regulations, such as ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). The institution has a progressive and effective public safety department to maximize the safety and security of the facilities and an adequate level of security appears to be provided at all locations despite the dispersion of the multiple educational centers. (III B.1.)

The college has an active cycle of evaluation, planning, resource allocation, and implementation relative to its capital construction program. To assure the feasibility and effectiveness of physical resources in supporting institutional programs and services, the college plans for and evaluates its facilities on a regular basis, taking utilization and other relevant data into account. Evidence of the regular evaluation of the adequacy of facility capacity includes local facilities related plans and the yearly Five Year Capital Construction Plan prepared for the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Those local plans include the Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan and the Master Plan for Technology. Evidence of the analysis of the condition of the existing facilities includes the Five Year Scheduled Maintenance Plan and the comprehensive 3D/I study.

There is limited evidence to indicate the college's facilities planning process stems from an institutionwide, integrated, and comprehensive approach to strategic and master planning. It

is unclear as to the connection between the Master Plan for Education and the college's long-term efforts revolving around facilities acquisition and development, capital construction projects, and resource allocation. Further there is little evidence to indicate the institution engages in broad and systematic dialogue about student learning as its primary mission as it relates to physical resources. (III B.2.)

Conclusions

The college provides safe and sufficient physical resources that support and assure the integrity and quality of its programs and services, regardless of location or means of delivery. The college is commended for its development of unique and diverse facilities that are tailored to specific communities within the district, such as the Emeritus College for the large and active senior community.

Adequately maintaining the facilities has become a challenge for the college due to the California budget crisis, its effect on community college funding, and therefore its negative impact on the college's budget. The Maintenance Department is unable to effectively maintain the facilities or stay current with identified preventative maintenance requirements. The team recommends the college develop specific plans for restoring adequate staffing and equipment to more effectively maintain all of its facilities and grounds as funds become available.

The Custodial Department is commended for implementing creative tactics to allow it to maintain a satisfactory level of cleanliness at the multiple and geographically separated locations despite severe budgetary constraints.

As a compilation of the institution's yearly goals and objectives, the Master Plan for Education appears to be more of an annual strategic document than a long-range planning tool. As such, this document seems to function in a general way as a guide for the college's annual spending plan rather than as a long-range blueprint necessary for effective planning, particularly with regard to physical resources. The college has not demonstrated that there is a long-range facilities master planning process that follows from, and is linked to, a long-range educational master plan and that supports defined institutional improvement goals. This disconnect was particularly evident in the acquisitions program for off-site locations. For example, it was difficult to find the nexus between the acquisition of the Bundy property and the annual goals and objectives set forth in the college's Master Plan for Education. There should be a clear linkage between the institution's long-term educational goals (as embodied in an educational master plan with a long-range perspective) and facilities planning.

There is evidence the planning of specific facilities projects involves academic planning and largely follows academic planning, but there is not a documented process or procedure for meaningful and effective constituent involvement. In addition, there is not evidence that long-range capital planning includes assessing and developing strategies to address the total cost of ownership of new facilities and equipment. The team agrees with the plans in the Master Plan for Education for the college to develop and document a new comprehensive

facility master plan. In terms of planning specific projects, the college is addressing the challenging balance between adequate and collegial participation and the realities associated with acquiring real estate and building facilities in a cost effective and timely manner.

III C. Technology Resources

Observations

The college is committed to providing access to technology and to using technology in support of teaching, learning, communications, research, and operations. All college departments promote and support the use of technology to improve the students' educational experiences at the college.

The Information Technology Department supports the college's efforts to infuse technology across the spectrum of programs and services. This multi-faceted department has the responsibility of designing and implementing technology solutions to support the college's mission and goals. The department is comprised of four distinct units each with its own function: Network Services, Telecommunications, Management Information Services, and Academic Computing. These four units serve as the primary resource for providing solutions to and support for all technology-related initiatives. A long-term proposed reorganization plan for the Information Technology Department, services, and function has been developed. While it is expected the implementation of this reorganization plan will be a gradual process, a number of intervening classified personnel issues is delaying the process. Recent staffing reductions have impacted the Information Technology Department as a consequence of the fiscal challenges confronting the college.

Since the last accreditation, the college developed a robust and user-friendly Technology Training program for faculty and staff which included regularly scheduled workshops, customized departmental training upon demand; online training courses; printed help documents; and one-on-one assistance via drop-in, telephone, or email. Over 1,200 unduplicated users participated in the training program. The college has currently suspended much of the training program due to budget constraints. Efforts are underway to create a more independent, self-service, on-line support center to address training needs.

The college's Master Plan for Technology is updated on an annual basis. The planning process for the updates is separate from other college planning process. Input is received from four sources: Academic Senate Joint Information Services Committee; Vice President, Student Affairs (for non-instructional needs); the Information Technology Departments; and various instructional departments. Priority is then determined by the District Technology Committee based on four principles: maintaining existing technologies; promoting new initiatives; adhering to guidelines for categorical expenditures; and preserving the ability to "cascade" desktop systems. Funding for technology needs is provided through a combination of general and categorical resources. The Master Plan for Technology also includes plans for maintenance and upgrading for all systems.

The college has a firm commitment to providing technology resources in support of all college programs and services. The technology planning process serves this goal well. As stated in the self study, the "technology planning process works very well to distribute technology resources equitably and to leverage the limited financial resources for technology equipment and software to cover all critical needs." The self study notes that the current

trend toward decentralization of technology functions and services across campus is advantageous for targeted users in specific programs yet costly to service and maintain and inefficient in the use of existing equipment and software. A move toward centralization of services, labs, and facilities would maximize resources and provide a cost-effective approach to the support of technology across campus. The self study includes an action plan to examine a more centralized approach to technology services. (III C.1.)

As mentioned above, the college's technology planning process has as its cornerstone the Master Plan for Technology. This annual planning process is coordinated through the District Technology Committee. This body assesses needs across all instructional, student services, and administrative service areas. There is widespread input into the development of the plan. The core of the process is the prioritization of institutional technology needs which then guides resource allocations in a systematic and equitable manner as funding becomes available. While this process serves to effectively map out the technology needs for the campus on an annual basis, it is unclear as to how the annual update of the Master Plan for Technology is integrated into institution-wide master planning across all facets of the institution over the long term. The manner in which technology planning can become more formally integrated into collegewide planning processes is currently under evaluation for potential improvement through the adoption of a relevant objective into the July 2003 update to the Master Plan for Education.

In addition to the planning process described above, the Information Technology Departments undergo program review as a means of evaluating program effectiveness and identifying areas needing improvement. Additionally, statistics are regularly gathered regarding usage of the campus' technology resources. Surveys are conducted periodically to gather targeted information from users about specific services. (III C.2.)

Conclusions

The college is to be commended for its commitment to becoming a digital campus and using technology effectively and efficiently to improve the educational experiences of students. There exists a myriad of ways in which the college is using technology in instruction, student services, and the operational areas to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness. The systems and processes in use are diverse and complex and it is a tribute to the faculty and staff (in particular the Information Technology Department) that technology on campus is used in a productive, meaningful, and effective manner.

While the planning process for technology is well established and institutionalized, there does not appear to be a clearly defined link between this annual process and collegewide planning efforts. The college recognizes the need to address this planning gap as evidenced by the following statement in the self study: "Ideally, the next phase of its [Master Plan for Technology] evolution will involve more direct linkage of technology objectives to institutional objectives and the inclusion of standards that can be used to measure the success of each objective." The college is urged to embark upon this next phase of planning. Coupled with this initiative is the need for the college to systematically assess the use of

technology campuswide and use the results of such an evaluation as the basis for continual improvement.

III D. Financial Resources

Observations

The college relies upon its mission and goals as the foundation for financial planning. The Master Plan for Education, which is updated yearly, serves as the basis for all planning efforts, and that document is the institution's expression of its mission and goals. There is no evidence of a documented process or procedure that links the Master Plan for Education to the budget development process.

As stated in the self study, "The annual budget of Santa Monica College meets the expenditure requirements of state law, but does not provide the funding desired to meet all the requirements of the various areas of the college." Unfortunately, the allocation of financial resources is the primary focus of campus discontent and disagreement. At the root of this underlying discontent are issues of communication, perception, style, and a lack of consensus regarding the roles of planning bodies. Among multiple college constituencies there is disbelief regarding the accuracy of financial documents and projections prepared by college management, and there is disagreement concerning the level and role of participatory governance in the decision-making process.

Historically, the audits and board-approved budgets indicate that institutional planning reflects realistic assessment of financial resource availability, development of financial resources, partnerships, and expenditure requirements. However, recently serious concerns have developed concerning the accuracy of some financial documents and projections of financial resources from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. The self study states that there is a perception that the budget is not as bad as the portrayed by the college and/or that funds are being hidden.

When making short-range financial plans, the institution considers its long-range financial priorities to assure financial stability. It is, however, not clear that the institution clearly identifies and plans for payment of liabilities and future obligations, especially related to human resource costs. The institution is hampered in its fiscal planning efforts by a financial accounting system recently acquired by the Los Angeles County Office of Education. The county office is responsible for the computerized accounting and payroll functions for the college. This new software system segregates human resources data from payroll data and both from the fiscal database. The lack of interface among the databases and the untimely reports from the county office is a serious impediment to financial monitoring and planning.

There is no evidence the institution has established and documented clear guidelines and processes for financial planning and budgeting, or that the processes and guidelines that do exist are being followed; nor does there appear to be agreement as to the appropriate extent of participation by the constituent groups in the planning processes. The situation has been exacerbated by the state's fiscal crisis that has had a serious negative impact on all the state's

community colleges. The self study points out that the recent California fiscal crisis, “has taken a hard toll on the campus, particularly in relations between management and the faculty and staff.” (III D.1.)

The financial management system has appropriate control mechanisms and widely disseminates dependable external financial documents as validated by the history of satisfactory audits. Internally, however, the fiscal management system does not produce timely or even accurate information for sound decision making. The self study discusses the inadequacies of the fiscal services provided by the county’s financial accounting system. The undependable and inconsistent financial reports have contributed to the atmosphere of discontent and disagreement that permeates the college.

Financial documents, including the budget and independent audit, reflect appropriate allocation and use of financial resources to support student learning programs and services. The only major audit exceptions have been related to a fixed assets issue that affected virtually every California community college and which is not considered significant by outside financial, oversight, or control agencies. Although the audits verify the appropriate allocation of available resources, the 2003 audit expresses concern about the college’s fiscal solvency, and it recommends that the college prepare a long-range fiscal plan and significantly increase the reserve for contingencies.

Appropriate and timely financial information is not provided throughout the institution. There appear to be both process- and technical-related issues concerning financial information. It appears as if there is not an acceptably adequate and understood feedback and tracking process for recommendations that flow through the constituency participation process. At least some constituent groups feel that their recommendations are not being seriously considered, or that the final decisions are incongruent with the institution’s mission and values. Technically, it appears that the district’s fiscal processing agent, the Los Angeles County Office of Education, has implemented a software system that has had deeply detrimental effects upon the district’s ability to provide timely financial information throughout the institution. Among the problems are databases that are not integrated and budget reports that are routinely several months late.

There is not agreement that the institution has sufficient cash flow and reserves to maintain stability, strategies for appropriate risk management, and realistic plans to meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences. Historically, the district has a history of satisfactory audits and adequate ending balances. There is strong disagreement and mistrust between the faculty and administration concerning the district’s balance sheet adequacy. The self study indicates the faculty and staff have a strong perception that management is projecting an overly negative assessment of the budget, and that academic programs and services to students are being negatively impacted by that assessment. On the other hand, the district was put on the state Chancellor’s Office fiscal watch list, and the June 30, 2003 independent financial audit of the district notes that there was only a \$221,720 balance available for the Unrestricted General Fund. That audit recommends that the management prepare a long-range plan that includes the impact of negotiations, long-term leases, and other financing obligations including employee benefit costs. The audit states, “We believe

it is extremely critical that management closely monitor the 2003-2004 financial statements to protect the financial solvency of the District.”

The institution practices effective oversight of finances, including management of financial aid, grants, externally funded programs, contractual relationships, auxiliary organizations and foundations, and institutional investments and assets. The college is a large and fiscally complex community college, and there are no indications in the self study that the college is not practicing effective oversight and control of its diverse fiscal operations. The self study cites the annual general audit and the program-specific financial reviews as evidence of its sound fiscal practices.

The multiple independent audits indicate that all financial resources, including those from auxiliary activities, fund-raising efforts, and grants are used with integrity in a manner consistent with the mission and goals of the institution.

Contractual agreements with external entities are consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, governed by institutional policies, and contain appropriate provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution.

It does not appear that the institution regularly evaluates its financial management processes toward the goal of improving its financial management systems. It does appear as if the implementation of the new financial accounting software at the county office and related procedures have caused a serious deterioration of the financial processing systems since the previous accreditation report. (III D.2.)

Conclusions

There is limited evidence that the college has an effective process that links budget development to institution-wide strategic planning (particularly long-range academic planning). While the Master Plan for Education appears to be used as a short-range guide for fiscal planning, the document lacks a long-range perspective that is essential for effective financial management and planning. That is, it is not apparent that there exists a formal connection between institution-wide long-range planning and annual and long-term fiscal planning. As such, it is not clear that the institution has in place the organizational structures and fiscal processes to produce and support institutional effectiveness.

The current California fiscal crisis has severely challenged the institution’s structures, processes, and collegiality. The self study acknowledges that the allocation of financial resources is a primary focus for discontent and disagreement in the institution. Problems resulting from the Los Angeles County implementation of a new accounting and reports system have exacerbated a distrust of financial information provided by the college’s administration to the constituent groups.

There is not a documented process for budget development that defines constituent roles and responsibilities, nor is there a documented link between formalized academic planning and

budget development. The team recommends the college clarify and document the fiscal planning process and the roles of individuals and constituent groups in that process.

The college has depleted its unrestricted balances in order to fund multiple years of operating deficits, and the fiscal solvency of the district is dependent upon an enrollment recovery strategy in 2004-2005. In addition to addressing the reserve for contingency recommendation presented below, the college is urged to give serious consideration to the recommendation contained in the 2003 district audit: “Management should prepare a long-range plan in detail with various scenarios. This plan should include the impact of negotiations, long-term leases and other financing obligations and employee benefit costs, as well as various enrollment and income scenarios.”

Recommendations

1. See Recommendation 1 in Standard I.
2. See Recommendation 2 in Standard I.
3. The team encourages the college in the strongest terms possible to pursue strategies that will result in a financial system that will produce clear, reliable, timely, and transparent reports in which all constituents can have full faith and confidence. (III D.2.b.)
4. The team recommends the college consider establishing a reserve for contingency sufficient to maintain stability and meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences. (III D.1.c, III D.2.b.)
5. To ensure the economic viability of the institution, the team recommends the college must focus on developing and implementing the enrollment recovery plan, while concurrently developing the specific contingency plans to address alternative enrollment and economic scenarios. (III D.1.c, III D.2.b.)

Standard IV Leadership and Governance

IV A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

Responses to the Recommendations from the Previous Team

The team observed that in reaction to a number of historical College events substantial interpersonal dissension threatens to distract the College from a critical focus on its recently developed Master Planning agenda and other significant issues. The team recommends that representatives of all stakeholders of the College be convened to identify these interpersonal issues and determine a process to reach an expeditious and lasting resolution.

The self study chronicles some of the history that resulted in the previous team identifying “interpersonal dissension” as an issue that needed to be addressed. In addition, the self study reviews some of the major issues that have occurred between 1998 and 2004 that have led to dramatic swings in campus relationships. There have certainly been attempts by major campus constituents and the administration to address this recommendation, however, this team finds that the campus is still struggling with issues of communication, trust, and mutual respect. The college has not reached a satisfactory and lasting resolution to this problem. The self study notes that “Although campus climate and interpersonal relationships improved considerably for a period of time, planning efforts undertaken during spring 2003 to address significant state funding uncertainties culminated in a May 15 action of the Board of Trustee to discontinue five academic programs and eventually led to a June 2003 vote of no confidence in the superintendent/president by the faculty and classified staff members.” In our interviews it was apparent that there are serious differences of opinion as to whether the program discontinuance and layoff actions were necessary and whether the college’s participatory governance processes were appropriately used to make the final decisions. It is the firm belief of this team that the dissension that threatened to distract the college from its focus on its mission in 1998 remains a threat at this time. Relationships on campus have deteriorated to the point that among many of the constituent group leaders there is little trust in the administration. The past informality of the participatory governance systems on campus does not provide the assurances of two-way communication, clear understanding of issues and proposed solutions, trust, and mutual respect. The team addresses these issues in greater detail in the current team report.

Observations

The 1998 visiting team commended the efforts of the college’s board, administrative leadership, faculty, and staff for the development of a comprehensive master planning system during periods of challenge and change. This commendation reflected the systems the college had put in place to encourage and enable the participation of faculty, staff, and students in the development of college planning and decision making. There is evidence

from the review of campus documentation and interviews that the college has a policy for participatory governance by the faculty, staff and students. Board Policy 1600 states:

The Board of Trustees embraces the concept of participatory governance as policy of the Santa Monica Community College District, while retaining its own rights and responsibilities as the ultimate authority in all areas defined by State laws and regulations.

An example of how this system worked is the manner in which the college developed its vision, mission and goals statements. Then the college, through the Collegewide Coordinating Council, set broad goals and annual action plans aimed to improve the institution. The college's vision statement, "Santa Monica College: Changing Lives Through Excellence in Education" establishes a foundation for the college's commitment to excellence. The Mission Statement and the Goals Statement clearly reflect the commitment of the college to student learning outcomes and academic excellence. Quoting from the Goals Statement:

Student Success:

The College's learning environment will challenge, motivate, and support students. The College will use data on student outcomes to enhance educational programs and services.

Academic Excellence:

The College will uphold its tradition of academic excellence and innovation centered on a strong core of classified staff, faculty, and administrators. All are dedicated to the life-long development of individual skills and competencies.

During spring 2002, the Collegewide Coordinating Council devoted several meetings to the process of reviewing and revising the college's vision, mission, and goals statements. A draft of the revised statements was distributed to all college constituencies represented on the Collegewide Coordinating Council for review and recommendations. The Council subsequently reviewed the recommendations and incorporated many of them into a final version, which the Council approved in May 2002 and the Board of Trustees adopted later that year. Because the Collegewide Coordinating Council's membership consists of the leadership of all college constituencies, the involvement of the Council in the development of these statements ensured that a broad segment of the college community had an opportunity to contribute to the final product. Interviews with faculty and staff on the campus verified that the college's vision, mission and goals statements have been well communicated and are generally understood. (IV A.1.)

However, in the winter and spring of 2003, the college's structure for participatory governance was put to the test and in the minds of many of those who participated in the difficult budget related decisions that year, the system failed. In the self study and in interviews with representatives of the faculty, staff, and students, it was obvious that the current structure and processes left many with a feeling of dissatisfaction and mistrust.

These feelings seemed to be grounded in the lack of clarity about the role of various committees, the processes used to disseminate information, the concern regarding the credibility of information, and the lack of clarity of constituency involvement and follow through on input. The team found that Santa Monica College does not have a cohesive decision-making process and in times of economic instability and cutbacks the current informal structure did not work as intended. In the present statewide climate of economic uncertainty, the lack of a clearly defined process has contributed to an environment of distrust. The team heard that the decision in 2003 to eliminate programs seemed to highlight the lack of clarity regarding the role of the Collegewide Coordinating Council, the Budget Committee, the superintendent/president, and the governing board. We found in addition that there is currently no formal process in place to evaluate the integrity and effectiveness of the college's current governance and decision-making structures and processes.

The team found that there are no adopted board policies or administrative regulations to define the compositions and the charge for any of the committees. Constituency groups expressed concern that there is neither written authority for the Collegewide Coordinating Council or a clear charge of which issues are within its purview and which are not. As reported in the self study, until recently meetings did not have agendas; minutes were not regularly kept; and aside from its process for ranking new full-time faculty hires and updating the Master Plan for Education, the operation of the council was surprisingly informal. The team found there is no established way to define and assign tasks with timelines, weight and evaluate outcomes, nor mechanisms in place to handle situations in which a majority of the members favors a particular course of action when consensus is not reached. There was no apparent disagreement that the Board of Trustees had the authority in 2003 to discontinue some vocational programs or to layoff tenured faculty and staff members from those programs in response to the state's financial crisis and its potential impact on Santa Monica College. The problems stemmed from the perception of the faculty, staff and students that the ideas generated by these groups to address the crisis were not considered in the final decision. The lack of a more formal governance structure with written procedures and guidelines contributed to this perception. In interviews with the senior administrative staff, the superintendent/president and members of the Board of Trustees, it is apparent that these alternative ideas were discussed and rejected in favor of the ultimate decision. (IV A.2.)

In other areas, the college has well-defined policies for many of its decision-making roles and processes. Board Policy 1610 recognizes the Academic Senate "as the body which represents the faculty in collegial governance relating to academic and professional matters." The policy stipulates that the board will "rely primarily" on the Academic Senate or reach "mutual agreement" on a large number of issues that are related to governance and enable the institution to identify institutional values, set and achieve goals, and improve the effectiveness of the institution.

The team found a general concern among the faculty and staff regarding communication. Many shared with the team that they believe information has not been shared in an open, timely manner to allow them to participate effectively in the decision-making process. One example given is the claim that the board agenda is published and distributed on a Friday

afternoon prior to a Monday meeting. This process meets the requirements of state law regarding the publication of agendas for the benefit of the public being served. If there is an item of concern to any one of the constituent groups on the agenda and this item has not been previously discussed to the extent that a recommendation has been reached and communicated to the faculty, staff and student leadership, the leaders of the group have little time to react and must work over the weekend to prepare to address the issue at the board meeting. A second example is some faculty reported they believed that in 2003 the senior staff had begun planning for program cuts without meaningful participation from the Academic Senate or the Faculty Association. The administration and the board reported they had interacted both formally and informally with various leaders on several occasions before making a final decision. It seems there was a breakdown in communication across the campus as to how and what information had been conveyed to the superintendent/president and the board. Another example is the acquisition of the Bundy site in 2002. This purchase was made with virtually no consultation beyond the college vice presidents. Given the large commitment of resources, many faculty and classified staff members feel there should have been some consultation. However, the superintendent/president believed she needed to act with speed and in confidence to assure the purchase could be made. The Comprehensive Facility Master Plan, the development of which had broad participation, called for the acquisition of additional property to relieve the college's overcrowded condition on the main campus and to meet the growing need to increase parking for the large student body. Given the lack of trust that existed on the campus at that time, it is not surprising that a decision made for apparently all the right reasons and with an exceptional financial strategy was subjected to criticism for a lack of consultation and communication. What could have been celebrated as a successful achievement of the planning process unfortunately resulted instead in the criticism of the superintendent/president. The team found that the consultative process is so informal that efforts to consult were not always recognized as such and not adequately documented. (IV A.3.)

The college has a history of honest and accurate responses to the Accreditation Commission standards, policies, and guidelines. It is clear from reading the reports of two prior visiting teams, the most recent mid-term report, and the self study that the institution takes the accreditation process seriously and makes a sincere effort to respond to the recommendations that arise from the process. (IV A.4.)

There is currently no formal process in place to evaluate the integrity and effectiveness of the college's overall governance and decision-making processes and structures. There is evidence that there have been attempts in the past several years to conduct evaluations of certain portions of the structure including the various Academic Senate Joint committees, the administrative structure, and the Collegewide Coordinating Council; but all of these have been piecemeal and some have never been actually conducted. The college has acknowledged this is an area that needs attention. The self study states, "The superintendent/president, in consultation with the senior administrative staff and constituent group leaders, will develop a global evaluation process for the College's governance and decision making structures and processes." (IV A.5.)

Conclusions

The team concludes that the current decision-making model is not as effective as is necessary to create an environment for improvement, innovation and institutional excellence, particularly in a college of this size. However, the team feels the college meets the standard for accreditation. The problems on this campus are problems of sharpening the processes and agreeing to learn to work together in a professional manner. The team strongly feels that the college needs to reevaluate its decision-making processes to ensure a process that defines the various committees; the roles, responsibilities and membership; methods for getting and disseminating consistent, timely, and credible information; processes for agendas, minutes, and chronicling past actions; and develop strategies for following through on concerns and methods to provide feedback and input to the college community.

The team concludes that one of the college's greatest challenges, for the foreseeable future, will be to deal with the issues of organizational decision-making and trust especially in these very difficult fiscal times. The accreditation standards call for the institution to provide, "an environment that supports learning, enhances student understanding and appreciation of diversity, and encourages personal and civic responsibility as well as intellectual, aesthetic and personal development for all its students." In the current environment on this campus, the team does not feel the various constituent groups have enough trust in one another nor the systems in place that would help reestablish this level of trust and mutual respect to meet this portion of the standard. The team urges the college to find ways to create new systems and approaches that will allow for effective communication, to listen to one another and seek to understand the various concerns and positions of all the constituent groups on this campus. The team met exceptionally qualified personnel across the campus who share a vision for Santa Monica College and who deserve and need a campus climate that will allow them to work together with collegiality and mutual respect.

While communication is always a challenge in a large community college, additional efforts should be taken by all members of the Collegewide Coordinating Council to fully inform their constituent groups of procedures and actions affecting constituent members. Communication is not the sole responsibility of the superintendent/president, the administrative team, and the Board of Trustee. Improved communication will assist in creating a culture that welcomes broad input and increased opportunities for participation in the planning process in an environment characterized by collegiality and mutual respect.

IV B. Board and Administrative Organization

The governing board of Santa Monica College consists of seven publicly elected members and a student member who is elected annually by the student body. The board includes members who are civic minded, involved citizens experienced and knowledgeable about educational matters, especially those relating to the college. To a member, the board is exceptionally proud of the faculty, staff, and programs offered by the college. In interviews with the team, each member expressed his or her appreciation for the quality of the instructional and student services programs, the focus of the faculty and staff on student learning and success, and is proud of Santa Monica College's many achievements and its

well-earned reputation as a leader in the community college movement. The Santa Monica College board has had exceptional stability and as a result the members clearly understand their role in setting policy and ensuring the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the institution as well as the financial stability of the district. The state's most recent financial crisis has created a great challenge to the board as it struggles to make the decisions necessary to protect the financial future of the college and at the same time maintain the high morale on campus that is necessary to optimize the effectiveness of the services the college provides to its students. The board takes very seriously its role to advocate for and defend the college from inappropriate and undue influence or pressure. The team noted that many of the campus personnel did not always agree with the decisions the board has made. While this is natural, there is a more disturbing impression that the employees of the college often feel they are not being heard. In interviews with the board members the team found that board members believe they are very well informed by the superintendent/president and make decisions with the full understanding of the positions of the active constituent groups on campus. They are painfully aware of the impression that exists on campus that they are not fully informed as they consider difficult decisions and are anxious to see the development of improved systems and procedures that will rebuild the trust and mutual respect that the entire campus desires. (IV B.1.a, b, c.)

Santa Monica College has published the board policies in accordance with the standard. All board policies have been updated since the 1998 accreditation. Board policy provides for the participation of the Academic Senate, the Classified Senate, and the Associated Students in the development and revision of board policies that directly affect each respective group. However, the administrative regulations that implement these policies are undergoing review and revision and this ongoing process has resulted in some confusion in that there is no readily accessible source of the current status of these regulations. (IV B.1.d. and e.)

The term of publicly-elected board members is established in law as four years with staggered elections. The student board member is elected on an annual basis by the student body. Board members are active participants in local, state, and national organizations appropriate to keeping them informed on emerging issues. The board has a program for new member orientation and continuing board development. Each summer, the board conducts a self-evaluation in which each member completes a questionnaire regarding how that member individually and the Board of Trustees as a whole have met responsibilities. The board has adopted a Code of Ethics. Each member is expected to uphold this code and act in the best interest of the college and its community. The board members appear to be well informed about the accreditation process. They have been informed of the status of the 2004 accreditation process through periodic updates at board meetings and retreats. It is noteworthy that the board has been able to monitor the progress of the college in responding to the recommendations of the 1998 visiting team because the recommendations have been central to annual campus planning efforts and reports. (IV B.1.f, g, h, i.)

The Board of Trustees selected the superintendent/president in 1995 and annually evaluates her. The board appropriately delegates responsibility and authority to the superintendent/president to implement and administer board policies without undue interference. (IV B.1.j.)

The superintendent/president is the chief executive officer of the Santa Monica Community College District. She provides leadership in the areas appropriate to a community college president and appropriately delegates authority and responsibilities to the college's administrative team to carry out the priorities of the institution. She led the college into a new planning model soon after her arrival on the campus in 1995. Through her leadership the college established the vision, mission and goals statements that have served as the foundation for planning efforts for several years. These statements were developed in a consultative process that involved the major constituents on the campus and reflect the values and priorities of the institution. Each year the college, through the efforts of the senior administrative members and the Collegewide Coordinating Council recommend annual institutional objectives that, upon adoption by the Board of Trustees, become the annual version of the Master Plan for Education. The superintendent/president provides for an annual evaluation of these objectives and communicates the outcomes to the college community through the Collegewide Coordinating Council as part of the efforts to establish a new set of objectives for the following year.

The college produces a great deal of institutional data that is now available to the college community through the college's website. These data have played a major role in grant development, program review, and the analysis of student achievement factors such as transfers, graduation rates, student success, and retention. There is some concern on campus because of recent reductions in the Institutional Research and Institutional Effectiveness and Planning offices and how this may affect the college's efforts to begin the process of collecting data on student learning outcomes to assist in the transition to these data as part of the college's planning cycle.

While it is clear that the planning structure the college has adopted is intended to link educational planning with resource planning and distribution, the self study indicates and interviews with campus participants in these processes confirm that it is not always clear how the vision, mission and goals statements and the Master Plan for Education are applied in the decisions to allocate resources. The superintendent/president presents balanced budgets that support personnel and operational expenditures to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis. She provides regular reports on the financial condition of the college to the Board of Trustees and the college community. Unfortunately, the Los Angeles County Office of Education has recently changed its financial accounting software system resulting in inaccurate reports and confusion at the college. Faculty, staff, and administration leaders do not feel secure that the information they are receiving is accurate and this is contributing to the lack of trust on campus. As noted in Standard III, the college is planning on addressing this issue as a very high priority this spring. The superintendent/president has been very energetic in encouraging the college staff to pursue grant funding and to successfully seek other outside funding sources.

The superintendent/president is very active in the communities the college serves. She is a member of many community-based and national organizations and boards. The recent passage of two bond measures to assist the college in recovering from the devastating effects of the 1994 Northridge earthquake and in meeting the needs for more space and for more

current equipment and facilities are evidence that the superintendent/president and the Board of Trustees are effective in communicating with the surrounding communities and of the strong community support that exists for the college. (IV B.2.a, b, c, d, e.)

Conclusions

The college is in general compliance with Standard IV; however, there is a critical need for the college to review its established governance structures, decision-making processes, and practices to ensure the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution. As these structures are improved, they should facilitate discussion of ideas and improve communication up and down the college organization. It is critically important for the college to find ways to hold substantive dialogues between the administration, faculty, staff, and students that are characterized by open conversations, good listening, mutual respect, and collegiality. Once an improved structure is in place, this structure and its processes should be regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness. It is important to such a process that the results of these regular evaluations are communicated across the campus and used as the basis of improvement.

There are serious problems as noted in Standard III with the recent change in the financial computing system by the Los Angeles County Office of Education that has left the college with uncertainties as to the accuracy of budget and expenditure data. In order for the superintendent/president to establish a system to effectively control the budget and expenditures, the college must have timely and accurate data.

The team noted that the college has grown under the current leader from 22,000 students to approximately 34,000 students in the peak year of 2002-2003. The number of full-time and part-time staff has also increased over the years. The team heard many concerns over the role and conflicting expectations of the top leadership positions. The team noted that the challenges that regularly confront a single campus district and a college of this size require an immense amount of time, skills, resources, and patience. The political environment both within and without; the need to vie for funds at the local, state, and national level; and struggles to maintain national and international presence and reputation that has been so carefully created and marketed to specific niches highlighted for the team that the college may want to review its current structure with a goal of creating a chief executive officer position that would serve as an external visionary leader and an executive assistant position that would handle the day-to-day operations of the college.

Recommendations

7. The team recommends the college clarify, develop, document and regularly evaluate the roles of individuals and constituent groups in college governance and decision-making structures and processes to ensure their effective participation and communicate the processes and outcomes to the college community as the basis for continued improvement. (IV A.1, 2, 3, 5)

8. The team recommends that the college develop and implement concrete strategies and processes to improve communication and professional relationships in order to create a campus climate characterized by collegiality and mutual respect. (IVA.1, and 3.)