

# **ACCREDITATION EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

## **Los Angeles Southwest College**

1600 West Imperial Highway  
Los Angeles, CA 90047

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

This report represents the findings of the External Evaluation Team that visited  
Los Angeles Southwest College,  
March 7 – 10, 2016

Leon Richards, Ph.D.  
Chair

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

DATE: July 8, 2016

INSTITUTION: Los Angeles Southwest College  
1600 West Imperial Highway  
Los Angeles, CA 90047

TEAM REPORT: Comprehensive Evaluation Report

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited Los Angeles Southwest College March 7 – March 10, 2016.

SUBJECT: Commission Revisions to the Team Report

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

1. The Commission notes that references to a business continuity and/or disaster recovery plan should not be capitalized as in District Recommendation 4. The team’s reference is to a general plan and not a specific plan with that title.

The Commission has also clarified the Standard citations in College Recommendation 1 and made the following change to College Recommendation 8 wherever it occurs in the Team Report:

1. The Commission has deleted the last sentence of College Recommendation 8 that required the college to “develop a database to monitor the diversity of its staff to ensure it reasonable mirrors its student body.”

## List of Team Members

Dr. Leon Richards (Chair)  
Chancellor  
Kapi'olani Community College

Dr. Salvatore Lanzilotti (Team Assistant)  
Special Assistant to the Chancellor  
Kapiolani Community College

Dr. Juan Avalos  
Vice President for Student Services  
Saddleback College

Dr. Joi Blake  
President  
College of Alameda

Dr. Charlotte Forté-Parnell  
Dean of Instruction  
Antelope Valley College

Mr. Brian Greene  
Librarian  
Modesto Junior College

Mr. Les Jauron  
Vice President for Planning, Research & Organizational Development  
Butte College

Ms. Kathleen Kirklin  
Vice President, Administration  
Folsom Lake College

Dr. Peter Maphumulo  
Vice President Instruction  
Victor Valley College

Ms. Vivian Varela  
Assistant Professor, Sociology  
Mendocino College

Dr. Melinda Womack  
Professor, Communication  
Santiago Canyon College

**Los Angeles Community College District  
Team Roster  
Monday, March 7-Thursday, March 10, 2016**

**Chair**

Dr. Helen Benjamin  
Chancellor  
Contra Costa Community College District

**Assistant**

Ms. Tammeil Y. Gilkerson  
Vice President, Academic and Student Affairs  
Contra Costa College

Ms. Linda Beam  
Vice President Human Resources  
El Camino College  
Dr. Jannett Jackson  
Chancellor  
Chabot-Las Positas Community College  
District

Ms. Deborah Ludford  
District Director of Information Services  
North Orange County Community College District  
Dr. Jamey Nye  
Associate Vice Chancellor of Instruction  
Los Rios Community College District

Mr. Dustin Johnson  
Trustee  
Los Rios Community College District

Dr. Lynn Neault  
Vice Chancellor Student Services  
San Diego Community College District Office

Mr. Doug Horner  
Director of Facilities and Bond Program  
Chabot-Las Positas CCD

Mr. Fred Williams  
Interim Chancellor  
North Orange County Community College District

Mr. Christopher Tarman  
Senior Dean of Research, Planning,  
and Institutional Effectiveness  
Grossmont Cuyamaca Community College District

## Summary of the External Evaluation Report

INSTITUTION: Los Angeles Southwest College  
DATES OF VISIT: March 6 - 10, 2016  
TEAM CHAIR: Dr. Leon Richards

An eleven-member Accreditation Team (referred to hereafter as the Team) visited the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) office and Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC), May 7 – 10, 2016 for the purpose of determining whether the College continues to meet Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and USDE regulations.

The Team evaluated how well the College is achieving its stated purposes, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement, and submitting recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) regarding the accredited status of the College.

In preparation for the visit, the Team Chair and Team Assistant attended an External Evaluation Team training workshop with Team members on January 26, 2016 and conducted a pre-visit to the campus on January 27, 2016. During this visit, the chair met with campus leadership and key personnel involved in the self-evaluation preparation process.

The Team received the College's Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) and related evidence several weeks prior to the site visit and an addendum in late February that contained additional information from the LACCD concerning Standards III and IV. Team members found the ISER to be a difficult document to assess for a variety of reasons, including, lack of names in the College's organization chart, conflicting data in different parts of the Report, and their inability to fully assess the veracity of the Report as the links to the evidence were not active and a great majority of the evidence was not available for review until the Team was on site at the LASC Team room.

The Team confirmed that the self-evaluation report was compiled with the participation of the various constituents at the College. The Team found that the College provided a self-evaluation that contained, for the most part, an accurate assessment of the College and self-identified action plans for institutional improvement.

On Sunday, March 6, 2016, the Team Chair, Team Assistant, and Standard III Team Members met with the District External Evaluation Team. On Monday morning, March 7, 2016, the Team Chair, Team Assistant, four Standard Leads and the Standard III Team Member met with LACCD personnel to hear responses to questions that had been submitted to the LACCD personnel in advance and to discuss the relationships between the College and the LACCD. After the LACCD meeting, the seven Team Members visited LASC to make an initial review of the evidence available in the Team room and to begin assessing the quality of the evidence provided by the College. On the evening of March 7, 2016, the entire Team met at the Embassy Suites Hotel and reviewed the general state of affairs in relation to the available evidence, briefed each

other concerning the meetings with the LACCD personnel, reviewed the schedule of interviews and developed a plan of action for the following day, and tentatively, for the LASC visit. Upon arrival to LASC on Tuesday morning, March 8, 2016, the Team was met by the College's Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) and taken for a tour of the campus. Afterward, the Team commenced assessing the evidence provided for it in the Team room and requesting additional evidence from the ALO. Also, on Tuesday morning the Team met with the College leadership, which included faculty and classified worker representatives, administrators, and union representatives. On Tuesday afternoon the Team held its first of two college wide forums in the College's theatre.

During the evaluation visit, Team members conducted 32 formal meetings and interviews, that included more than 144 College employees, students, and board members, in addition to the 31 District personnel who were available to selected Team members on Monday, March 7. There were numerous less formal interactions with students and employees outside of officially scheduled interviews. Also, Team members conducted informal observations of classes and other learning venues. In addition, the Team held two forums (Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning) that provided the College community opportunities to learn more about the Accreditation process, to ask questions and receive responses from Team members, and to voice opinions concerning the state of affairs at LASC.

The Team reviewed numerous materials supporting the self-evaluation report that were provided in the Team room on arrival. Also, the Team requested, received, and reviewed both numerous additional evidence documents in hard and electronic format. Electronic evidence and documentation was made available through the College's intranet and through documents stored on a flash drive. Materials reviewed included documents such as institutional plans, program review procedures and reports, student learning outcomes evidence, information concerning distance education classes, College policies and procedures, enrollment information, committee minutes and materials, and the College governance structure..

The Team greatly appreciated the support from College employees throughout the visit. The Team appreciated the assistance of key staff members, especially the ALO, who assisted the Team with requests for individual meetings and other needs throughout the evaluation process. Campus staff members did everything in their power to meet every request.

The Team was impressed with a number of innovative and effective practices and programs provided through the College's Student Support Services that were developed in response to the needs of specific populations of students.

Finally, this Report includes information from the report submitted separately by the Los Angeles Community College District External Evaluation Team (referred to hereafter as the District Team or DT). Accordingly, all General Observations, Findings and Evidence, Conclusions, Commendations and Recommendations from the District Team Report will be identified as such.

## **Major Findings and Recommendations: 2016 LASC External Evaluation Team**

### **Commendations**

#### **I. Team Commendations**

During the visit the Team recognized several aspects of the College worthy of commendations.

##### **Commendation 1.**

The Team commends the College for its exemplary commitment to its mission by providing targeted support services for special populations, such as middle college high school students, homeless students, foster youth, formerly incarcerated adults, and non-credit adult students (ESL, High School completion).

##### **Commendation 2.**

The Team commends the College for Curriculum Committee and its Chair, in building a transparent, effective process that positions the College to meet the student learning needs.

##### **Commendation 3.**

The Team commends the Program Review Committee and its Chair for the leadership for developing an annual program review process.

##### **Commendation 4.**

The Team commends the College for its wide identification and publication of student learning outcomes across student services programs.

##### **Commendation 5.**

The Team commends the College for constructing new facilities that provide access to new educational experiences for students and resource development opportunities for the College and the community it serves.

##### **Commendation 6.**

The Team commends the students and student leaders for their vision and efforts to create vibrant out-of-classroom experiences and determination to seek out solutions to current College issues, despite College financial challenges.

#### **II. District Team Commendations**

##### **District Commendation 1.**

The District Team commends the District for exemplary preparation and coordination of the accreditation visit for all nine colleges under the new accreditation standards. (I.C.12)

### **District Commendation 2.**

The District Team commends the District for its commitment to professional development and improving the knowledge, skills, and abilities of its employees in support of student achievement. (III.A.14)

### **District Commendation 3.**

The District Team commends the technology staff from the nine colleges and the District for their teamwork and collaboration in the areas of shared staff resources, development of standards, collaborative training opportunities and deployment of integrated systems resulting in effective and efficient use of technology resources to improve academic quality and institutional effectiveness. (III.C.1, III.C.4)

### **District Commendation 4.**

The District Team commends the District for its substantial support of the internal audit function. (III.D.8)

### **District Commendation 5.**

The District Team commends the District for its commitment to continuous quality improvement by building evaluation loops for all its services, decision-making processes, and institutional performance. (IV.D.2, IV.D.5, IV.D.7)

## **College Recommendations for Compliance**

### **College Recommendation 1.**

In order to meet the criteria for standards pertaining to institutional effectiveness, resources, and decision-making, the Team recommends that the College implement a systematic, sustained and integrated planning and resource allocation process that results in the improvement of student learning and student achievement. To implement this process the Team recommends that the College:

- 1.1 Review and revise its Mission to include the types of degrees and other credentials offered by the College and then aligns its planning, data collection, decision-making, and resource allocation processes with the revised Mission. (I.A.1)
- 1.2 Build on the progress it has made in the last four years by: completing its Educational, Facilities and Technology Master Plans, (to include Distance Education); refining, implementing, and systematically assessing these and other institution wide plans and processes, such as comprehensive program review and the Integrated College Operational Plan; and assessing the overall effectiveness of its integrated planning process. (I.A.2, I.B.1, I.B.6, I.B.7, I.B.9, II.A.13, II.A.16, II.B.3, III.C.1, III.C.2, III.C.5, ER 11, ER 19)
- 1.3 Complete the implementation of Student Learning Outcomes to include developing and implementing an ongoing cycle for assessing course, program, and institutional SLOs, student services, library and learning support services, and administrative unit outcomes and tracking the status of the implementation of this cycle. (I.A.2, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.3, II.A.7, II.B.3, II.C.2, III.A.6, IV.A.1, ER 11)
- 1.4 Work collaboratively with the District to address the existing deficit and to improve the annual budget allocation model to ensure fiscal stability and the ability to fulfill the



College's Mission by adequately meeting the needs of instruction, student services and operations. (I.A.3, 1.B.7, III.A.7, III.D.1, III.D.4, III.D.15, IV.C.5, ER18)

- 1.5 Develop an integrative and comprehensive planning process guided by an updated Educational Master Plan and Strategic Plan that incorporates Total Cost of Ownership in the following areas: technology, business continuity, disaster recovery, and physical plant. (I.A.3, III B.2, III.C.2, III.C.3)

**College Recommendation 3.**

In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the College follow documented procedures related to the responsibilities of librarians and content faculty in the collection development processes. (II.B.2, IV.A.1)

**College Recommendation 4.**

In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the College analyze, discuss, and use student satisfaction data, collected by the College and the district, in creating plans of action to improve the quality of the services it offers for all student constituencies. (Standard II.B.3, II.C.1)

**College Recommendation 5.**

In order to meet Standard, the Team recommends that the College evaluate its contracted services for effectiveness and continuity of service and maintain copies of all agreements in a central location on campus. (II.B.4, III.D.9, III.D.10, III.D.16)

**College Recommendation 6.**

In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends LASC assess the effectiveness of its counseling services and practices and utilize the information accordingly to increase focus and action on the growing Hispanic demographic in its core area and determine how best to expand the hours of operation of student services programs and the availability of counselors for all student constituencies. (Standard II.C3, II.C.5)

**College Recommendation 7.**

In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the College ensure evaluations of academic administrators directly responsible for student learning outcomes include, as a component of that evaluation, consideration of how they use the results of the assessment of student learning outcomes to improve teaching and learning; and in the case of all administrators, how they utilize position-related assessment data to improve College processes and programs. (Standard III.A.5, III.A.6)

**College Recommendation 8.**

In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the College continue to complete staff evaluations for all personnel, increase the number of administrators and staff necessary to support its programs and services, create and monitor a system of "essential" professional development for both full-time and part-time and adjunct faculty, with professional development funds equitably allocated. (Standard III.A.5, III. A.7, III.A.8, A.III.9, III.A.10, III.A.14, ER 8, ER 14)

**District Recommendation 1.**

In order to meet the Standard, the District Team recommends that the District ensure consistent and uniform guidelines for the search and selection of adjunct faculty. (III.A.1)

**District Recommendation 2.**

In order to meet the Standard, the District Team recommends that the District ensure all personnel are systematically evaluated at stated intervals in accordance with the bargaining agreements and Board policies. (III.A.5)

**District Recommendation 3.**

In order to meet the Standard, the District Team recommends that the District update the performance evaluations of academic administrators to include the results of the assessment of learning outcomes to improve teaching and learning. (III.A.6)

**District Recommendation 4.**

In order to meet the Standard, the District Team recommends that the District and colleges develop a comprehensive business continuity/disaster recovery plan to ensure reliable access, safety, and security. (III.C.3)

**District Recommendation 6.**

In order to meet the Standard, the District Team recommends that the District comprehensively responds to the recurring audit findings concerning: 1) the internal control weakness in information technology controls over the areas of security and change management; and 2) the state compliance exceptions related to “To Be Arranged” (TBA) hours attendance documentation and course classifications. (III.D.7)

**District Recommendation 8.**

In order to meet the Standard, the District Team recommends that the District develop a process to capture the full impact of the District’s liability for load banking and to record the liability in the District’s financial statements. (III.D.12)

**District Recommendation 10.**

In order to meet the Standard, the District Team recommends that the Board adopt policies that clearly define the process for the selection and evaluation of the chancellor. (IV.C.3)

**District Recommendation 11.**

In order to meet the Standard, the District Team recommends that the Board establish a formal process for approving the review of policies in which no revisions are made and to regularly assess the effectiveness of all policies in fulfilling the District mission. (IV.C.7)

## **College Recommendations for Institutional Improvement**

### **College Recommendation 2.**

In order to increase institutional effectiveness through continuous, broad-based, systematic evaluation and planning, the Team recommends that the College implement a comprehensive process that substantively engages students and classified staff in these processes, and demonstrates outcomes based on the participation of these and the other constituent groups of the College. (I.B.9, IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.3, IV.A.5,)

### **College Recommendation 9.**

In order to increase institutional effectiveness, the Team recommends that the College improve existing systems in the following manner:

1. Institute the work order system and train personnel on its use in order to better assess the needs of facility users and the maintenance requirements of the buildings. (Standard III.B.3)
2. Address the Work Environment Committee recommendations that identify issues related to the provision of safe, healthy, and sanitary work environment. Settlement Agreement agreed to by the District and the AFT College Faculty Guild dated January 2016. (Standard III.B.1)
3. Ensure adequate Maintenance and Operations staffing are scheduled to address needs of evening classes. (Standard III.B.1)
4. Ensure a higher visibility of campus security in order to allay some campus constituency doubts related to safety. (Standard III.B.1)

## **District Recommendations for Institutional Improvement**

### **District Recommendation 5.**

In order to increase effectiveness and better assess financial resource availability, the District Team recommends that the District implement a District position control system to track and budget for personnel costs. (III.D.4)

### **District Recommendation 7.**

In order to increase effectiveness, the District Team recommends that the District develop and publicize a plan to fully fund the Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB) Liability, which is currently funded at 16.06 percent. (III.D.12)

### **District Recommendation 9.**

In order to increase effectiveness, the District Team recommends that the District review the membership of institutional governance committees to ensure all employee groups, particularly classified staff, have formal input on institutional plans, policies, and other key considerations as appropriate. (IV.A.5)

### **District Recommendation 12.**

In order to improve effectiveness, the District Team recommends that the District expand efforts to communicate decisions made in the institutional governance process to all stakeholders. (IV.D.6)

## **Introduction**

Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC) serves a socioeconomically and ethnically diverse community. In addition to southwest Los Angeles, its service area includes the communities of Gardena, Hawthorne, Inglewood, Compton, and Lynwood. Its service area has a lower median household income and a higher rate of poverty than both Los Angeles County and the state of California. The College has a rich history that connects it to the community it serves, as it was borne from the efforts of community activists and the after effects of the "Watts Rebellion," a violent outbreak from August 11-17, 1965, during which 34 people died and more than 1,000 people were injured. A California commission, under Gov. Pat Brown, later determined that the rebellion was caused by locals' resentment toward police as well as a lack of jobs and educational opportunities for African-Americans.

In January 1967, the LASC school board would earmark \$2 million to open the college campus at Western Avenue and Imperial Highway. At 3:30 a.m. July 11, 1967, the first of 13 bungalows were delivered to the site from Los Angeles City College. Classes started September 11, 1967, with more than 600 registered students and 22 full-time faculty members. Today, LASC's service area is experiencing demographic changes that will impact the college over the course of the 2014-2020 Strategic Plan. The ethnic composition of the area has gradually changed over the past 20 years and is projected to continue changing into the next decade. In the early years of LASC's existence, the LASC service area was composed of a predominantly Black/African-American population. Over the past 20 years, this community has become predominantly Hispanic. In 2010, Hispanics increased to 58.9 percent of the community's population and this trend is expected to continue over the course of the next five years.

Consequently, over the past five years, LASC's Black/African-American student population has declined, while the Hispanic student population has increased. However, the trends in the student population have not reached the magnitude of the change in the LASC service area. In 2013, the LASC service area population was 61 percent Hispanic and 30 percent Black. In fall 2014, LASC's credit student population was 33 percent Hispanic and 56.8 percent Black. This disparity points to one of the current challenges of the College, as an increase in Hispanic students could help to solve some of the financial problems the College is experiencing.

In order to best serve the needs of its community, LASC must ensure it is meeting the needs of its Hispanic and Black/African-American student population. This includes offering programs and services that can provide the most benefit to this community. In many cases the Team saw this occurring and, in fact, has commended the College for some of these programs.

Another underrepresented demographic is male students, which make up 48.4 percent of the service area population, but only compose 31 percent of the LASC student population. Also, although most of the LASC students come from low-performing high schools, they are increasingly stating that their educational goal is to transfer to a 4-year university. Thus, many students view LASC as one step along a longer educational path. Students at the forums expressed that LASC was, "The foundation, the dream, and the hope of the community."

## **Eligibility Requirements (ER)**

### **I. LASC Eligibility Requirements**

#### **ER 1. Authority**

The Team confirmed that Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC) is authorized to operate as a post-secondary, degree-granting institution based on continuous accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The ACCJC is a regional accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and granted authority through the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

In addition, the College operates under the authority of the State of California Education Code, which establishes the California community college system under the leadership and direction of the Board of Governors (State of California Education Code 70900-70901).

The College is recognized by the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) Board of Trustees as one of the nine colleges operating in the District.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

#### **ER 2. Operational Status**

The Team confirmed that the College is operational and provides educational services to 10,555 unduplicated student enrollments within degree applicable credit courses for the 2014-2015 academic year.. For 2014-15, the College enrolled 12,953 (credit and noncredit) students with 2,049 (16%) of those students being enrolled as full-time. Sixty-three percent (63%) of credit students are pursuing educational goals that relate to degree, certificate, or transfer.

The College offers 44-degree programs and 42 certificate programs. Additionally there are 13 approved Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADTs).

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

#### **ER 3. Degrees**

The Team confirmed that over 70% of the courses offered lead to a degree and/or transfer. A majority of LASC students are enrolled in the 44 AA/AS degree, or 13 Associate Degrees for Transfer programs offered by the College.

All associate degrees consist of courses required for the major or area of emphasis, general education, and degree-applicable elective units to achieve the 60-unit minimum as required in LACCD Board Rules 6201.13 and 6201.14.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

#### **ER 4. Chief Executive Officer**

The Team confirmed that the Governing Board employs a president as the chief executive officer of LASC. The CEO does not serve as a member of the board nor as the board president. The Team found that the Governing Board vests requisite authority in the superintendent/president to administer board policies. Since the last full accreditation visit, there have been changes in the CEO position, each of which were appropriately reported to the ACCJC.

The District Team found as follows for ER 4. The District's current chief executive officer is highly qualified for the position and has served as chancellor since June 1, 2014. His full-time responsibility is to the District; he possesses the requisite skills and authority to provide leadership for the District.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

#### **ER 5. Financial Accountability**

The Team confirmed that LASC engages a qualified audit firm to conduct audits of all financial records. All audits are certified and all explanations or findings are documented appropriately.

Annual external financial audits are conducted of each college in the LACCD by certified public accountants. The Board of Trustees reviews these audit reports annually, and the results of the audits are made public.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

## **II. District Eligibility Requirements**

#### **ER 5. Financial Accountability**

The District Office Accounting Office staff oversees District wide audits and is responsible for coordination of all site visits. The District also has a Central Financial Aid Unit that monitors and helps control the Perkins Loans default rates. The District has Perkins Loans outstanding (over 240 days in default) totaling \$1.8 million, but when compared to total loans outstanding for the District of \$270 million, the default rate is only approximately one percent of their outstanding principal. District staff continue to make collection calls to help reduce the default rates throughout the District. Discussion with staff revealed that the District is phasing out the Perkins Loan Program.

The Central Financial Aid Unit recently had a Perkins Loan Program site visit for Los Angeles Trade-Technical College by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) to follow up on high default rates over the last three years. The final report has not been received, but at the exit interview it was noted that while the rates were high, the USDE auditors were pleased with the collection efforts. Other compliance issues existed, but none related to the default rate.

The District annually undergoes an external financial audit by a certified public accountant,

which is made available to the public. Evidence shows that the audits were completed and are available to review on the District's website. Reports were available for the years ending June 30, 2001 through 2015.

Four colleges had a Perkins Loan default rate exceeding 30 percent for three straight years: West Los Angeles, Los Angeles Harbor, Los Angeles Pierce, and Los Angeles Trade-Technical. The total principal outstanding on loans in default exceeding 240 days for those four colleges (as of February 12, 2015) was \$874,202. The District is phasing out of the Perkins Loan Program and is moving to the Direct Loan Program. The published default rates for the Direct Loan Program are only available through fiscal year 2012. Of the nine colleges, only one (Los Angeles Trade-Technical College) had a rate over 30 percent and had only been in the program for one year.

The District meets the Eligibility Requirement.

## Federal Regulations and Related Commission Policies

### Public Notification of an Evaluation Team Visit and Third Party Comment

#### Evaluation Items:

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

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

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

[Regulation citation: 602.23(b).]

#### Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

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

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

#### Narrative

The College solicited third party comment and provided evidence showing it met all the criteria for this Regulation.

### Standards and Performance with Respect to Student Achievement

#### Evaluation Items:

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

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

The institution-set standards for programs and across the institution are relevant to guide self-evaluation and institutional improvement; the defined elements and expected performance levels are appropriate within higher education; the results are reported regularly across the campus; and the definition of elements and results are used in program-level and



institution-wide planning to evaluate how well the institution fulfills its mission, to determine needed changes, to allocating resources, and to make improvements.

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

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

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

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

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative:**

In accordance with the USDE regulations, the College has established standards and performance on student achievement. The College provided evidence that it has established institution-set standards for its student achievement for course completion rates, job placement rates for Student degree completion, student certificate completion, and licensure passage rates for instructional programs. The College provided evidence that demonstrated the seven measures it uses to substantiate that it has established student achievement benchmarks.

**Credits, Program Length, and Tuition**

**Evaluation Items:**

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

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

3 Rev. July 2015

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

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

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

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

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

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

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative:**

The assignment of credit hours and degree program lengths are including the Course credit calculations and are described in Article VII of the Board Rules. The College adheres to the commonly accepted minimum semester programs. There is an institutionally-established equivalency that reasonably approximates hours of instruction. Enrollment fees are the same for all courses since they are set by the State of California.

**Transfer Policies**

**Evaluation Items:**

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

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

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

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

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

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

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative:**

Transfer policies and the criteria used to accept transfer credits is appropriately documented. Transfer policies are properly disclosed in the College Catalog.

## **Distance Education and Correspondence Education**

### **Evaluation Items:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

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

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

### **Narrative:**

The Team reviewed 26 online classes (34% of all online classes listed in the LMS for spring 2016). Six of the courses reviewed were self-identified as hybrid courses. Seven courses had no evidence of "regular substantive contact" as required by USDE and two classes were empty of any course content; one of the two course shells did have students loaded into the class shell. The College needs to be consistent with meeting all the policies indicating compliance with the Commission Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education. [Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(iv), (vi); 602.17(g); 668.38.]

## **Student Complaints**

### **Evaluation Items:**

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

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

The team analysis of the student complaint files identifies any issues that may be indicative of the institution's noncompliance with any Accreditation Standards. 5 Rev. July 2015

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

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

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

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

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

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative:**

The institution has very clear policies and procedures for handling student complaints and the process is spelled out in the catalog and online. The College conducts an analysis of student complaints and identifies issues that need institutional attention.

**Institutional Disclosure and Advertising and Recruitment Materials**

**Evaluation Items:**

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

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

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

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

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

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

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative:**

Information about the College’s programs, policies and location is accurately communicated to the students and the public. Information is communicated to students and the public via the College Catalog, Schedule of Classes, and the College website.

**Title IV Compliance**

**Evaluation Items:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Conclusion Check-Off:**

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

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative:**

In the Basic Financial Statements and Supplemental information, the College presented evidence of the required components that are required for Title IV program, including information and findings from audits.

## **Standard I**

### **Mission, Academic Quality, Institutional Effectiveness, and Integrity**

#### **Standard I.A. Mission**

##### **General Observations**

The College's Mission is:

“In honor of its founding history, Los Angeles Southwest College empowers a diverse student population to achieve their academic and career goals, and to become critical thinkers and socially responsive leaders.”

The Mission is prominently displayed in College documents, such as the Strategic Plan, and on a large electronic billboard on the campus.

##### **Findings and Evidence**

The Mission describes the College's broad educational purposes, intended student population, and commitment to student learning and student achievement. As acknowledged by the College in the Self Evaluation Report, the current Mission does not describe the types of degrees and other credentials offered by the College. (Standard 1.A.1)

The College's standards for student achievement and institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) are generally aligned with the mission statement. The College actively tracks the performance of its diverse student populations through its standards for student achievement. This supports the portion of the College's mission as it pertains to “empowers a diverse student population to achieve their academic and career goals.” The cognitive and social responsibility institutional learning outcomes support the portion of the College's mission as it pertains to “become critical thinkers and socially responsible leaders.” There is no evidence that the ILOs have been assessed although, according to the SLO Guidebook, there is a plan to assess them in the future. (Standard I.A.2)

The College uses its Strategic Plan and program reviews to ensure that its programs and services remain aligned with its mission. The Strategic Plan is designed to operationalize the mission into five broad goals. There are a number of supporting measures for each goal that provide a clear picture of the extent to which the goals are being accomplished. However, there is not a clear linkage between the goals and measures and the mission statement in the area of “academic and career goals” and “critical thinkers and socially responsive leaders.” Additionally, the evidence does not show that the College's performance against these measures is systematically reviewed and used to prioritize institutional effort and resource allocation. (Standard I.A.3)

The format of the annual program reviews is aligned with the College's Strategic Goals and, as part of the program review process; programs describe how they are aligning their efforts with the goals. (Standard I.A.3)

The College's resource allocation process is also clearly aligned with the goals. As part of this process, the Budget Committee uses a matrix that aligns the Strategic Goals with their importance to the College and its programs to develop a prioritized augmentation list. This process ensures that resource allocation is aligned with the College mission. As part of the program review process, programs report the extent to which their objectives are accomplished

and how money that was previously allocated in the previous year was used. However, the inability to use available funds and the lack of adequate funding from the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) prohibits resource allocation that would allow the College to fulfill its Mission. (Standard I.A.3)

The College's Participatory Decision-Making and Integrated Planning Handbook describes a process for reviewing and revising the Mission every six years. This process, which was last conducted in 2013-2014, involves a representative Mission Review Task Force appointed by the Strategic Planning Committee Co-Chairs. The Mission Review Task Force then goes through a process to review and refine the mission statement and makes recommendations to the College Council. According to the Handbook this process can be conducted more frequently than every six years upon the recommendation of a constituent group to the College Council. The College Council approved the results of the 2013-2014 mission revision. The Board of Trustees approved the Mission by approving the Strategic Plan. (Standard I.A.4)

The District Team finds as follows for Standard I.A.4. The District's mission statement contains all the required elements and was approved by the LACCD Board of Trustees on February 6, 2013. (I.A.4)

### **Conclusions**

Based on a review of the evidence presented in the Self Evaluation Report, College publications, and multiple interviews the Team concludes that the College meets all Standards and Eligibility Requirements except for Standards I.A.1, I.A.2, and I.A.3.

### **College Recommendations for Compliance**

#### **College Recommendation 1.**

In order to meet the criteria for standards pertaining to institutional effectiveness, resources, and decision-making, the Team recommends that the College implement a systematic, sustained and integrated planning and resource allocation process that results in the improvement of student learning and student achievement. To implement this process the Team recommends that the College:

- 1.1 Review and revise its Mission to include the types of degrees and other credentials offered by the College and then aligns its planning, data collection, decision-making, and resource allocation processes with the revised Mission. (I.A.1)
- 1.2 Build on the progress it has made in the last four years by: completing its Educational, Facilities and Technology Master Plans, (to include Distance Education); refining, implementing, and systematically assessing these and other institution wide plans and processes, such as comprehensive program review and the Integrated College Operational Plan; and assessing the overall effectiveness of its integrated planning process. (I.A.2, I.B.1, I.B.6, I.B.7, I.B.9, II.A.13, II.A.16, II.B.3, III.C.1, III.C.2, III.C.5, ER 11, ER 19)
- 1.3 Complete the implementation of Student Learning Outcomes to include developing and implementing an ongoing cycle for assessing course, program, and institutional SLOs, student services, library and learning support services, and administrative unit outcomes and tracking the status of the implementation of this cycle. (I.A.2, I.B.2,

- I.B.3, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.3, II.A.7, II.B.3, II.C.2, III.A.6, IV.A.1, ER 11)
- 1.4 Work collaboratively with the District to address the existing deficit and to improve the annual budget allocation model to ensure fiscal stability and the ability to fulfill the College's Mission by adequately meeting the needs of instruction, student services and operations. (I.A.3, 1.B.7, III.A.7, III.D.1, III.D.4, III.D.15, IV.C.5, ER18)
  - 1.5 Develop an integrative and comprehensive planning process guided by an updated Educational Master Plan and Strategic Plan that incorporates Total Cost of Ownership in the following areas: technology, business continuity, disaster recovery, and physical plant. (I.A.3, III B.2, III.C.2, III.C.3)

## **Standard I.B. Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness**

### **General Observations**

The Participatory Decision Making and Integrated Planning Handbook describes a process to systematically integrate program review, planning, and resource allocation to accomplish the mission and improve the effectiveness of the institution. Through these processes, and a committee structure that is clearly aligned with them, the College conducts a sustained, substantive, and collegial dialog about student outcomes, student equity, academic quality, institutional effectiveness, student learning and student achievement.

Although these processes and the committee structure that support them are relatively new and the recent turnover in administrative leadership positions has been significant, the College has provided evidence that it is committed to the successful implementation of these processes.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The College has an integrated planning and resource allocation process that includes the Mission Statement, Strategic Plan, Master Plans (Educational, Facilities, and Technology), annual program reviews, an Integrated College Operational Plan (ICOP), resource allocation, implementation and evaluation. The Mission Statement, Strategic Plan, and Master Plans are refined on a six-year cycle. The Strategic Plan provides goals for the College and measures of effectiveness for meeting these goals. The College Master Plans (Educational, Facilities, and Technology) are designed to provide institutional priorities and activities to support the implementation of the goals in the Strategic Plan. However, the Master Plans have not yet been refined to be aligned with the new Strategic Plan. (Standard I.B.1)

Currently, the District does not have a standard cycle for its planning efforts. These have tended to be accreditation-driven and, since the colleges were on different accreditation cycles, there was no standard District cycle. However, since all of the colleges are now on the same accreditation cycle, and the resourcing decisions for Facilities and Technology are made at the District level, effectiveness for these decisions could be enhanced by going to a common planning cycle. (Standard I.B.1)

The three main dialogue mechanisms for the College seem to be the annual program review, committee operations, and the annual planning retreat. At the department level, the main dialogue mechanism is the annual program review. The format for the annual program review includes reporting on standards for student achievement and student learning outcomes along



with descriptions of the data with action plans and requests for resources to improve performance where this is necessary. The annual program review is conducted using an online tool. It is developed by an initiator and then goes to the dean and vice president for comment. The dean and vice president may return the program review to the initiator if this is necessary. Faculty and staff have the opportunity to provide input as “contributors” to the development of the unit plan. From interviews with faculty and staff the level of participation from members of these groups varies depending on the department and the employee classification. (Standard I.B.1)

The campus committee structure is aligned with the integrated planning and resource allocation process. It includes Academic Senate Committees and College Council Committees. The Academic Senate Committees include Curriculum, Distance Education, Program Review, and SLO. The College Council Committees include ADT/Student Success, Budget, Educational Master Plan, Enrollment Management, Facilities Planning, Strategic Planning, Associated Students Organization, and Technology. There are College Council representatives on each College Council Committee. Agendas and minutes are reported using a standard form and, according to the process, committees are to be evaluated annually although no evidence was provided to show that this has actually occurred. (Standard I.B.1)

The annual planning retreat seems to be a key component of the College’s ongoing dialogue about continuous improvement. The key driver of the annual planning retreat seems to be the Integrated College Operational Plan (ICOP). This combines the operative objectives from the master plans as well as the department objectives from the annual program reviews. The annual planning retreat is used to add master plan objectives to the ICOP. The ICOP for 2015-2016 is still in draft form and the Educational Master Plan, Technology Plan, and Facilities Master Plan have not yet been refined to be aligned with the 2014-2020 Strategic Plan. (Standard I.B.1)

The College provides evidence of student learning and the integrated planning system ensures that the results of the assessment of student learning are included in prioritization and resourcing decisions. The College has a six-semester assessment cycle for its SLOs. To date 83% of courses, 61% of programs, and 100% of student learning and student support services have been assessed. The College’s plan was to assess 100% of courses offered in fall 2015 although evidence was not provided to show that this occurred. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) have been identified and are, for the most part, aligned with course SLOs. However, there is no schedule defined for assessing all of the PLOs and the program review template only asks programs to report on the percentage of courses with SLOs that are assessed. Since courses may have multiple SLOs, the current system does not provide assurance that all required course SLOs and PLOs are being assessed. Institutional Learning Outcomes have been identified but have not been assessed. Recently, the College has not experienced stability in the SLO Coordinator position. The current SLO Coordinator, the third in six months, is a part-time faculty member that is being paid to dedicate 14 hours each week to this task. There is no automated tracking system in place for SLOs. The College recognizes that Institutionalizing ongoing assessment is still a need and has made this one of the areas for the Quality Focus Essay. (Standard I.B.2.)

Student achievement standards and goals are presented very clearly along with five years of longitudinal performance and alignment with strategic plan goals. However, there were significant discrepancies in the numbers of associate degrees and certificates shown on different

pages of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER). Additionally, in the ISER, standards were not shown for transfer, retention (or persistence) and employment outcomes although the College's 2015 annual report to ACCJC includes all of the required standards for student achievement. These internal standards were approved by the Strategic Planning Committee although the process for reviewing and refining institution-set standards is not defined in the Participating in Decision-Making and Institutional Effectiveness handbook. (Standard I.B.3)

The Strategic Planning Committee is responsible for setting the College's institution set standards for student achievement. For the most part, the Strategic Planning Committee takes a numerical approach to setting standards. Under this methodology, the standards are based on the five year average in the standard area multiplying by 95% to allow for the normal variance that occurs in these areas. This methodology provides consistency and allows for evolution of standards as levels of performance change. The Strategic Planning Committee varies from this methodology when, in their judgment, it makes sense to do this. (Standard I.B.3)

The College provides an annual report to the Board of Trustees about its performance on the indicators established by the District in support of its Strategic Plan (Vision 2017). This report currently does not contain institution-set standards although the District is currently attempting to include the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI) goals in this process. Rationalizing the report to the Board with the College's Integrated Planning System, institution-set standards, and IEPI goals could simplify these currently disparate threads and, more importantly, provide a framework for an ongoing discussion of institutional effectiveness with campus and external stakeholders. (Standard I.B.3)

The College provides analysis of its performance against its institution set standards for student achievement and has disaggregated this data by ethnicity for most of the standards. The improvement in degree and certificate attainment by Hispanics is noteworthy and seems to go beyond the rate of change being experienced in the for-credit student population. Other improvements have included the establishment of the Passages program for male students of color and the Bridges to Success Program for Hispanic students. Although the grant funding for the Passages program has expired, the College President has committed to institutionalizing this program. The College's five semester scheduling process is designed to facilitate student completion of program pathways by ensuring that courses are scheduled and available at the times students need them. Additionally, the College has made significant progress over the past two years in retention and success rates for distance education. (Standard I.B.4)

According to the Self-Evaluation Report and the Program Review Guide the College uses two types of program review – an annual review and a six-year comprehensive. The annual program reviews are posted on the website. The last set of comprehensive program reviews were accomplished in 2010 and the Program Review Committee is working to update the comprehensive program review template with the objective of conducting comprehensive program reviews using an online format. The annual program reviews are developed by discipline and each is supported by a data template. From a spot check these are reasonably complete and provide analysis from the program level for student achievement data in the areas of course completion, degrees, and certificates as well as data and analysis about SLO assessment at the course level. (Standard I.B.5)

The program review process is data informed and the data templates are designed for ease-of-use at the program level. The annual program review template is designed in SharePoint and is designed to be aligned with the College's goals. Significantly, the template requires programs to establish objectives: where there are shortfalls in areas in which the College has institution set standards; in areas in which courses are not assessing SLOs; and other areas where their standards are aligned with College goals but not meeting them. Additionally, the template ensures that departments review the status of previous objectives as well as the use of funds that were previously allocated. (Standard I.B.5)

According to the process, the Program Review Committee evaluates the quality of the submitted program reviews, using a rubric to ensure that these are complete, that the data interpretations make sense, and resource requests are clearly linked to objectives. After this review, which occurs simultaneously with the dean and vice president reviews, the program reviews are sent to the Academic Senate for approval. After the approvals occur the Institutional Advancement Office develops a consolidated list of budget requests for considerations by the Budget Committee. Faculty hiring requests are referred to the Faculty Hiring Committee in the fall. (Standard I.B.5)

The College's program review format and process are designed to ensure that programs continuously align their efforts with the College's Strategic Goals and Measures. However, the process to refine the College's focus to address changes in the operating environment or to take advantage of opportunities is undefined. (Standard I.B.6)

The Budget Committee has the lead role in establishing priorities for resource allocation. To be considered for funding each item must be included in a program review. Faculty requests and categorical funding requests are considered separately. The members of the committee use a Budget Allocation Request Scoring Rubric that shows the alignment of the request with the College's goals and the criticality of the request to the institution and department. The resulting prioritized list is then funded as resources are made available. However, for the past several years none of the items on the list were funded through the annual process although some items were funded later if non-general fund resources became available. The annual program reviews provide a status update on the objectives identified from the previous year. This includes funding requests that were funded, as well as items that did not require funding to implement. (Standard I.B.6)

The College has extensively analyzed student achievement data and has taken actions to address gaps. These actions include joining Achieving the Dream, conducting focused outreach to Hispanic students, and beginning the implementation of a comprehensive Student Equity Plan. At the program level, the program review data templates provide disaggregated data by ethnicity, time of day, and modality. The data templates also provide the resources requested and program objectives from the previous year. The College is still in the early stages of disaggregating SLO data and Learning Outcomes Assessment is a focus in the College's Quality Focus Essay. (Standard I.B.6, ER 11)

A key component of the College's strategy to identify and close performance gaps for subpopulations of students is through the implementation of the Student Equity Plan. Initially, based on the Student Equity Plan, resources were allocated to support groups to achieve

equitable outcomes. Specific items included increasing Hispanic student enrollment through the hiring of bilingual recruiters and marketing efforts using Spanish-language media, improving outcomes for basic skills students and students in high-enrollment, low success courses. In 2015-2016, the College refined its allocation process for Student Equity funds to enable the campus community to request funding for specific projects. (Standard I.B.6)

The Integrated College Operational Plan (ICOP) is designed to be a compilation of the recommendations and requirements from the Strategic Plan, Master Plans, and the annual program reviews. The current draft ICOP, for 2015-2016, is 66 pages of detailed outcomes the college is attempting to achieve and includes 361 program objectives. The College conducts an annual planning retreat to set direction for the upcoming year and the ICOP seems to be the focus for this event. The fact that the 2015 ICOP is still in draft form although the year is over halfway complete may indicate the difficulty involved in this approach. (Standard I.B.7)

The College uses its annual planning retreats to evaluate and discuss its performance against selected measures from the Strategic Plan. Additionally, according to the College's Participatory Decision Making and Integrated Planning Process, the Office of Institutional Advancement develops an Annual Progress Report of the Strategic Plan and the Strategic Planning Committee conducts an Annual Evaluation of the Strategic Planning Process. There is no evidence that these evaluations have actually occurred or that refinements to the plan or the process have been implemented as a result. This may reflect the relative newness of the College's Integrated Planning Process and a year-long vacancy in the Dean of Institutional Advancement position. (Standard I.B.7)

The College communicates the results of its assessment and evaluation activities in a variety of ways to include using the webpage. Items provided include all communications to and from the ACCJC, the Strategic Plan, Master Plans, completed program reviews and data templates, SLO assessment results, the California Community Colleges Student Success Scorecard, and the White House College Scorecard. Additionally, the College Profile provides a single page snapshot showing five-year trends in enrollment, student demographics, student completion and the budget. (Standard I.B.8)

Overall, the College's broad based, systematic planning process defines an effective avenue for aligning the College's processes and committee operations around improving institutional effectiveness. However, during forums and interviews students and classified personnel complained that while there were some avenues for broad based planning, too often either the avenues were not accessible or when accessible, there was little or no response to indicate that their points of view were considered seriously. Although the College seems to be deploying a variety of planning processes, a combination of personnel turbulence and the magnitude of the task have prevented complete deployment. Areas where deployment is not yet complete include completing the College Master Plans, systematically assessing the implementation of plans, implementing institutional, program, and course learning outcomes, and fully evaluating the effectiveness of the overall integrated planning process. (Standard I.B.9, ER.19).

The District Team finds as follows for Standard I.B.9. Institutional planning is clearly documented in the 2013 *District Governance and Functions Handbook*. As shown in the handbook, integration with District planning starts with the LACCD Strategic Plan Vision 2017

(DSP). Created collaboratively among key constituent groups from the college, the DSP generally integrates all the college strategic plans by establishing a common framework through four overarching goals. The most consistent alignment, however, occurs through the annual Institutional Effectiveness Reports that are reported to the Board of Trustees. Using a standard report template and common metrics and data sources developed collegially by the District Planning and Accreditation Committee (DPAC), the colleges map college goals to the District goals, compare their progress against the District as a whole in their reviews, and provide an analysis of strengths and weaknesses in accomplishing planned objectives. These assessments, in turn, inform the Board of Trustees' annual goals as well as future college and District planning priorities.

### **Conclusions**

Based on a review of the evidence presented in the Self Evaluation Report, College publications, and multiple interviews, the Team concludes that the College meets the Standards and related Eligibility Requirements except for Standards I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.6, I.B.7, I.B.9; and Eligibility Requirements ER 11; ER 19.

### **College Recommendations for Compliance**

See College Recommendation 1.2 and 1.3.

### **College Recommendations for Improvement**

#### **College Recommendation 2.**

In order to increase institutional effectiveness through continuous, broad-based, systematic evaluation and planning processes, the Team recommends that the College implement processes that substantively engage students and classified staff and that demonstrate outcomes based on the participation of these and the other constituent groups of the College. (I.B.9, IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.3, IV.A.5)

### **Standard I.C. Institutional Integrity**

#### **General Observations**

The College demonstrates integrity in all policies, actions, and communications through appropriate documentation, such as board policy, and printed materials, such as the catalog. The College's website contains a vast amount of information that is displayed in a way that is generally easy to access. Overall, the College is committed to representing its programs and policies to the campus and community in a way that is clear, accurate, and appropriately detailed. Members of the College community act honestly, ethically, and fairly in carrying out the work of the College.

The District Team observes as follows for Standard I.C.7. The District Board has long-established policies on academic freedom, ethics, and freedom of speech to assure institutional and academic integrity. The District also has policies on standards of student conduct and

prohibited practices such as discrimination and harassment that include elements of academic freedom. A noteworthy practice is the existence of a committee of the Academic Senate on Professional Ethics and Academic Freedom, which is charged with “regulating the ethical conduct of faculty and issues of academic freedom.”

In addition, the District Team observes as follows for Standard I.C.8. The Los Angeles Community College District has well-developed Board Rules that promote academic honesty, responsibility, and academic integrity that *ensure a faculty’s right to teach and a student’s right to learn*. These Board policies are posted on the District and college websites. Board Rule 9803 requires that the college president annually publicize the Standards of Conduct. The District also has a comprehensive policy on student discipline that delineates the process for student due process in the event of a violation of the student code of conduct. This information is available to students in the college catalogs as well as online via the college websites.

The District Team observes as follows for Standard I.C.14. The LACCD Board of Trustees establishes policies that are consistent with its mission statement and exercises oversight of the colleges’ educational programs by means of its Board Rules and Administrative Regulations (Board Rules, Chapter 1, Article 2).

### **Findings and Evidence**

The primary method the College uses to provide information to prospective students, students, and employees is the website. The website contains vast amount of information, is easy to use, and is updated in a timely manner. This includes information about the College mission statement, learning outcomes, educational programs and student support services. The accreditation webpage is accessible from a button on the main website and includes all required material to include the Accreditation Self Evaluation Report, reports from external evaluation teams, reports to the commission, communications from the commission, and requests for third party comments. The Public Information Officer is responsible for the website and provides oversight to ensure that it is up to date. This information is supplemented with a College Jumbo Tron on the corner of Western Avenue and the Imperial Highway. (Standard I.C.1; ER 20)

The College provides an online catalog for students that can easily be accessed from the website. A Catalog Committee is responsible for reviewing the College information about the institution, requirements for students, major policies and procedures affecting students, locations where other policies may be found, and required complaint and grievance procedures. The catalog is available online through the College website. For 2015-2016 the College published an addendum to the catalog that includes updated information to include the College Mission and Goals, Institutional Learning Outcomes, complaint procedures, general education pathways and academic programs. There is no description of the scope of the addendum and the duplication of information in the main catalog and the addendum could be confusing for students. (Standard I.C.2; ER 20)

The College website provides information about academic quality to current and prospective students on its website. This information includes accreditation communications, the Strategic Plan, Master Plans, program reviews and achievement data, Student Learning Outcome assessments for courses and programs, a variety of reports available on the Institutional Effectiveness webpage, the California Community Colleges Student Success Scorecard, and the

White House College Scorecard. The College Profile provides an easy-to-understand single page snapshot that shows five-year trends in enrollment, student demographics, student completions, and the annual budget. (Standard I.C.3; ER 19)

The College uses its online catalog as the primary tool for disseminating information about degrees and certificates. Each degree and certificate offered by the College is described in detail to include information about its purpose, content, course requirements, and expected learning outcomes. The catalog addendum for 2015-2016 updates information about programs in the 2015-2016 catalog and may be confusing since most programs are listed in both although some programs have been added and updated in the addendum. In addition, program and course information is publically available through the Los Angeles Community College District's Electronic Curriculum Development System. This system allows anyone to search the requirements for any program or course offered at the College. (Standard I.C.4)

The College's processes are designed to ensure that policies, procedures, and publications are regularly reviewed to ensure that there is integrity in all representations of its mission, program, and services. These processes include a committee structure that is focused on institutional effectiveness, annual written self-evaluations by each committee, a process to update the mission statement, and publications. The Participatory Decision-Making and Integrated Planning document clearly describes how these processes work. The website is clear and easy to navigate and the information it contains is up-to-date. The Catalog Committee is responsible for the College Catalog. However, this committee is not listed in the Participatory Decision-Making and Integrated Planning document and the 2015-2016 Catalog Addendum contains updated information about programs and services that are listed in the 2015-2016 Catalog without describing how users should use the two documents to get an accurate portrayal of College programs, policies, and services. (Standard I.C.5)

The College provides accurate information on the total costs of education to include tuition, fees, and other required expenses in its catalog. It also describes the process for tuition and fee refunds. The course schedule contains a worksheet to help students to calculate the costs of expenses, textbooks, and other instructional materials. The College also posts its federally mandated gainful employment disclosures for students in career and technical education programs. (Standard I.C.6)

The College uses the LACCD policy on academic freedom and responsibility. This policy is posted on the LACCD webpage. The Academic Freedom Statement that is published in the LASC Catalog articulates this policy for students. (Standard I.C.7 and ER 13)

In addition, the District Team found the following for Standard I.C.7. The District Board's policy on academic freedom specifies the faculty's right to teach and the student's right to learn. The colleges widely publish their commitment to a learning environment that promotes free expression of thought and ideas in the college catalogs and some include it in the class schedule. The District's faculty contract (AFT) specifies that faculty shall have the *freedom to seek the truth and guarantee freedom of learning for students*. The faculty contract also outlines the policies and procedures for protection of academic freedom. (I.C.7)

The College uses the LACCD Board of Trustees has a formal policy on academic honesty and

integrity. This is articulated in Section IX, Article VIII of the LACCD Board Rules, which states the expectation for conduct on campus to include honesty, responsibility, academic integrity, student behavior, academic honesty, and the consequences for dishonesty. These policies apply to all constituencies and are posted on the LACCD website and documented in the College Catalog. (Standard I.C.8)

The District Team found the following for Standard I.C.8. The LACCD demonstrates a clear commitment to academic integrity and personal responsibility. The District has established, and routinely publishes, Board policies and administrative regulations that promote honesty, responsibility, and academic integrity that apply to all constituencies, including students taking online classes (Board Rules 9803-9806 and 91101). Policies include definitions of, and expectations for, honest and ethical behavior. The District has a student code of conduct that includes academic honesty. The District also has policies and procedures for addressing student discipline and complaints. These policies and procedures are communicated to students in college catalogs and on the District and college websites. In accordance with Board Rule 6703.10, faculty are required to include an expectation of academic integrity for students in their class syllabi. (I.C.8)

The Team found that the faculty at LASC is expected to be professional at all times and to distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views within a discipline when providing instruction to students. According to Board Rule 1201 Core Values, the colleges will provide students with Access and Opportunity, Excellence and Innovation, Equity, and Opportunities for Critical Inquiry through instruction and campus community activities. The District has an Ethics Code that speaks to ethical behavior, to include critical self-discipline and judgment and the practice of intellectual honesty. As part of the faculty evaluation process students have the ability to express any concerns about faculty professionalism, objectiveness, or fairness. (Standard I.C.9)

The LACCD Board of Trustees has a formal Board Rule on ethical conduct, which prescribes the ethical standards to which District employees must adhere. The policy is posted on the LACCD website. LASC College also has a student code of conduct, which is published in its Catalog. (Standard I.C.10)

The College does not operate in foreign locations. (Standard I.C.11)

The College is responsive to recommendations made by the ACCJC and agrees to comply with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies, guidelines, and requirements for public disclosure. It responds quickly to requests for information. The College's accreditation webpage provides the public with all the information needed to determine the accreditation status of the College, its communications with the commission, and substantive changes. The accreditation webpage is one click from the College's homepage and accessible by a highly visible button on the homepage. (Standard I.C.12)

The District Team finds as follows for I.C.12. A careful review of the historical documents related to accreditation reveals that the District adheres to the Commission's Eligibility Requirements and Standards. The District website maintains a Planning and Accreditation webpage whereby the District publicly discloses information regarding accreditation. All college



self evaluation reports are posted to the website as well as District responses and evidence for the reports. Recent follow-up reports and correspondence from the Commission are posted. The Educational Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (EPIE) division in the Educational Services Center (ESC) provides support and coordination for college accreditation efforts. In particular, EPIE assists college personnel in coordinating accreditation efforts for comprehensive site visits and midterm and progress reports; provides college accreditation leaders information in support of District wide accreditation issues; monitors college progress in responding to Commission recommendations; serves as liaison to the Board of Trustees and the chancellor on all issues related to college accreditation; coordinates the production, review, and revision of the “Functional Map” of District/college responsibilities and duties; monitors and interprets ACCJC Standards and policies; and coordinates responses to accreditation standards that reference multi-college District or District-level functions. Much of this coordinating effort occurs in the District Planning and Accreditation Committee (DPAC), which is comprised of the colleges’ ALOs, faculty leaders with accreditation and planning, deans of institutional research and planning, District Academic Senate appointees, representatives from District Committees, and ESC administrators. (Standard I.C.12)

The LASC faculty, staff, and administration work together to ensure that the College demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies and that it complies with regulations and statutes. This includes providing accurate information about the College’s accreditation status and its response to accreditation recommendations. Additionally, the College maintains relationships with the California Board of Registered Nursing, complies with federal financial aid requirements from the U.S. Department of Education, and has advisory committees for its career and technical education programs. (Standard I.C.13)

The District Team finds as follows for I.C.13. The District and the colleges have numerous relationships with external agencies. The District works in tandem with the colleges to submit all required data and reports to the California Community College Chancellor’s Office, the U.S. Department of Education, external agencies, and accrediting agencies. The District coordinates the submission of MIS data requirements to the state, along with accurate and timely submission of reports and budgets such as those required for the Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) and Student Equity funding. All required data for IPEDS reporting is also coordinated at the District. Working collaboratively with the colleges, the District’s Central Financial Aid Unit complies with Federal Title IV regulations affecting the administration of financial aid programs. This includes regular submission of required data and reports, adherence to federal program reviews and audits, and quickly addressing any noted areas of noncompliance in any findings. The Contract and Purchasing Office in the Business Services Division of the District publicly advertises requests for bids and proposals for qualified suppliers and consultants through the District’s website. All open requests, vendor forms and directions, and contact information for District contract and procurement personnel is provided. The District communicates information regarding accredited status through the Planning and Accreditation webpage. All correspondence from the Commission is posted on the webpage, including the college’s self-evaluation and follow-up reports, and their associated evidence. (I.C.13)

The College’s mission statement focuses it on providing high quality education, student learning, and student achievement. The goals and objectives in the 2014-2020 Strategic Plan provide operational guidance for implementing the mission. (Standard I.C.14)

The District Team finds as follows for Standard I.C.14. The Board is responsible for policy and exercises oversight over student success, persistence, retention, and quality (BR 2100). The Board exercises oversight of the District's educational programs and has established an Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success (IESS) Committee to monitor the integrity, quality, and improvement of student learning programs and services (I.C.14). The Board of Trustees is kept regularly informed on key indicators of student learning and achievement through the IESS. Additionally, Board agendas and minutes provide evidence of regular review of the colleges' academic quality and institutional plans. The annual review and analysis of the state's Student Success Scorecard completion data and the resultant Board discussion has focused on strategies for improving student success and academic quality.

### **Conclusions**

Based on a review of the evidence presented in the Self Evaluation Report, College publications, and multiple interviews, the Team concludes that the College meets Standard I.C and the related Eligibility Requirements.

The District Team concludes the following for I.C.7 and ER 13. The District meets the Standard and ER 13. The Los Angeles Community College District is committed to principles of academic freedom and ethical behavior. The District assures institutional and academic integrity through adherence to Board of Trustee policies on academic freedom that commit to a learning environment in which intellectual freedom exists for faculty and students to explore and critically examine knowledge. This commitment is reflected throughout the organization in a variety of ways including Board policies, mission statements, institutional core values, faculty contracts and governance handbooks that are readily available. This commitment is communicated to students and the public via college catalogs and websites, along with student evaluations at some or all of the colleges.

The District Team concludes the following in reference to Standard I.C.8. The District meets the Standard. The District has a number of policies and administrative regulations in place to promote honesty, responsibility, ethical conduct, and academic integrity that apply to all forms of delivery and constituencies, including visitors to the campuses. There are several commendable practices pertaining to academic integrity at the various colleges of the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD). For example, Los Angeles Valley College prints a statement on academic dishonesty on the cover of examination books and includes a line for the student's signature. The online course management system used by some colleges, Etudes, is developing a student authentication for online classes that will require the student to answer a random question that pertains to individually identifiable information about the student contained in the Student Information system before taking an exam or submitting assignments. East Los Angeles College (ELAC) instructors will be piloting the new functionality. Students at ELAC take an honor pledge before taking online assessments and LACCD has a Board rule that requires faculty to include a statement in the syllabi about the student code of conduct including academic honesty on the syllabi.

The District Team concludes as follows for Standard C.1.14. The Board of Trustees' IESS committee keeps them informed on issues involving academic quality, student achievement, and student learning.

**The College meets this Standard.**

**The District meets this Standard.**

## **Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Support Services**

### **Standard II.A. Instructional Programs**

#### **General Observations**

LASC's instructional programs focus on general education, transfer, pre-collegiate, non-credit, and career and technical courses and programs. The College awards 44 Associate of Arts/Associate of Science degrees, 13 Associate of Arts/Associate of Science Transfer degrees and 42 certificates.

In reference to Standard II.A.10 the District Team finds as follows. The transfer of credit policies are established by the District in Board Rules and Administrative Regulations. There is no District oversight in ensuring consistency in the application of these policies. The nine colleges maintain articulation agreements with public and private accredited institutions both in-state and out-of-state. The District does not have any role in the development or maintenance of articulation agreements.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

All of LASC's instructional offerings are aligned to the College's mission, "In honor of its founding history, Los Angeles Southwest College empowers a diverse student population to achieve their academic and career goals, and to become critical thinkers and socially responsive leaders." (Standard II.A.1; ERs 9, 11)

Through the College's Curriculum Committee and Program Review Committee faculty provide systematic evaluation of instructional courses, programs, and services to ensure that courses, programs, and services are aligned to the mission of the College to promote student success. Faculty at LASC regularly and systematically review and improve course and program curricula to ensure academic rigor and alignment with current standards of scholarship in professional and academic fields. Faculty review courses at least once every six years with career-technical programs evaluated at least once every two years. The continuous development of curriculum process, led by the Curriculum Chair at LASC ensures high quality of the curriculum offered and a thorough curricular review process. (Standard II.A.2)

Course, program, and degree student learning outcomes and assessments are the same for face-to-face instruction and distance education offerings. Departments choose the assessment tools most appropriate and relevant for their students. The Team found evidence of assessment at the program level, but the Team found a lack of evidence of ongoing assessment and dialogue at the course level for a number of programs. Team members confirmed that some program level assessments have been conducted and are publically available on the website, but the College could not provide evidence that all courses were being assessed. The Team found evidence the

SLO assessment cycle is not working due to multiple changes in leadership leading to a lack of institutional memory and clarity regarding the process. The Team found that although student learning outcomes are found in the majority of syllabi sampled, there was evidence that some syllabi lacked published SLOs, especially within the online courses reviewed. The Team reviewed 26 online classes (34% of all online classes listed in the LMS for spring 2016) and found that 61% had either no SLOs or incomplete/incorrect SLOs that did not align with the course outline of record. (Standard, II.A.3, II.A.7)

The College offers basic skills courses in math and English, both credit and non- credit. Additionally, the College offers English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, tutoring courses, learning skills courses, and various non-credit courses through the Bridges to Success Program to support student learning and provide a pathway for students to advance to and succeed in college-level curriculum. (Standard II.A.4)

LASC's degrees and programs follow practices common to higher education including the appropriate breadth, length, depth, rigor, and course sequencing. Instructional quality is maintained through the College's curriculum approval process. The College relies on the expertise of the faculty through the Curriculum Committee and Academic Senate to review and approve all courses. Through its Curriculum Committee and faculty senate review process, the College ensures alignment with the minimum degree requirements of 60 units (Standard II.A.5; ER 12)

The department five-semester plans and enrollment data provided to department chairs at the time of scheduling classes ensure that courses are scheduled in a manner that allows students to complete certificate and degree programs within a period of time consistent with established expectations in higher education. (Standard II.A.6)

A review of a broad sample of course outlines confirmed that faculty members use multiple methods for delivering course content to meet the diverse learning needs of its students. LASC supports faculty through professional development opportunities that facilitate the delivery of instruction in multiple formats and engage different learning styles. Faculty are provided with opportunities to participate in the Faculty Teaching and Learning Academy (FTLA) to enhance their teaching skills and learn new pedagogical strategies to address the academic and cultural changes in the College's student population. Additionally, the College has support programs in place to address the needs of all students (traditional and nontraditional), and many of these services are available online. (Standard II.A.7)

LASC validates its effectiveness in measuring the learning outcomes of course-exiting students in the English and math departments, where departmental course examinations are given. The Team found evidence of the process whereby a departmental final exam for the remedial courses is assessed for student learning by the departments' faculty. Thereby, English and math departments' final examination processes minimize test biases due to the level of scrutiny by departmental members during the internal validation process. Both exams measure student progress across remedial and basic skills sections of each level using an assessment tool or rubric. The norming sessions align instructors' standards to the rubric, and this sets a common standard, minimizing bias. (Standard II.A.8)

Each required course outline of record at LASC contains the standards for awarding units of credit that are compliant with institutional and regulatory policies and procedures. The College awards units of credits based on student achievement of the course objectives and outcomes listed in the course outlines. The College does not offer courses with clock-to-credit-hour conversions. (Standard II.A.9; ER 10)

LASC makes available to its students clearly stated transfer-of- credit policies in order to facilitate the mobility of students without penalty. The College accepts articulated courses for degree eligibility and as part of the requirements for the graduation. The College maintains articulation agreements with California and out of state senior institutions through ASSIST (Standard II.A.10; ER 10)

The District Team finds as follows in reference to Standard I.A.10. The District has well-established policies and regulations in place for acceptance of a wide range of transfer credits including: standardized tests, external exams, International Baccalaureate, military credits, Advanced Placement, courses completed at international institutions, and acceptance of upper division courses to meet lower division requirements. These policies align with state regulations, the policies of the California State University and the University of California systems, and other transfer institutions, as well as with generally accepted practices in higher education. This information is published in the college catalogs and websites. The awarding of transfer credits is the responsibility of each college and is reflected on the student's permanent record, maintained in the Student Information System (DEC). Each college currently issues its own student transcripts, however, this will change with the new PeopleSoft system where there will be one District transcript that reflects credits taken throughout the District. There is no District monitoring of the consistency of the awarding of transfer credits. (Standard II.A.10)

The District Team also finds the following. The information presented to students in college publications is thorough and comprehensive. While some colleges specified that they do not specifically examine student learning outcomes in the process of evaluating transfer credits, the acceptance of transfer credits by the institutions implies that the expected learning outcomes are comparable. (Standard II.A.10)

In addition, the District Team finds as follows. Each of the nine colleges maintained articulation agreements with public and private accredited institutions both in-state and out-of-state. These agreements are contained in ASSIST, the state's recognized articulation database for use by students and employees that advise students. The establishment and maintenance of articulation agreements is the responsibility of the college faculty. The District does not have a role in developing articulation agreements. (Standard II.A.10)

The Team finds that all degrees offered by LASC include the College's Institutional Learning Outcomes as part of the assessment of the student's ability to meet the general education requirements for successful completion of program or degree. (Standard II.A.11)

The College requires of all of its degree programs a component of general education based on a Philosophy on General Education created through the Curriculum Committee and relying on faculty expertise to determine the appropriateness of each course for inclusion in the general education curriculum. Faculty are required to submit a General Education Course Application to

meet the requirements of Board Rule 6201.14. The general education plans are included in the College Catalog, and general education courses prepare students for and acceptance of responsible participation in civil society; skills for lifelong learning and application of learning; and a broad comprehension of the development of knowledge, practice, and interpretive approaches in the arts and humanities, the sciences, mathematics, and social sciences. (Standard II.A.12; ER 12)

All degree programs at LASC require students to complete 18 units in a major area of emphasis. The Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are aligned with the course Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and to the key theories and practices in the program. All degrees have program-level outcomes that the College clearly publishes on its website. The Team found evidence of programs, both career technical education and general education, lacking published learning outcomes assessment results. Not all programs have assessed their learning outcomes in a consistent and timely manner. (Standard II.A.13)

CTE programs are evaluated on a two-year cycle. Through this process CTE programs assess the effectiveness of graduates in meeting technical and professional competencies as well as external licensure and certification. LASC prepares the students of career-technical certificates and degrees to demonstrate technical and professional competencies that meet employment standards and other applicable standards and preparation for external licensure and certification. As evidenced, the Team found that in 2015 the California Community College Student Success Scorecard for Career Technical Education (CTE) Completions showed that LASC was tied for 24th in the State Rankings in CTE completions (out of 112 California community colleges) and was ranked number seven in its scorecard peer group. (Standard II.A.14)

Through the Academic Senate, LASC has a process for assessing program viability that makes appropriate arrangements so that enrolled students may complete their education in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption if a program is eliminated. (Standard II.A.15)

LASC regularly evaluates and improves the quality and currency of all instructional programs offered by the College through program review and, if deemed necessary, program viability. The College regularly updates its courses. However the Team found evidence that there needed to be more emphasis on the quality of the program review process, as well as clear expectations of the feedback loop, to ensure ongoing continual program improvement. (Standard II.A.16)

### **Conclusions**

The Team concludes that the College meets all the Standards and related Eligibility Requirements except for Standards II.A.3, II.A.7, II.A.13, II.A.16.

The Team suggests that the College develop and/or implement a process whereby all online classes are reviewed prior to scheduling so as to verify that all distance education courses have accurate syllabi including SLOs and clearly stated (and followed) student contact policies. The Team further suggests that the LASC develop clear procedures for the systematic review of distance education course offerings based on student success rates and outcomes assessment. The College should also review the support services available to online students to ensure parity with students enrolled in face-to-face courses.

The District Team concludes, in reference to Standard II.A.10, as follows. The District meets the Standard and ER 10. Transfer of credit policies are clearly communicated to students in various college publications, including the college catalog and websites, to facilitate the mobility of students from one institution to another without penalty. While the District does not specifically assess student learning outcomes of transferred courses since they are not readily available, the college reviews required prerequisites, course content and knowledge gained in transferred courses to determine equivalency. Moreover, by accepting transfer credits in accordance with Board policies, the college has determined that the learning outcomes for the transferred courses are comparable to the courses at the college.

The colleges all have numerous articulation agreements in place and rely on ASSIST as the primary repository of those agreements. The development and maintenance of articulation agreements is the responsibility of the individual college faculty. The District does not have a role.

### **College Recommendations for Compliance**

See College Recommendation 1.2 and 1.3.

## **Standard II.B. Library and Learning Support Services**

### **General Observations**

LASC offers traditional library and learning support services via its library and Student Success Center (SSC). Faculty and staff in both areas are passionate about meeting student needs and providing excellent services. Both spaces are busy with students throughout the day and those interviewed conveyed how important LASC library and tutoring services are in supporting student success.

Both the library and SSC moved into a newly renovated facility in 2015. The new, shared location provides several floors of study space, computer labs, classrooms, physical library materials, and offices. The SCC occupies the third floor and offers tutoring in more than a dozen subjects, gender-specific empowerment workshops and Supplemental Instruction. Alongside its physical resources and in-person services, the library and SSC offer comparable tools and services online, including online student success workshops and access to scholarly ebooks and research databases.

In conjunction with the move into the new facility, the library was given a one-time budget augmentation of \$250,000 — five times its annual materials budget — to purchase materials for its collection in both print and electronic formats. Staffing has also increased with the addition of thirty librarian hours per week. Furthermore, two new librarian positions have also been approved and are expected to be filled before the fall 2016 term.

The District Team, in reference to Standard II.B.4, observes as follows. All the colleges adhere to Board policy pertaining to intra-library loans and have strong collaboration pertaining to providing learning support for students. When the institution relies on or collaborates with other institutions or other sources for library and other learning support services for its instructional programs, it documents that formal agreements exist and that such resources and services are

adequate for the institution's intended purposes, are easily accessible, and utilized. The institution takes responsibility for and assures the security, maintenance, and reliability of services provided either directly or through contractual arrangement. The institution regularly evaluates these services to ensure their effectiveness.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Physical library collections include reference materials, circulating books, course reserves and a print periodical collection comprised of donated titles. Many services and resources that are available in person are also available online, including access to academic ebooks and prominent research databases such as EBSCO's Academic Search Premier and Gale's Academic OneFile, and reference help via email. The library continues to rely on username and password authentication for off-campus access to most electronic resources even though the College has purchased a more accepted and secure proxy server authentication. According to the College's IT department, staffing shortages have delayed implementation of the EZproxy system but that it should be operational by the end of the current term. (Standard II.B.1; ER 17)

Information literacy instruction occurs primarily through the library's credit classes. Other forms of instruction include face-to-face reference instruction and limited email reference. The Library's recent program review process identified a need for 24/7 online, reference service software and the acquisition of QuestionPoint software has been approved. No implementation date was available at the time of the site visit. (Standard II.B.1; ER 17)

The SSC provides tutoring in more than a dozen subjects such as English, math, Spanish, critical thinking, and natural and social sciences. In addition, Supplemental Instruction is available in certain math and English courses. Online student success workshops are available via StudentLingo, a service that also provides the tutor training used by the College. One concern in this area is that the College's SmartThinking contract for online tutoring recently lapsed and therefore tutoring is currently only available in person. (Standard II.B.1; ER 17)

LASC has a detailed acquisition plan for using the recent one-time \$250,000 budget augmentation to expand their collection, however conflicting information was offered concerning the role librarians and other faculty played in developing that plan and it is unclear from the evidence provided if a similar plan exists for annual budget allocations. The library's collection development policy details a prominent role for librarians and content faculty in the selection of materials, yet both librarians and administrators concede problems with the implementation of that the policy when selecting recent acquisitions. The collection development policy also describes the process by which materials will be de-selected (i.e. weeded) and withdrawn from the collection. After noting that a major weeding project was completed in 2011, the policy describes how de-selection is to take place on a continual basis. However, a spot check of the print collection's medical titles indicates additional weeding is warranted. Furthermore, while the self-evaluation report explains that a librarian liaison model was established in 2012 to facilitate content faculty input in the collection development process, no evidence was provided that this is occurring in a meaningful way. (Standard II.B.2)

The Student Success Center is overseen by a faculty director who is involved in the selection of learning support materials, such as online tutoring and workshop programs. In recent months the College's SmartThinking subscription that provides online tutoring lapsed, but that does not



appear to have been the result of a data-driven process. (Standard II.B.2)

The LASC library regularly assesses the SLOs for its credit courses and went through the program review process in 2014 and again in 2015. Assessments conducted by the library have identified needed modifications and associated funding requests. These requests include personnel and new resources, some of which have subsequently been approved (e.g. two full-time librarians and QuestionPoint 24/7 reference service). Yet the sections of the report that are the mechanism for administrative feedback are blank, suggesting the loop hasn't been fully closed on the process. In addition, the discussion of outcomes assessment focuses on the library's credit courses and doesn't include the evaluation of other library services. Furthermore, the institutional effectiveness and accountability sections of both program reviews include numerous "NA" or not applicable entries, providing little insight into how the assessment data from the credit courses was used to identify program modifications. Further, the reports do not include analysis of relevant data that's being collected, such as usage statistics and the results of the District's satisfaction surveys that are conducted across the nine LACCD colleges. All of which suggests the foundation for a more complete program review process is in place. Such a process, once fully implemented, should capture assessment efforts throughout the library, support a more robust dialogue between librarians and administrators, and lead to meaningful planning that is integrated with the College's processes. (Standard II.B.3)

The SSC has participated in the program review process in 2014 and again in 2015, summarizing the area's objectives, assessment activities and resource requests. Like the library, the modifications described in the SSC's program reviews include detailed resource requests but, again, the spaces for administrative feedback are blank, suggesting a missed opportunity for valuable dialogue. Furthermore, the program review report provides limited insight into the SSC's assessment efforts, but hints at valuable data being collected via surveys and focus groups. This data, such as Supplemental Instruction Report, Student-Parent Focus Group summaries, and SSC Satisfaction Surveys — all of which include insightful data on student needs and program effectiveness — should be thoroughly integrated into the College's program review, planning and budgeting processes. (Standard II.B.3)

LASC partners with the other colleges in the LACCD for the provision and maintenance of its Integrated Library System (ILS), SirsiDynix. Taking advantage of this shared catalog, LASC has joined into an interlibrary loan policy that enables students to borrow materials from the other eight college libraries in the District. However, no evidence was provided that indicates this service has been evaluated for effectiveness at meeting student needs. Several other prominent services pertinent to Standard II.B have also been contracted to outside entities, such as some cataloging and processing functions, and the maintenance of security gates in place at the entrance to the space. Evidence of formal agreements and the assessment of these services was not provided. Similarly, online tutoring was provided through SmartThinking software, yet no evidence of the College evaluating this service was provided and it was discontinued shortly after the publication of the self-evaluation report. (Standard II.B.4; ER 17)

The District Team finds, in reference to Standard II.B.4 as follows. The District has a long-standing practice of collaboration for library and learning support for its instructional programs. The District has a policy that facilitates intra-library loans for its students. This reciprocal agreement allows students to request material to be sent to another library within the District, generally within one week. Students also have the option to drive to another college to pick up

materials on loan.

The District Team also finds the following in relation to Standard II.B.4. The District does not have a role in documenting formal collaborative agreements pertaining to library and other learning support services for instructional programs. The development and maintenance of these agreements is the responsibility of the individual colleges. The colleges also have subscriptions for online databases, tutoring programs, and career planning tools. The District libraries use the California Community College Library Consortium to purchase electronic resources, which is the most cost-effective approach. The colleges also have reciprocal agreements with the libraries at the local California State University campuses and refer students to the local public libraries for various materials that may not be available.

In addition, District Team finds, in relation to Standard II.B.4, the following. The institutions are responsible for assuring the security, maintenance and reliability of the services provided. District Information Technology is responsible for maintaining the software and websites. It should be noted that not all the colleges address security and maintenance measures in their reports. The District does not have a role other than the District wide contract with the Sherriff's Department for campus security services.

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standards and related Eligibility Requirements except for Standards II.B.2, II.B.3 and II.B.4. The College should demonstrate that data collected has been evaluated, disseminated, and used in decision-making processes to support student learning and improve student support services. Among assessment strategies, the College should consider designing research studies that focus on yielding evidence that the services it offers, in fact support student learning and the mission of the College. In addition, as per District policy, it is the College's responsibility to document formal agreements for services and whether or not such resources and services are adequate for the institution's intended purposes, are easily accessible, and utilized. While the College may have agreements for online resources and services in place, as indicated in the District Team Report, *evidence* of formal agreements for services and the *assessment* of these services were not provided by the College.

The District Team concludes, in reference to II.B.4, as follows. The District meets the Standard. The nine colleges of the District have strong collaboration with regards to library and other learning support that aligns with District policy. The colleges also collaborate with local universities and the public library system to provide library support for students. The colleges have agreements in place for online resources and services. The nine librarians meet monthly to share resources and identify needs and services for students. The colleges are responsible for the overall security and maintenance of resources, and District IT is responsible for the maintenance of the websites and software. Facilities are secured through a District wide contract with the Sherriff's Department.

### **College Recommendations for Compliance**

See College Recommendation 1.2 and 1.3.

### **College Recommendation 3.**

In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the college follow documented procedures related to the responsibilities of librarians and content faculty in the collection development processes. (II.B.2, IV.A.1)

### **College Recommendation 4.**

In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the college analyze, discuss, and use student satisfaction data, collected by the college and the district, in creating plans of action to improve the quality of the services it offers for all student constituencies. (Standard II.B.3, II.C.1)

### **College Recommendation 5.**

In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the college evaluate its contracted services for effectiveness and continuity of service and maintain copies of all agreements in a central location on campus. (II.B.4, III.D.9, III.D.10, III.D.16)

## **Standard II.C. Student Support Services**

### **General Observations**

Los Angeles Southwest College offers a comprehensive array of student support services with core services that are offered to both on-ground and on-line students. Although LASC has a solid program review structure in place, there is little evidence that they can assure the overall quality of its student support services. LASC does a wonderful job of ensuring all student service areas articulate SLOs, but need to do a better job of assessing them. LASC has expressed a commitment to providing equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students regardless of service location and delivery method. All student services report full access to services by gender and ethnicity, but only a handful recognize that there is a disproportionate service gap for Hispanic students.

Through the vision and efforts on the part of student leaders to create vibrant out-of-classroom experiences, LASC offers a rich array of co-curricular, social, cultural, and artistic experiences that make up the fabric of student life on campus. LASC provides access to the full complement of counseling services (i.e. academic, transfer, career, personal, vocational, crisis, etc.) in various locations and to various student populations (general and special-focused). LASC has clearly articulated admissions criteria, informs and advises students of the various pathways, degrees, certificate, and transfer options available to students, evaluates placement instruments and validates cut scores for English, math, and English as a Second Language. LASC maintains student records permanently, securely, and confidentially. LASC recently hired a Vice President for Student Services (VPSS); at the time of the Team visit he had been on the job for approximately two weeks.

The District Team observes the following for Standard II.C.6. The District has adopted, and the colleges adhere to, admission policies that are consistent with the mission and specify the qualifications of students appropriate for its programs. These policies are published in catalogs and class schedules as well as available on websites. In addition, academic programs that have special admission/selection processes such as nursing and radiologic technology include this

information in program applications/websites.

Also, the District Team observes the following for Standard II.C.8. The District and colleges have high standards for the confidentiality, maintenance, release, and destruction of student records. District policies and practices have been developed in accordance with state and federal law and are strictly followed. There are a number of safeguards in place to protect the confidentiality of student records, including: requiring photo identification to access records information in person; nightly back up of the databases; adherence to a records classification and destruction system; and restricting access through the use of controlled passwords that are automatically changed every 90 days.

### **Findings and Evidence**

LASC offers a comprehensive array of student support services, which include: Outreach and Recruitment, Admissions and Records, Financial Aid, Assessment Office, Bridges to Success Center, Counseling Services, Transfer Center, Career Services, Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S), Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOP&S), Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE), Foster and Kinship Care Education Program/Guardian Scholars, Veteran Student Center, Passage Program, PUENTE program, TRIO programs (Talent Search, TRIO Scholars, TRIO Stem, and Upward Bound), Student Health Services, Associated Student Office, First-Year Experience, and library and learning support services. Core services are offered to both on-ground and on-line students for: admission services (website), orientation (website), financial aid (website), counseling (*Ask-a-Counselor*), career assessment (*EUREKA*), tutoring (*Smart Thinking*), and personal management workshops (*Student Lingo*); and frequently asked questions (website) can be assessed online. (Standard II.C.1)

Los Angeles Southwest College regularly assesses its student services programs via their Non-Instructional Program Review (NIPR), which are structured around three of the five LASC Strategic Goals (i.e. (1) Improve equitable access to high-quality education that promotes student success; (2) Increase student success and academic excellence with a focus on student-centered instruction and support services; and (3) Enhance institutional effectiveness and accountability through data-driven decision making, planning, evaluation, and improvement of College programs, professional development opportunities, and governance structures) and prompts responses on learning support outcomes, college-wide collaboration and partnerships, resources, and status update of previous year's objectives. (Standard II.C.1)

Although LASC has a solid program review structure in place and student services programs have completed several program review cycles, there is little evidence that LASC can assure the overall quality of its student support services. NIPR form poses very good questions, but responses to these questions by most of the student services programs either reflect a misunderstanding of the focus of the question or minimal effort in completing the form. Two "student satisfaction survey" efforts were launched over the past two years, LASC Student Satisfaction Survey-Spring 2015 and LACCD Fall 2014 Student Survey. LACCD Fall 2014 was administered to students across the nine LACCD college campuses, with 2,146 students from LASC responding to the survey. The 34 question survey asked a broad array of questions covering six overarching areas (student goals and plans, student background, financial resources, college services, college facilities and security, and academic experiences) and two open-ended

questions (1- Please describe the one or two things you like best about this college and 2- Please describe the one or two things at this college that you would like to see changed). There was no evidence that results from this survey were analyzed, discussed, or used for improvement considerations (i.e. survey was not referenced in any NIPR forms across all student services). The LASC Student Satisfaction Survey-Spring 2015 was administered to students at LASC across most student services operations. Survey respondents varied from 17 respondents (Outreach Survey) to 189 respondents (Student Success Center), with most being less than 50 respondents per operation surveyed. While satisfaction surveys were referenced in LASC's self-study there is little evidence that results from these surveys were analyzed, discussed, or used for improvement considerations. (Standard II.C.1)

There is no reference to the LASC College Mission in their Non-Instructional Program Review form; the only connection is through their Strategic Plan goals, which are broad enough to encompass almost any California community College mission statement. During the site visit, via the two open forums and follow-up one-on-one interviews with students and student leaders (i.e. ASO), students expressed strong support for and attachment to the College, and expressed its positive role in the community. However, they also expressed much frustration with the overall quality (i.e. customer service) of student services received and the way in which their input into school-related matters was received by administrators. (Standard II.C.1)

LASC student services programs have articulated Student Learning Outcomes. LASC should be commended for their wide identification and publication of student learning outcomes across student services programs, as evidenced in their 2012-13 College SLO Report, 2014 Non-Instructional Program Reviews, LASC program websites, and the November 2013 Feedback Memo on College Status Report on SLO Implementation, where the College received a score of 5 out of 5 for exceeding the norm of effective practice for Student Learning and Support Activities. (Standard II.C.2)

The Team observed an inconsistency in LASC's representation of their service SLOs on their webpages and Non-Instructional Program Review database - many of the service SLOs are not consistently represented in both locations or are significantly different. SLO assessment is the other major area of needed focus. SLOs in student services are either not currently being assessed, the assessment strategy is not appropriate for the stated SLO, and/or the identified key performance indicator is not aligned with the SLO. This lack of proper assessment results in limited insights for asserting the effectiveness of student support services, thus making it difficult to have effective dialog and to create plans for making necessary improvements that would result in improved services for students. The 2014 NIPR form responses to questions under "Section 3: Enhance institutional effectiveness and accountability through data-driven decision making, planning, evaluation, and improvement of College programs, professional development opportunities, and governance structures" reflected the need for increased understanding and improved quality of responses. (Standard II.C.2)

Many services report having 0 or 1 meeting(s) over the past year to discuss SLOs; are unable to identify data directly related to articulated SLOs; report learning, areas they excel in, and identify issues and needs that were revealed. None of these insights came from data directly related to articulated SLOs. Most of the Program SLOs identified by each service area did not align with Program Objectives in their NIPR. Making these improvements to SLO assessment,

measurement, reflection, and improvement plans should help the College improve service to both on-ground and on-line students. LASC currently is minimally able to use data to continuously improve student support programs and services. Direct measures of learning support outcomes and focused-dialog around necessary improvements will serve both on-ground and on-line students well. (Standard II.C.2)

LASC has expressed a commitment to providing equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students regardless of service location and delivery method. Core services are provided to both on-ground and on-line students and the institution regularly reviews adequacy of hours of operation and accessibility of these services by ethnicity and gender, as evidenced by their “Point-of-Service Surveys” and 2014 Non-Instructional Program Review (NIPR) Forms. The 2014 NIPR Form responses to questions under “Section 1: Improve equitable access to high-quality education that promotes student success...” denotes the structural commitment to keep important access questions at the forefront of the program review process (Standard II.C.3).

Most student services programs participated in the 2014 Non-Instructional Program Review (NIPR) and responded to the aforementioned access prompts. All programs were generally aware of students’ demands for hours of operation and believe to be adequately meeting said demands. In some cases, a service area’s claim to be meeting hours of operation demand was not consistent with the “Point-of-Service Survey” results (i.e. Counseling – there is a significant demand for service after 7pm, but the Counseling office closes at 4:00pm on Mondays and Tuesdays, closes at 6:30pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and closes at 1:00pm on Fridays; Financial Aid – this office is aware of the articulated need, and the fact that the College is located in the poorest section of LA, but it cited inability to meet demand due to staff and budget shortage; DSPS - aware of the demand for online and weekend services, but does not provide these services; Outreach and Recruitment - claim of service meeting demand was not based on the data from a “Point-of-Service Survey. In other cases, the service area’s analysis of student demand for hours of operation was semi-accurate, as it was silent on high demand areas (i.e. for both SSSP and EOPS/CARE – there is high demand for online and weekend hours. In one case, CalWORKS, an accurate assessment was made in recognizing current hours of operation meeting most of the time demands and went as far as addressing the need for articulated evening hours; but survey demand did not result in use of services during evening hours and CalWORKS reverted back to core schedule at the conclusion of the pilot. (Standard II.C.3)

All student services programs that participated in the 2014 NIPR indicate full access to services by gender; most cite full access to services by ethnicity, but only a handful address the issue of the student demographic shift towards more Hispanic students and the extent that they are currently serving this growing population in the service area and on campus. (Standard II.C.3)

LASC’s service area has been changing dramatically, going from predominantly African-American (under 30 percent currently) to predominantly Hispanic (over 60 percent currently). While LASC’s student demographics have been trending in the same direction, the College has yet to reflect the ethnic proportions seen in its service area as Hispanic students make up only 38.5 percent of LASC’s student body. This disproportionate representation in access is further magnified in disproportionate representation in service, but little-to-no awareness is reflected in responses to NIPR questions around equitable access for Hispanic students:

- **Outreach & Recruitment:** College student demographics are currently at 38.5 percent Hispanic. Program claims to be meeting community needs, which contradicts changing trends in Hispanic population within its service region. There was no discussion of disconnect between the services and the changed demographics of the community.
- **DSPS:** 12 percent of served are Hispanic. Program sees low percent of Hispanic students being served, knows trending up, but does not appear to be concerned.
- **Counseling:** 13 percent of served are Hispanic. No recognition of low percent of Hispanic students accessing their service. Program indicates not being able to improve services due to “not enough counselors or classified employees. No funding for specialized programs.”
- **Financial Aid:** 14.1 percent of served are Hispanic. The program is cognizant of the need to provide bi-lingual services in Spanish and intends on increasing the number of Hispanic applicants. However, the NIPR does not speak to a service disconnect for Hispanic students.
- **Career Center:** 16.9 percent of served are Hispanic. No 2014 NIPR form.
- **Library:** 16.9 percent served are Hispanic.
- **Admissions and Records:** 18 percent of served are Hispanic. There was no discussion of disconnect between the services and the changed demographics of the community.
- **Student Success Center:** 18.6 percent served are Hispanic. Program aware of service disconnect, but claims to be meeting need, believe numbers will grow naturally, does not propose effort to accelerate representation.
- **EOPS:** 21.6 percent served are Hispanic. Program is aware of changing trends towards more Hispanics. Intends on increasing the number of Hispanic students in program.
- **Associated Students Org:** 25.9 percent of served are Hispanic.
- **SSSP:** 35.4 percent of served are Hispanic. Cognizant of need to do orientations in Spanish.
- **CalWORKs/Gain:** 35.7 percent of served are Hispanic.
- **Bridges to Success:** 98 percent of served are Hispanic. Primarily an ESL program.

During the site visit, via the two open forums and follow-up one-on-one interviews with three students and seven student leaders, students expressed frustration with the overall hours of operation of services offered. The students the Team encountered, regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender, did not believe services the College provides to them are appropriate, comprehensive,

or reliable. Additionally, LASC would benefit from focused dialog and review of service statistics to ensure that the fastest growing segment of their service area (Hispanic students) is represented within their College and is being served by its cadre of student support services. (Standard II.C.3)

LASC offers three athletic programs (men's football, women's basketball, and men's basketball), offers student government opportunities (Associated Students Organization), three student support programs (EOP&S, DSP&S, and Veteran's Resource Center), and a number of learning communities (Freshman Year Program, Puente Program, and Passage Program) that contribute to the social and cultural experiences of their student body. While LASC currently does not have gender equity in its athletic programs, it is in the process of developing a plan and budget to bring on additional women's sports such as softball and soccer. (Standard II.C.4)

Although LASC did not speak to additional co-curricular opportunities for their students and local community, the Team was able to identify a rich array of co-curricular, social, cultural, and artistic experiences that make up the fabric of student life on campus.

LASC offers fifteen (15) chartered student clubs and organizations (SAADA, Village People, LASC Entrepreneurial, Phi Theta Kappa, Student Helping Students, Veteran's Club, Black Student Union, Pied De Gracee's Dance Ensemble, Hip Hop Congress, LGBT, Gospel Choir, Law Club, Holistic Health, Music Club, and Bible Club). Associated Students Organization, Chair of Cultural Events (ASO member), works with the respective college wide committee to puts on various heritage celebrations on campus (Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month). These heritage month celebrations comprise a variety of guest speakers and faculty lectures on topics of historical relevance (i.e. Senator Isadore Hall, III forum on Peace/Violence; Professor Reggie Morris presentation on the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements during the 1960s; A Century of Black History, Life & Culture, Commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Watts Rebellion Community Celebration and Forum; LASC's Latino Employee Association events featuring folklorico dancers, Loteria lessons—Latino “bingo” game, Zumba lessons, and presentation on Latino Employee Association's history, overview, and scope of work; Dr. Daniel Ortega presentation on The Growing Educational Equity Gap for California's Latino/a Students: Courage to Learn-A Possible Solution). (Standard II.C.4)

LASC provides access to the full complement of counseling services (i.e. academic, transfer, career, personal, vocational, crisis, etc.) in various locations and to various student populations (general and special-focused). Counseling services are available through various categorical and specially-funded programs, such as: Extended Opportunity Programs & Services (EOP&S), CalWORKs, Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S), the First-Year Experience Program (FYE), Student Support Services Program (SSSP), TRIO Student Support Services, and through other grant-funded programs such as the Passage Program and Nursing. (Standard II.C.5)

Students can select from an array of on-ground and on-line options for counseling services. Students can meet with a counselor in person, in a workshop setting, via a personal development course, through email, via phone, and through various resources available to them off of the Counseling Center website (i.e. web links, resources, guides, and directions to add all types of students). Students have access to online counseling tools (*Ask a Counselor* and *Contact My*



*Counselor systems).*

Despite counseling services being available and the LASC self-study noting that “students receive timely, useful and accurate information regarding counseling services,” there is little evidence of the effectiveness of counseling practices and services or how these practices and services enhance student development and success. (Standard II.C.1, II.C2, II.C.3, II.C.5)

The Los Angeles Community College District, and Los Angeles Southwest College have clearly articulated admissions criteria (Board Rule 8100: Admission to a Community College). LASC is open to anyone “who is 18 years or older” if in the judgment of the President or his/her representative “the person is capable of profiting from the instruction offered”. Admits who are 18 years or older without a high school diploma or its equivalent are admitted as provisional students. LACCD’s open admissions policy supports the mission of LASC. Board Rules 8100 – 8100.15 further illustrate the various admissions criteria for the array of prospective students (i.e. high school graduates, non-high school graduates, international students, non-resident students, K-12 students). Additional admissions processes and criteria set for specialized programs, nursing and athletics. (Standard II.C.6)

LASC informs and advises students of the various pathways, degrees, certificate, and transfer options via their college catalog, class schedule, and orientation session during matriculation process, as well as, via information and services offered by the transfer center, and various counseling offices and courses. (Standard II.C.6)

The District Team finds as follows for Standard II.C.6. The District has admissions policies consistent with its mission and state regulations. These policies include special admission of part- and full-time K-12 students, F-1 students, noncitizens, and persons who do not possess a high school diploma or equivalent. The colleges all adhere to these policies when admitting students. These policies are published in catalogs and class schedules, as well as available on websites. The colleges also have developed and adhere to admission criteria for specific academic programs such as nursing and radiologic technology. These criteria are published on departmental websites as well as college catalogs.

In addition, the District Team finds the following. All the colleges advise students on the pathways to complete degrees, certificates and transfer goals in various ways. While all the colleges rely primarily on counselors to advise students on these pathways, other resources are relied upon, including transfer and career centers and a number of support services and programs such as First Year Experience, Honors, Puente, and MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement).

Also, the District Team finds the as follows for Standard II.C.6. The information on degree, certificate, and transfer programs is published in the college catalogs and various websites. Two colleges noted that improvement was needed in this area. In addition, the information provided by one of the colleges was not adequate enough to assess this component of the Standard. There is no District involvement in developing, publishing, or advising students on degree, certificate, or transfer pathways. (II.C.6)

LASC evaluates placement instruments and practices to validate their effectiveness while

minimizing biases. LASC instituted processes for evaluating placement instruments and validating cut scores for English, math, and English as a Second Language in Fall 2015. LASC will validate assessment tests via the required California Community College Chancellor's Office methodology of content validity, cut score validity, and disproportionate impact analyses. (Standard II.C.7)

The District Team finds, in reference to Standard II.C.7, as follows. The institution regularly evaluates admissions and placement instruments and practices to validate their effectiveness while minimizing biases. The District has no role.

The LACCD and LASC maintain student records permanently, securely, and confidentially. Transcript records prior to 1974 are stored on campus in a secure area. Hard copies of student transcripts and admissions-related documents are stored via Viatron imaging system. Institutional data and records are backed up on a regular basis at both the college and district level. Copies of records are stored at an offsite location (District) and through a cloud-based system (College's data). (Standard II.C.8)

LASC staff members are appropriately assigned access to Student Information System (SIS) records per their official college role or function and are regularly trained on Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations. Board rules are in place to ensure the proper use of college/district technology (BR-27 Use of District and College Facilities); responsible, ethical, and privacy assurance of users when using district computing services (BR-28 District's Network Security Policy); routine and scheduled destruction of records (BR-7708 Classification of Records, BR-7709: Destruction of Records). Employee's desktop access is password protected and staff are informed of the requirement to keep password secure. Additionally, students are required to provide photo identification in order to access confidential information and so that LASC adheres to FERPA regulations. (Standard II.C.8)

The District Team finds as follows for Standard II.C.8. The Los Angeles Community College District has policies in place for the maintenance and destruction of confidential student records in accordance with state and federal law. The colleges do not use social security numbers (SSN) as the key to records; students are assigned student identification numbers. Electronic records are stored securely in the District student information system, and files are routinely backed up and stored off site. Access to confidential student records by employees is controlled through security where users are assigned passwords based upon their job classification and approval of their supervisor. The District general counsel provides workshops on the confidentiality, security, and maintenance of student records for admissions and records staff. Students can access their electronic records online. Access to student records in person requires a picture identification from the student.

Also, the District Team finds as follows. Various paper records are maintained on the campuses in locked files, with access controlled by the supervisor of that office. Some paper records are scanned (imaged) into an online database (product varies by college) and stored on a protected server. The information on the servers is backed up locally and is the responsibility of the college. The student health centers comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) and maintain records in an electronic records system via a contracted service.

In addition, the District Team finds the following for Standard II.C.8. The District has a policy for classification of records in accordance with state law as well as destruction of student records based upon the classification system. The colleges publish and follow policies for release of confidential student records that align with current federal and state law. The security and maintenance of student records is a shared responsibility between the District and colleges, with the District having primary responsibility for the records in the Student Information System (DEC). (II.C.8)

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standards and related Eligibility Requirements except for Standards II.C.1, II.C.2, II.C.3, and II.C.5.

The District Team concludes the following for Standard II.C.6. The Los Angeles Community College District meets the Standard. The District has adopted, and adheres to, admission policies that are consistent with its mission. These policies include criteria for special categories of students such as concurrent high school enrollment and F-1 students. These policies are published in District and college publications and websites. The District does not have a role in defining and/or advising on clear pathways to degree or certificate completion or transfer.

In addition, the District Team concludes that District meets Standard II.C.8. The District and colleges have high standards for the confidentiality, maintenance, release, and destruction of student records that adhere to state and federal law. Staff receives training on the confidentiality of student records, and passwords are routinely changed every 90 days. The databases are backed up nightly and stored in an off-campus location. The campuses also have local databases that store student records. These databases are backed up, although the storage varies.

### **College Recommendations for Compliance**

See College Recommendation 1.3 and Recommendation 4.

### **College Recommendation 6.**

In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends LASC assess the effectiveness of its counseling services and practices and utilize the information accordingly to increase focus and action on the growing Hispanic demographic in its core area and determine how best to expand the hours of operation of student services programs and the availability of counselors for all student constituencies. (Standard II.C.3, II.C.5)

## **Standard III: Resources**

### **III.A. Human Resources**

#### **General Observations**

Through both centralized and decentralized HR functions, LASC generally meets its HR goals to provide educational services to over 8,000 students. Processes and procedures exist at the District office and at the Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC) to employ qualified

administrators, faculty and staff who have the appropriate education, training, and experience to provide and support the College's programs and services.

The District has an EEO plan approved by the Board in Sept. 2015. That plan is followed at the College level. The College has an ethics policy for all of its personnel. All institutional HR policies are posted on the Colleges SharePoint website.

The District Team, concerning III.A.1-6, 8, 11-13, and 15, observes as follows. The human resources function LACCD includes both a Human Resource (HR) Division and a Personnel Commission (PC). While both entities are co-located in the District's Educational Services Center (ESC) office building, the authorities and functions are separate. These two entities provide comprehensive human resource services in support of LACCD's employment practices and in adherence to adopted hiring policies to meet the instructional and support needs of the colleges and District.

In addition, the District Team observes as follows. The LACCD's classified staff employment processes are administered by the PC, an autonomously governed merit system organization. The PC is responsible for recruitment and testing for classified staff and management vacancies, audit of assignments, and classification for support staff. The PC also acts as the hearing panel in disciplinary hearing matters affecting classified employees.

Furthermore, the District Team observes the following. The HR Division has oversight for employment operations, employee relations, and professional development activities for faculty, management, and classified employees. The hiring of tenure-track faculty and management personnel is overseen by District Office HR personnel. The hiring process for adjunct faculty is decentralized to the individual colleges, with final qualification and eligibility determinations made by the HR Division.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The District is applauded for updating its HR Guide on Academic Administrator selection and hiring procedures last year to ensure minimum qualifications for administrators are met by LASC and other member colleges and that proper hiring procedures are followed. (Standard III.A.1)

Faculty qualifications adhere to the state minimum qualifications as detailed in the Minimum Qualifications Handbook for Faculty, and are verified by the District. Administrative job descriptions are developed by the College and reviewed by the District to ensure "desirable" skills meet legal tests. (Standard III.A.2)

LASC has close to 700 employees. Recent hiring of one new VP of Student Services and one new Dean of Institutional Advancement has increased the ranks of administrators to help it meet its institutional priorities. Eleven new faculty have been hired within the last year and about five more are scheduled for hire this academic year. (Standards III.A.2, III.A.9)

Administrators and other staff with educational program responsibilities possess the necessary qualifications. Adequate input is solicited and obtained for staffing through the shared

governance processes including Program Review and strategic planning. The ultimate decision for staff prioritization and hiring rests with the College president. (Standard III.A.3)

District HR and the College hiring Team review candidate applications and credentials prior to a job offer. (Standard III.A.4)

The District Team finds, in reference to Standard III.A.5, as follows. The evaluation of student learning is included as a component of faculty evaluation; however, this component is absent from the academic administrators and other personnel evaluations (Standard III.A.5)

While most faculty personnel have now been evaluated, some classified and technical staff have not been evaluated. The EASY system is in place to alert supervisors of the need to evaluate employees, but there is nothing in place to ensure the evaluation actually takes place. The District office is looking into systems and methods to ensure, not only that follow-up takes place, but also that lack of response is reflected in the supervisors' evaluation. Additional improvement in the evaluation processes will include a component on SLOs for administrators. This requirement will also be addressed during the next negotiation cycle with the Deans' bargaining unit. (Standard III.A.5)

Also, the Team found that while faculty evaluation includes responsibility for student learning outcomes and they are evaluated systematically and at required interval; however, this is not the case for academic administrators with direct responsibility for student learning. (Standard III.A.6)

In interviews with students and comments made by administrators and faculty, the Team found that students had to attend other community colleges in order to obtain classes in their area of study due to the fact that qualified faculty were not available to teach the required courses in the area of study. One reason given by administration to students and to the Team members for this condition was that the College did not have the funds to hire in all the areas needed and therefore had to prioritize its hiring of personnel. (Standard III.A.7, ER 14)

According to the District, professional development funds are allocated to the College yet employees feel the funds are not available for all classifications. (Standard III.A.8)

There is, according to the Self-Study Report, "significant" turnover in administrators within the last year. Additionally, several faculty, classified and support staff positions are unfilled. Recent hiring in the IT department has provided some enhancement for technology support; however, additional staff is needed. These ongoing vacancies raise questions about the College's ability to meet its needs and to be an effective institution. Department chairs, deans, technicians, custodians, business service personnel, classroom faculty, counselors, and other administrators are identified as needed but lacking in the organization structure. (Standards III.A.9, III.A.10)

The College's recruitment and hiring of qualified faculty has increased in recent years. More than 11 faculty have been hired with an additional five or more slated for the near future. With this hiring the College is moving towards its goal to have a full-time faculty for each of its disciplines. (Standard III.A.9, ER 8)

The Vice President of Student Services is the most recent hire to the administrator ranks of the College. The current Acting VP of Administrative Services will leave within 30 days after serving less than three months in this capacity. The Team was informed that a replacement will be hired soon. There are three academic deans and no student services deans. Another recent hire is the Dean of Institutional Advancement/Effectiveness. This leaves a number of dean positions unfilled with the existing academic deans covering a vast range of areas. Consequently, the Team found that these conditions create conditions that make it difficult for LASC to support effective educational and administrative operations of the College. (Standard III.A.9, III.A.10; ER 8)

Based on information gathered in individual and group interviews, as well as in open forums, the Team found that there are inadequate personnel to support the effective educational, technological, physical, and administrative operations of the institution. This is most felt in the facilities area, IT, and in the administrative staffing at the College. (Standard III.A.10)

The College provided evidence that it establishes, publishes, and adheres to written personnel policies and procedures that are available for information and review. These policies and procedures are fair and equitably and consistently administered. (Standard III.A.11)

According to the District, each college has a designated and trained EEO representative. No evidence was available regarding this designated employee at LASC or that it maintains appropriate programs, practices, and services to support its diverse personnel. No evidence was provided to demonstrate that LASC regularly assesses its record in employment equity and diversity consistent with its mission. (Standard III.A.12)

There was no evidence that describes how or substantiates that the College assesses its record in employment equity and diversity as this information is not available via its data collection systems, nor is it clear whether or not this information is available at the District level for the College. (Standard III.A.12)

The College provided evidence that it has a written code of professional ethics for all of its personnel, including consequences for violation. (Standard III.A.13)

The College does have an Professional Development plan, however, there is some question as to whether or not it is applied equitably between the faculty and classified staff. The funds are allocated from the District. (Standard III.A.14)

The College provided evidence that it makes provision for the security and confidentiality of personnel records. Each employee has access to his/her personnel records in accordance with law. (Standard III.A.15)

The District Team, concerning III.A.1-6, 8, 11-13, and 15 finds the following. The LACCD Board of Trustees, in its role as the governing authority, establishes policies pertaining to the faculty, staff, and administrators employed by the District. These policies, procedures, and related supporting documentation are found on the District's website. The District's HR Division and PC are responsible for the oversight in the hiring of qualified personnel to serve its nine colleges and central District support services, including the selection, evaluation, and monitoring processes

within the LACCD. District guidelines provide consistency in the development, definition, and establishment of hiring policies and processes for administrators, full-time faculty, and classified staff. Job descriptions for full-time/regular positions reflect the duties, responsibilities, and authority in support of mission and goals for the college and the District.

Also, the District Team finds as follows for Standard III.A.1. Due to the dynamic staffing needs encountered at the college level, decentralization of the recruitment and selection process for part-time/adjunct faculty was implemented. The District's HR department verifies the qualifications of recommended part-time/adjunct faculty prior to hire. HR R-130, entitled "Adjunct Faculty Selection and Pay," requires the president and Academic Senate at each college to develop written procedures governing the search and selection of adjunct faculty to ensure that a thorough and deliberate search for the most qualified candidate is conducted well in advance of the starting date of the assignment. Procedures and processes for the selection of part-time/adjunct faculty are not clearly and publicly stated. College-level adjunct hiring processes result in inconsistent notification and advertisement of employment opportunities. HR reviews part-time/adjunct qualifications upon receipt of candidates from the colleges. Candidates' qualifications are evaluated and verified as meeting the job description requirements. (III.A.1)

In addition, the District Team finds as follows for Standard III.A.2 and ER 14. Faculty qualifications are clearly stated on job descriptions, including education, skills, experience, and/or certifications. Job descriptions include professional responsibilities beyond teaching expectations. Student learning outcomes, curriculum development, and college-level committee requirements are included in responsibility expectations when developing full-time faculty job descriptions. HR reviews the draft job descriptions for competencies, compliance and consistency. Faculty candidates are required to meet all published job qualifications. A faculty-led process for determining equivalency for stated qualifications exists, but is generally limited in utilization. Faculty performance evaluations include the assessment of multiple measures of these job-related requirements. (III.A.2 and ER 14)

Moreover, the District Team finds as follows for Standard III.A.3. Job descriptions for administrators and other positions supporting institutional effectiveness and academic quality include requisite education and experience requirements. Job descriptions are updated by HR and the PC to include evolving institutional responsibilities. HR and PC personnel verify candidate qualifications prior to employment consideration. (III.A.3)

In reference to Standard III.A.4, the District Team finds as follows. LACCD has established policies and procedures regarding the evaluation of educational degrees earned by faculty, administrators, and support personnel. Applicants and employees seeking promotional opportunities are required to submit official transcripts from accredited institutions. Degrees earned from non-U.S. institutions are required to be evaluated by an established state-recognized evaluation organization for equivalency. (III.A.4)

Moreover, the District Team finds, in reference to Standard III.A.5, as follows. The District has established a system of performance evaluation for faculty, staff, and administrative personnel. The evaluation process is dictated by individual collective bargaining agreements and District policy. Faculty evaluation tracking is delegated to individual colleges. The PC distributes evaluation notices to classified employees and their respective supervisor during the employee's probationary

period. Thereafter, HR uses an automated system to notify supervisors of upcoming and past-due performance evaluations. Current District wide completion rates average approximately 50 percent. (III.A.5)

The District Team, in reference to Standard III.A.6, finds as follows. Faculty evaluations include the assessment of learning outcomes. The negotiated evaluation process and related forms include requirements for the utilization of learning outcomes in the improvement of teaching and learning. Academic administrators' evaluations do not include the assessment of responsibilities related to learning outcomes. (III.A.6)

Also, the District Team finds as follows in reference to Standard III.A.8. LACCD employs a substantial cadre of over 3,300 part-time/adjunct faculty among the nine colleges and academic organizations. Each college is delegated the responsibility for orientation, oversight, evaluation, and professional development of adjunct faculty at their respective campus. Opportunities for part-time faculty participation in the teaching and learning aspects of college operations and decision-making are provided and encouraged. (III.A.8)

In addition, the District Team finds, in reference to III.A.11, as follows. Written personnel policies and procedures are available online for information and review. A process of regular policy review and updating has been established. The Human Resource Council meets monthly to review and recommend proposed changes in Board Rules and Administrative Regulations. The HR Council's membership includes college presidents, the vice chancellor of HR, college vice presidents (academic affairs, student services, and administrative services), and resource personnel, as needed. The PC regularly reviews its policies and procedures regarding the employment of classified staff. These rules and regulations provide fair and equitable employment conditions. The Employment Relations Department is responsible for addressing allegations of inconsistent application of District policies. (III.A.11)

Furthermore, the District Team finds, in reference to III.A.12, as follows. The Office of Diversity Programs provides programs, analysis, and training to support the District's diverse personnel. This office is assigned compliance and investigatory responsibilities to resolve allegations of unlawful discrimination and conduct. LACCD's "Project Match" program provides a formalized outreach program to aspiring, but historically underrepresented, individuals to encourage community college faculty careers. An Equal Employment Opportunity Plan has been adopted and includes an annual evaluation of employment equity and diversity of LACCD's employees. (III.A.12)

The District Team finds, in reference to III.A.13, as follows. The District has adopted Board policy, Code of Ethics-Board Rule #1204, and collectively bargained language addressing professional ethics expectations. Appropriate corrective actions and consequences are addressed in the Board Rule. (III.A.13)

In addition, the District Team finds, in reference to III.A.14, as follows. The District has long-established professional development programs. Existing programs and new opportunities for District employees are continually identified, evaluated, and developed, i.e., "Dean's Academy," "Professional Development College," and "The President's Academy." The introduction of a partnership with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) to create the "President's Academy" provides relevant training for aspiring LACCD executive leaders. The District Academic



Senate provides faculty representatives the ability to work collaboratively in providing content in support of student learning and success. The District also explores methods to increase opportunities for its classified staff. Campus-level trainings are provided by District personnel as part of the regular communication and educational support. (III.A.14)

Finally, the District Team finds, in reference to III.A.15, as follows. The District provides security and has established both physical and electronic access safeguards in the confidentiality of personnel and employment records. Access to confidential electronic personnel data is monitored and limited to authorized employees. Procedures, as evidenced by Administrative Regulation C-10, Custodian of District Records, and collective bargaining agreement language are in place to provide employee access to his/her personnel records. (III.A.15)

### **Conclusions**

The College meets the Standards and related Eligibility Requirements except for Standards III.A.5-10, III.A.12, III.A.14, and ER 14.

The College has made great strides to improve the completion of staff evaluations and the District has plans to assist it to further develop its processes in this area. It has also recently hired new administrators, faculty and technical staff to assist with its institutional effectiveness. However, in addition to faculty, the College is required to evaluate how academic administrators and other personnel directly responsible for student learning use the results of assessment of learning outcomes to improve teaching and learning. Also, the Team noted the College's need for additional work in the Human Resources area, and suggests it continue its efforts in staff hiring, evaluations of personnel, developing and implementing data collection systems, and providing professional development. The College must also identify an individual responsible for Equal Employment Opportunities. (ERs 8 and 14)

The District Team, concerning III.A.1-6, 8, 11-13, and 15 concludes the following. The LACCD provides comprehensive human resource services to employ qualified personnel in support of its broad educational programs. The District has established policies and procedures beginning with the recruitment process, hiring, evaluation, and employee-related matters throughout employment for its regular employees.

Although the colleges currently are responsible for the adjunct faculty hiring process, the District is responsible to assure that employment policies and practices are clearly described and equitably administered. However, the recruitment and employment of adjunct faculty is unevenly administered, and, therefore, the District does not meet Standard III.A.1.

The District does not conduct regular evaluations of all staff, and does not meet Standard III.A.5.

Faculty evaluations include an assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) as a component of the performance appraisal; however, academic administrators' evaluations do not have an SLO responsibility component, so the District does not meet Standard III.A.6.

The District Team commends the District for its commitment to professional development and improving the knowledge, skills, and abilities of its employees in support of student achievement.

## **College Recommendations for Compliance**

See College Recommendation 1.3 and 1.4.

### **College Recommendation 7.**

In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the College ensure evaluations of academic administrators directly responsible for student learning outcomes include, as a component of that evaluation, consideration of how they use the results of the assessment of student learning outcomes to improve teaching and learning; and in the case of all administrators, how they utilize position-related assessment data to improve College processes and programs. (Standard III.A.5, III.A.6)

### **College Recommendation 8.**

In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the College continue to complete staff evaluations for all personnel, increase the number of administrators and staff necessary to support its programs and services, create and monitor a system of “essential” professional development for both full-time and part-time and adjunct faculty, with professional development funds equitably allocated. (Standard III.A.5, III. A.7, III.A.8, A.III.9, III.A.10, III.A.14, ER 8, ER 14)

## **District Recommendations for Compliance**

### **District Recommendations 1.**

In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the District ensure consistent and uniform guidelines for the search and selection of adjunct faculty. (III.A.1)

### **District Recommendation 2.**

In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the District ensure all personnel are systematically evaluated at stated intervals in accordance with the bargaining agreements and Board policies. (III.A.5)

### **District Recommendation 3.**

In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the District update the performance evaluations of academic administrators to include the results of the assessment of learning outcomes to improve teaching and learning. (III.A.6)

## **III.B. Physical Resources**

### **General Observations**

LASC provides its students, staff, and community with a safe and comfortable campus. As a result of over eight years of new building construction and renovation, there is now over 648,000 square feet of building space available for programs and services that are accessible and maintained. An additional 27,000 square feet are planned for completion by 2018. The image

of the campus has been significantly improved and the community views LASC as a beacon of hope for its residents. The District contracts with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for campus security services.

The District Team observes, in reference to Standard III.B.1-4 as follows. The District's role and performance is, for the most part, strong and effective in assisting the college in meeting Accreditation Standards. Three District documents (the Independent Review Panel Report dated January 4, 2012, resulting in 17 recommendations to the chancellor for the improvement of the bond program delivery. The LACCD Comprehensive Plan for Total Cost of Ownership dated March 20, 2013, resulting in seven recommendations for the better understanding of the actual cost associated with maintaining and operating a building. The LACCD Accreditation Special Report, dated April 1, 2013, that responded specifically to the 17 recommendations to the Independent Review Panel Report indicate the District's commitment to ensuring that integrity and accountability are maintained in the acquisition, implementation, and use of funds related to the physical resources of the District.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Campus Cleary Act Report for 2014 cited drug arrests (11) and robberies (8) as the safety issues that confronted the campus at that time. No updated numbers could be found. (Standard III.B.1) The Campus has utilized "green" elements wherever possible in its building processes. It was observed that several classrooms and buildings and spaces are not fully utilized (i.e. theater and athletic field). It was reported in interviews that this condition is at least partially due to the need to fund and hire faculty to teach the courses related to theater classes and other disciplines. (Standard III.B.2)

Long-range capital plans support the institutional improvement goals and the recommendations of the Independent Review Panel Report attempts to ensure the proper completion, maintenance, and total cost of ownership of the building projects. (Standards III.B.3, III.B.4)

Some of the newer buildings have presented some technological issues that could affect student success, and in some of the older buildings there is evidence that maintenance issues, if not fully addressed, may cause health and safety issues. Evidence: Board of Trustees Minutes, April 30, 2014. (Standard III.B.4)

The District Team finds, in relation to Standard III.B.1-4 as follows. The District plays a significant role in ensuring that all locations under its purview are safe and that sufficient resources are provided to maintain each facility. The LACCD contracts with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department for college campus security. This agreement provides for a standardized and coordinated approach to campus safety. Further, a report titled Blue Ribbon Panel on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness was adopted December 16, 2015. The charge of the panel was to, "review the District's existing policies and procedures on safety and security in order to determine the readiness of the colleges, District satellites and the Educational Service Center in cases of natural catastrophes or criminal events." It will be critical to follow up on the progress of the colleges and District in their response to the recommendations and implementation of plans. The sufficiency of physical resources at the colleges is clearly assured by the District. Three bond issues have been passed since 2001 resulting in nearly \$6.2 billion in capital project funding. To date, about 80 percent of those funds have been expended. All funds

are budgeted to projects. Sufficiency is also evident by the current cap load status. District wide, the lecture capacity/load ratio is 162 percent while the laboratory cap/load is at 144 percent. The District has supported the colleges in assuring access. ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) transition plans were created for the nine colleges using District resources. The implementation of the plan is funded by a District wide bond allocation of almost \$69 million. (III.B.1)

The District provides effective centralized services for planning, acquiring, building, maintaining Review Panel Report, the District has developed a new program management approach assuring the continuing quality necessary to support its programs and services to achieve its mission. Noting that shared governance practices had significantly contributed to increased costs, changes, delays, and disruptions to the Building Program, the Board responded with BT4: Resolution-Standardize Centralized Accountability Controls dated September 12, 2012. The resolution centralized accountability measures and established that college project managers report through the program manager to the District. The District uses a "project allocation model" in dispensing bond funds which ensures that the Board of Trustees has primary control over which projects will be built at the colleges and that projects will align with District priorities, i.e., support of the Educational Master Plan ensuring a consistency of intent. To ensure the model is followed, Board Resolution to Adopt a Master Budget Plan and to Implement Policies to Strengthen Oversight and Spending Practices for the District's Construction Program (BT6) was approved by the Board on October 5, 2011. (III.B.2)

The District materially assists the colleges in updating master facilities plans on a regular basis. This planning is managed through the bond program manager reporting to the District Office. The BuildLACCD website shows evidence that all nine colleges have current facility master plans, the oldest being less than eight years old. Further, the District assists the colleges in facility condition assessment and uses the data to identify needs and allocate District-scheduled maintenance funds. (III.B.3)

The Board of Trustees adopted the Master Building Program Budget Plan per resolution BT6 dated October 5, 2011. The plan assigns budgets at the individual project level providing support for long-range capital plans. The Board adopted Resolution 3 of BT6 dated October 5, 2011, stating, "The chancellor ... will include in the regular budget reports the identification of funding measures to address the costs of maintaining and operating expanded facilities." Following that, the District produced the Comprehensive Plan for Total Cost of Ownership detailing seven points defining, "a process for establishing the true cost of additional space." The Board voted to create a Deferred Maintenance Fund by passing Board Resolution BT2 on May 23, 2012. This resolution sets aside a fixed amount each year from the General Fund to address postponed and emergency repairs and maintenance work not funded by the bond program. In addition, the District provides funding to the colleges for maintenance and operations calculated by a formula that takes into consideration total assignable square footage as a part of the basic allocation (III.B.4)

### **Conclusions**

The College meets the Standards and related Eligibility Requirements except for Standard for III.B.2.

Although the majority of criteria are met for this Standard, there are some issues that deserve attention by administration that are affecting the employees and their ability to provide services

that will contribute to the student success. Given the financial problems the College has had for the last decade, it is imperative that it have a facilities use plan, with associated costs, in order to inform the student body of the economics of educational institutions and to make the most efficient and effective use of its physical resources while providing the programs and courses students need.

In reference to Standard III.B.1-4, the District Team concludes the following. In general, the role of the District in supporting the colleges to meet the Standards of Accreditation is evident and well supported. The District has implemented positive changes to the bond program management structure and adequately responded to the recommendations made in the Independent Review Panel Report. The District meets the Standard.

### **College Recommendations for Compliance**

See College Recommendation 1.5.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

#### **College Recommendation 9.**

In order to increase institutional effectiveness, the Team recommends that the College improve existing systems in the following manner:

- (1) Institute the work order system and train personnel on its use in order to better assess the needs of facility users and the maintenance requirements of the buildings. (Standard III.B.3)
- (2) Address the Work Environment Committee recommendations that identify issues related to the provision of safe, healthy, and sanitary work environment. Settlement Agreement agreed to by the District and the AFT College Faculty Guild dated January 2016. (Standard III.B.1)
- (3) Ensure adequate Maintenance and Operations staffing are scheduled to address needs of evening classes. (Standard III.B.1)
- (4) Ensure a higher visibility of campus security in order to allay some campus constituency doubts related to safety. (Standard III.B.1)

### **Standard III.C. Technological Resources**

#### **General Observations**

Los Angeles Southwest College has minimally adequate systems of technology and support in place. There are clear delineations between the LACCD Information Technology services and campus Information Technology and Media Services. LACCD Information Technology is responsible for the district-wide technology infrastructure, including systems and support for the College's administration (human and fiscal services), student services and instructional services. Technology used to support operations and facilities are supported at the local level. LASC IT and Media Services maintain responsibility for local equipment, and department/discipline-specific instructional technology needs. Perceptions of LASC technology support services are generally positive.

The District Team observes as follows in reference to Standard III.C.1-5. The LACCD emphasizes the effective use of technology in the support of teaching and learning, student support and success, and administrative functions to assist students and staff as evidenced by the significant investment made in staff to support the use of technology, equipment and systems and training of staff and students in the use of technology. The 40+ members of the LACCD Information Technology department provide systems and services to support Learning, Assessment, and Teaching with Infrastructure and Productivity tools as outlined in the LACCD Technology Strategic Plan – Vision 2020. Campus information technology staff at each of the nine campuses assist in the delivery of LACCD Information Technology department systems and services as well as support the classroom, computer labs and local infrastructure to enhance the learning environment. Policy, planning and budget recommendations regarding the use of technology across LACCD is driven by the Technology Planning and Policy Committee (TPPC) which is a governance committee with representation from all constituents. The District Technology Committee (DTC) focuses on operational decisions and makes recommendations to the TPPC

### **Findings and Evidence**

LASC IT staff work in collaboration with LACCD IT to provide comprehensive technology services, professional support, facilities, hardware, and software in order to meet the needs of learning, teaching, communications, and operational systems. LACCD IT provides support for the technology infrastructure and systems in use at LASC, including design, implementation, operation and support of the networks, security, the Etudes learning management system, , and telephone and video conferencing. LASC IT staff support local networks, equipment, and communication, including support for campus audiovisual equipment. The responsibilities of both LACCD IT and LASC IT staff are clearly delineated and understood by the LASC IT Systems manager. The College IT Services department provides support and infrastructure to meet campus network and computing needs. (Standard III.C.1)

The District Team finds as follows in reference to Standard III.C.1. Technology resources are used to support student learning, student services, and institutional effectiveness. As noted in the District/College Functional Map, this is a shared responsibility between the colleges and the District. Each college technology department provides support and infrastructure to meet campus network and computing needs. At the District level, the LACCD Information Technology department provides the wide area network infrastructure, an enterprise resource planning system for finance and human resources (SAP), a student information system (DEC/Peoplesoft), an educational planning system (DegreeWorks), email for students and staff (Office 365/Microsoft Exchange), a helpdesk ticketing system (CMMS), a scheduling system for faculty class and room assignments (Protocol ESS), an electronic curriculum development system (ECD), and other related systems as presented in the campus Self Evaluation Reports and confirmed in interviews with District and college technology staff. In addition, it was noted in interviews with campus technology managers that LACCD Information Technology assists with contract optimization, District wide technology standards, best practices, data interface to campus specific systems such as distance education systems and staff augmentations when needed to assist the colleges. (III.C.1)

The Team found that infrastructure and enterprise software systems are acquired and maintained at the District-level. LASC staff participate in District wide Technology committees and

meetings related to the ongoing management and operation of these systems. The LACCD Technology Strategic Plan Vision 2020 - Implementation Plan guides the deployment of various infrastructure upgrades and enterprise software systems. (Standard III.C.2)

LACCD IT provides a reliable and secure infrastructure for all colleges in the district through its metropolitan area network (MAN). As LACCD technology infrastructure changes and expands, LACCD IT and College IT work together to ensure that the technology infrastructure at LASC is current and sustainable. (Standards III.C.1, III.C.2).

LASC acquired much of its current technology equipment through capital project funds. Finding ongoing resources to maintain the large numbers of computers and specialty instruments with preventative maintenance, repairs, and warranties, as well as the anticipated replacement costs over time remains a challenge at LASC. Adequate funding resources need to be identified to ensure technology equipment is current with industry trends and standards. LASC acknowledges that additional funding sources may be needed in order to ensure sustainability of its existing technology as it ages, and to provide a foundation for growth. As it moves forward in its development of a cohesive vision of future and emerging technology needs, LASC is encouraged to continue seeking realistic and sustainable funding sources for technology equipment. (Standard III.C.2)

Within LASC's participatory governance structure, the Technology Planning Committee serves to make recommendations on IT matters, and is responsible for developing and evaluating the Technology Plan. Subsequent to the completion of LASC's 10-year Educational Master Plan, the Technology Plan will be modified to better align technology planning with programming. Technology planning is integrated into the annual planning through program review processes. Annual program reviews provide a mechanism for each department or unit to communicate technology needs and make requests for specific equipment or technology-related professional development for their area. Technology and media needs are identified through the annual planning and program review processes, as well as through user surveys, in an effort to ensure that student learning programs and services are well supported. LASC acknowledges that better methods of communication with the Technology Planning committee and IT department regarding upcoming instructional technology changes and enhancements identified through the annual program reviews need to be developed. To provide for the management, maintenance, and operation of campus-owed equipment, LASC IT and Media Services staff maintain a detailed inventory that tracks age, cost, and potential replacement and/or repurposing timelines. Permanent IT Services staffing is improving, with the recent addition of a Data Communication Specialist, replacement of the Senior Computer & Network Support Specialist and the hiring of an Assistant Computer & Network Support Specialist underway. Given the number of classrooms and other learning and presentation spaces, responding to AV/Media needs has been challenging. LASC is encouraged to adopt a more formalized, ongoing processes of assessing the effectiveness of technology services and using the results of the assessment to determine realistic resource allocations, both financial and human resources, to adequately fund operational needs and support continuous improvement. (Standard III.C.2)

The District Team finds as follows for Standard III.C2. Planning at the District level is defined in the LACCD Technology Strategic Plan-Vision 2020. The plan was developed with input from all nine campuses by the District Technology Planning Taskforce (DTPT). As stated in the plan, this

task force was commissioned by the TPPC and comprised faculty from each of the nine colleges, administrative leadership and students. The DTPT developed the plan as a framework for the District and identified five areas to achieve the mission, including learning, assessment, teaching, infrastructure, and productivity. The plan is reviewed regularly at TPPC meetings as evidenced by the committee minutes. In interviews with District staff, it was noted that the five-year re-assessment, due in 2016, of the current state of IT infrastructure at all the colleges and the District will be done in the next four to six months. This will be used to update the target baseline for all colleges in the technology areas identified in the LACCD Technology Strategic Plan-Vision 2020. Two of the campus technology plans indicate direct alignment with Vision 2020 and the other seven technology plans are directly aligned with their respective campus strategic plans which identify Vision 2020 as a guiding force. Further, the TPPC commissioned the Implementation Task Force (ITF) with representation from faculty, administrative leadership, represented staff, and students which developed thirty two objectives to work on for the next five years. This was approved by the TPPC in 2013. Some colleges are incorporating Total Cost of Ownership principles, but some have not. As identified in the District/College Functional Map this is a shared responsibility between the colleges and the District. (III.C.2)

The Team finds that LASC has systems in place for reliability and daily back-up of its local networks. While there has been discussion, to use a sister college for back-up redundancy, it has not been implemented. In addition, there is no evidence that the College has a Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery plan. To ensure continuity and disaster recovery, LASC is strongly encouraged to implement daily remote backup processes and to develop a Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery plan. (Standard III.C.3)

The District Team finds as follows for Standard III.C3. Reliable, safe, and secure technology resources are the primary responsibility of the colleges and a shared responsibility with the District. Through interviews, the Team determined that the LACCD Information Technology department has developed Disaster Recover/Business Continuity plans which include local backup to disk, immediate backup to a second data center at one of the college sites about 25 kilometers away, with a final encrypted copy to tape. The tapes are moved off site to a specialized tape vault service, and the tapes are rotated out of state to Nevada for greater protection. Each campus is responsible for the security and reliability of the systems and data they support locally. All nine colleges indicate varying levels of security for locally supported systems, with six doing local campus backup only, two having local backups at a second on-campus data center, and one college doing backup to the District. None of the colleges indicate the existence of a Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery plan in their respective Institution Self Evaluation Reports. Interviews with campus and District technology staff confirmed that student and staff data are stored both at the District and campus servers and should be protected. (III.C.3) The Team finds that the LACCD provides some technology-related training opportunities for IT Services staff. Many of LASC's technology trainings are provided by the department responsible for the use of the technology in question – for example, the library offers library-related technology training for students; IT/Media Services offers audio-visual training. The IT department and the DE Coordinator provide training and support for faculty teaching online, and web-enhanced courses through LMS/Etudes. (Standards III.C.1, III.C.2, III.C.4)

The College has various teaching and learning centers on the campus. Some evidence was found on the College website that supports the College's assertion that technology support and training



through numerous modalities is being provided. Conversations with faculty and students indicated that they are generally satisfied with the amount and quality of training they have received. The College reviews feedback from training evaluations to improve future workshops. However, some employees do not feel that adequate financial and human resources are being provided to ensure classroom technology is reliable and functional to meet their instructional needs. The College is encouraged to continue its work to further develop ongoing and systematic assessments for the effectiveness of its technology and distance education training. (Standards III.C.2, III.C.3, III.C.4)

The District Team finds as follows for Standard III.C.4. Support, including training, in the effective use of technology is the primary responsibility of the colleges. Each campus has the appropriate instruction and support for faculty, staff, students, and administrators for their respective systems as evidenced by the existence of various forms of teaching and learning centers on the campus as well as training opportunities. As confirmed by interviews with District and campus technology staff, training is scheduled as part of any new systems deployment. The established strategy is to create super-users for all District wide systems so that the local campus can maintain the training after initial system deployment. The District will also schedule trainings on an as-requested basis when a significant need is identified. Campus technology staff also indicates that the District Information Technology unit provides funds for off-site training in deployed technology solutions. (III.C.4)

Both the Team and the District Team find as follows for Standard III.C.5. Policies and administrative regulations in place at the District which guide the appropriate use of technology in the teaching and learning process include B-27 Network Security Policy, B-28 Use of District and College Computing Facilities, B-33 Web Accessibility Standards and Guidelines, B-34 ADA Self Evaluation and Transition Plan, E-89 Distance Education Policy, E-105 Student Privacy/FERPA, and E-114 Identity Theft Prevention Program. The colleges acknowledge that they abide by these policies to guide operations as evidenced in their respective Institution Self Evaluation Reports. The Team confirmed in interviews that the TPPC and TPC suggest policies as needed to aid in the appropriate use of the technology. In addition, the colleges have additional local policies for campus technologies such as websites and distance education systems. (III.C.5)

### **Conclusions:**

The Team concludes that the College meets the Standard for III.C.4, but it does not meet Standards for III.C.1, III.C.2, III.C.3, and III.C.5.

IT Services has actively worked with LACCD on integrated planning efforts which have resulted in more informed, sound decisions about technology being made. This is evidenced by the relocation and refurbishing of the College's data center. The groundwork is laid in the LACCD Technology Strategic Plan – Vision 2020 but it has not been fully embraced as a guiding plan for local College planning or integrated into the College's planning processes. The College acknowledges there is no Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery plan and no redundant data center.

LASC is encouraged to align its strategic vision for distance education with its Educational Master Plan, and develop ongoing processes for evaluating the ongoing effectiveness of its

distance education offerings and technology services. In addition, the Technology Plan should be integrated with the program review process and with the on-going and routine technology assessments done by College and LACCD. The LASC Technology Plan should align with and directly support the College Educational Master Plan.

The District Team concludes as follows for Standard III.C. Technology resources are adequate to support the institution's management and operational functions. Tremendous effort has been put into integrated planning within each college and is guided by planning processes District wide. The institution plans for District-level technology replacement using a Total Cost of Ownership model for District systems. Sound decisions about technology are being made as a result. None of the colleges acknowledge a Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery plan although all indicate redundancy on campus data centers and local backups. The District and campuses provide appropriate instruction and support in the effective use of technology solutions. The District has appropriate policies and procedures that guide the appropriate use of technology in teaching and learning processes. The District meets all the Standards in III.C except Standard III.C.3.

The District Team commends the District for Standard III.C.1, III.C.4, as follows. The Team commends the technology staff from the nine colleges and the District for their teamwork and collaboration in sharing staff resources, developing technology standards, collaborative training, and deployment of integrated systems which result in effective and efficient use of technology resources to improve academic quality and institutional effectiveness. (III.C.1, III.C.4)

### **College Recommendations for Compliance**

See College Recommendation 1.2 and 1.5.

### **District Recommendation for Compliance**

#### **District Recommendation 4.**

In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the District and colleges develop a comprehensive business continuity/disaster recovery plan to ensure reliable access, safety, and security. (III.C.3)

### **Standard III.D. Financial Resources**

#### **General Observations**

Los Angeles Community College District is in debt to the LACCD and therefore the Team questions whether or not LASC receives sufficient financial resources to support and sustain student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness. The LACCD Budget Committee is charged with financial planning. A complex resource allocation model established through the District Budget Committee is used to determine the funding level of LASC's annual operating budget (apportionment allocation). Fiscal Planning for capital development is influenced by the Long Range Capital Plans and funded by available local bond resources.

The District Team's General Observations in reference to III.D.1-16 are as follows.

The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) has strong fiscal practices as evidenced by the reports from the District's external auditors, strong reserves, and documented practices in place to help achieve the District's goals of Organizational Effectiveness and Resources and Collaboration. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO)/Treasurer serves as the executive head which oversees all financial operations, including directing the development of financial strategies, policies, programs, models, controls, and standards to ensure the financial integrity and performance of the colleges, and also supports the overall strategic missions of the District. The CFO also monitors the effectiveness of the Board-approved budget allocation mechanisms and plans, develops, directs, and evaluates the District's treasury which includes cash and investment management. The CFO manages and directs the following departments: 1) Budget and Management Analysis; 2) Accounting; 3) Central Financial Aid; and 4) Office of Internal Audit.

In addition, the District Team observes the following for Standard III.D. Under the direction of the CFO, there are 91 staff members who provide services to the colleges. Staffing includes six staff members within the CFO Office. In the Budget and Management Analysis department, eight staff provide direction to the colleges on budget development, budget monitoring, and analysis of budget activity; in Accounting, 57 staff are responsible for general accounting, accounts payable, and payroll; in Central Financial Aid, 13 staff ensure all student aid programs are in compliance; and seven staff in the Office of Internal Audit provide investigations and internal control improvements.

Also, the District Team observes the following for Standard III.D. The District's main budget committee is the District Budget Committee (DBC), a District-level governance committee comprised of the nine college presidents, six Academic Senate representatives, six Faculty Guild representatives, and one representative from each of the following: AFT (American Federation of Teachers) Staff Guild, Local 911 Teamster, EEIU Local 99, Building and Construction Trades, Supervisors Local 721, Classified Management, and Associated Students Organization. This committee also includes the deputy chancellor, chief financial officer, and budget director as resource personnel. The DBC reports to both the chancellor and all constituent groups, and is charged with formulating recommendations to the chancellor for budget planning policies consistent with the District's Strategic Plan; reviewing the District's budget; making recommendations to the chancellor for adoption or modifications; and reviewing the District's financial condition on a quarterly basis.

Moreover, for Standard III.D., the District Team observes as follows. The chancellor (ex-officio), the CFO (chair), four Academic Senate/faculty representatives, one union/association representative, two college presidents, two college vice presidents, and the deputy chancellor serve on the Executive Committee of the District Budget Committee (EDBC). The purpose of the committee is to advise the chancellor on financial matters, evaluate the District Budget Committee, manage the District Budget Committee agenda, and perform as a workgroup on fiscal matters.

Furthermore, the District Team observes Standard III. as follows. Beginning in April 2016, a new vice chancellor of finance and resource development will begin tenure and will hire a new director, institutional advancement. The latter, new position will focus on resource and workforce development. There will be no significant changes to the responsibilities of current

staff except for the addition of one reporting layer between the chief financial officer and chancellor.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The Team finds as follows. LASC, the smallest college in the District, receives an annual budget allocation that is meant to support its annual operation costs. The current LACCD resource allocation model was implemented in 2013 with the agreement that it would be reviewed in three years. Despite the change in the allocation model, the operating budget continues to be insufficient to meet the ongoing non-salaried expense needs or costs associated with total cost of ownership. As a result, the College has been in a persistent budget deficit position for a number of years and it expects to end the 2016 fiscal year with a 1.9 million dollar shortfall.

A formal budget deficit reduction plan has been in place for the College since 2008 which requires that three percent of the current year budget allocation be used to repay the outstanding deficit balance. LASC takes the accountability for the management of its budget seriously and keeps its planning groups and Board of Trustees informed on the challenges of managing the reduction of its budget deficit. It is unclear how the College can balance its budget without an adjustment being made to the LACCD resource allocation model. In addition to the unrestricted budget allocation, the College receives various state categorical allocations and other local revenue, such as community service/facility rentals. A review of LASC's Student Success and Support allocation revealed that approximately \$500,000 of the \$1.547 million received from State was not distributed to the College to support its counseling, assessment and follow-up services to students, thereby adding to its problems in allocating resources to programs that are in need of additional funding. Student Equity funds (disproportionately impacted students: financial aid recipients, household income, unemployed, foster youth, educational attainment) listed in the Budget Operation Plan did not align with the amount funded through the District budget allocation model and the number being served by the College. (Standard III.D.1, IV.B)

Annually, the Strategic Planning Committee develops an Integrated College Operational Plan (ICOP) to ensure sufficient and properly allocated resources. The plan is based on the annual and program review plans and the input from shared governance committees charged with college wide planning. The Strategic Plan establishes the framework determining funding priorities. While guidelines and processes are established, many expressed that these processes exist on paper only. Information is not consistently disseminated throughout the College resulting in questions regarding transparency and accountability. (Standard III.D.2)

The College follows the LACCD financial planning and budgeting model and calendar. All College constituencies have an opportunity to participate in planning activities through the program review process, which guides the financial planning and budget development, including prioritizing resource request. (Standard III.D.3)

The College's planning process reflects a realistic assessment of available financial resources, development of financial resources, partnerships, and expenditure requirements. The ICOP does attempt to integrate the goals identified in the Strategic Plan, Facilities Master Plan and the Technology Master Plan. The Campus Climate Survey indicated that not all respondents agreed that the guidelines and process for budget development are clearly communicated. The College is searching for methods to increase understanding and participation in institutional planning.

The Budget Committee is working to change its focus from one that allocates resources to one that recommend College budget planning policies. (Standard III.D.4)

The District has a well integrated financial management process that is regularly evaluates its financial practices and internal control structure to ensure the financial integrity of the District. The CFO and the colleges work together to ensure that dependable and timely information for sound financial decision-making is consistently available to all parties. The district has an internal audit department that works on internal controls and has a Central Financial Aid Unit (CFAU) that continually monitors federal loans. The District received an unmodified external audit, with no identified material weaknesses, for 2013 and 2014. Financial information is distributed on a set schedule to the Board, colleges, the District Budget Committee (DBC) and the Board Budget and Finance Committee (BFC). Additionally, the College periodically reviews its local internal controls to ensure processes for managing business and financial activities are adhered to. (Standard III.D.5)

LASC's financial information is available through the Budget Committee website. The information is accurate and appropriately allocated given the constraints of the College's annual budget allocation. (Standard III.D.6)

LASC received several (not material) audit findings from external auditors in 2012 and 2013. The College has taken the necessary corrective actions and has responded comprehensively and timely. Beginning in 2016, audit findings will be reported at the Budget Committee. (Standard III.D.7)

The District reviews cash flow on a regular schedule and has maintained a sufficient cash flow, and healthy reserves, which range from 13% to 17%. Based on this the district was able to get through the recession without furloughing or laying off permanent employees. The District has issued a TRANS only once in the last decade. The District meets the standard.

As evidence, the District provided the following:

- Final Budget presented to the Board in September – a number of budgets are included as evidence.
- Bond Rating updated by Standard and Poor's from AA to AA+.
- Reserve levels – Prior to 2012, 5% of total unrestricted general fund revenue at the centralized account level, and 1% of college revenue base at the college level. For 2012-13 the centralized amount was raised to 7.5%. Since 2013-14 the District has two reserves, 1) a District General Fund Reserve (6.5%) and; 2) a Contingency Reserve (3.5%).
- Risk Management – adequate property and liability insurance – coverage limits are included. Also has WC coverage.
- Pending litigation report is made monthly to the Board of Trustees.

However, while the District remains solvent and meets the Standard, the College struggles, in debt to the District, to maintain adequate cash flow due to an annual operating budget allocation that seems to be inadequate to meet the basic expenses and needs of the college. This

contradiction between a “solvent” District and an in-debt College must be resolved. (Standard III.D.1, III.D.8)

The District practices effective oversight and management of all financial resources. It continually evaluates and, where needed, improves its oversight of financial aid, grants, externally funded programs, contracts, foundations, auxiliary organizations and institutional investment and assets. The District has both centralized and decentralized practices to ensure effective oversight.

#### Centralized District Oversight

- Purchasing
- Institutional Investment and Assets
- Budget Oversight by providing guidance to colleges and develops internal budget operational plans
- Financial Aid is coordinated by the Central Financial Aid Unit to standardize policy and procedures, check compliance and to reconcile the student loan program.
- Grants are managed by “Specialized Employees” to ensure compliance with applicable rules and regulations
- External Audits are managed at the District level
- Internal Audits
- The District Foundation is the sole auxiliary organization for which the District is directly responsible.
- Decentralized District Oversight
- Purchasing
- Fiscal and Enrollment Management – district staff meet with college senior staff on a quarterly basis to review FTES and fiscal projections.
- College Foundations and their audits
- Student Associated Student Organizations (ASOs) and are under the college presidents.

The District has a long history of compliance and sound financial management and oversight practices. Both colleges and the Educational Services Center (ESC) identify and correct deficiencies in internal controls and financial management practices when they are identified. Improved communication and coordination between District staff and the nine colleges will help ensure improved responsibility and compliance with all rules and regulations. The District meets this standard. (Standard III.D.9)

The College enters into a variety of contracts at the local level. Additionally, the district enters into contracts that benefit the College. The College follows Board policies and District procedures in overseeing and managing its contracts. The VP also ensures contracts contain the appropriate provisions to maintain the integrity of the College programs, services and operations. Oversight and management of contracts has not been consistently maintained. To ensure operating procedures are adhered to the College intends to hire a “purchasing aide” to assist in the process. The College should put procedures into place that ensure contracts are regularly reviewed to avoid a lapse in services. Copies of all contracts should be maintained in a centralized file. (Standard III.D.10)

The District identifies and evaluates its obligations on an annual basis and includes the



information in the District's audit reports. The audit reports also confirm that LACCD has a positive net position. The College and District are able to meet its short and long-term obligations due to the positive financial position of the District, including compensated absences and OPEB. Annual audits aid the College in finding ways to make improvements as evidenced by changes recommended for the College Business Office and the Bookstore. (Standard III.D.11)

The College planning process delineates in the Strategic Planning Handbook and Budget Operation Plan. The College periodically reviews its planning process and makes changes when needed. There have been lengthy discussions with the District's Budget Committee and other District leaders to review the District's funding model and the effect that the current model has on the College's ability to provide comprehensive services and instruction and conclude with a balanced budget. Despite insufficient funds, instruction, student services and administrative department across campus develop plans to maintain the integrity of the College's academic and student services programs, and campus operations. (Standard III.D.11)

The District takes appropriate and timely action in planning and allocating payment of liabilities and future obligations. It monitors for potential increases in OPEB and other employee-related obligations. (Standard III.D.12)

The evidence reviewed shows that the College does not have any locally incurred debt (Standard III.D.13)

The College financial resources are used with integrity in a manner consistent with the intended purpose of the funding source. To more effectively meet the College's academic, student services programs and campus operational needs, the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee should gain a better understanding of appropriate uses of its various resources to optimize funding of the prioritized list of annual budget requests. (Standard III.D.14)

The financial aid program is a shared responsibility of the College and District. The student financial aid default rate has been above federally established 30% threshold for three out of the last four years. Efforts to improve students' financial literacy are minimal. Likewise, access to financial aid services is minimal due to very limited office hours. Work needs to be done to ensure students remain enrolled and successfully complete their classes to reduce the amount of Title IV funds being returned. There is a concern that the College may lose its eligibility to offer federal financial aid. (Standard III.D.15)

Although 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 and the quality of its programs, services, and operations, as stated earlier (Standard II.B.2) the College's SmartThinking contract for online tutoring lapsed making tutoring only available in-person. Also, it was noted (Standard II.B.2) that the lapse did not appear to be the result of a data-driven decision. (III.D.16)

The District Team's Finding and Evidence for III.D.1-16 is as follows. In October 2013, the Board of Trustees adopted the District Financial Accountability Measures in response to a 2013 Accreditation Evaluation Report for Los Angeles Valley College, which recommended that accountability measures be put in place to ensure long-term fiscal stability and financial integrity

of the college. The District Financial Accountability Measures are used to ensure sound fiscal management and provide a process to monitor and evaluate the financial health of all colleges within the District and require that each college president include provisions for (1) a balanced budget; (2) long-term enrollment plans; (3) position control for personnel; (4) an annual financial plan; (5) quarterly reporting on expenditures and overall fiscal status; (6) a college reserve policy; and (7) action plans. (III.D.1)

The District's budget planning process is clearly laid out in the District's "Operation Plan Instructions" for 2015-16 (District's website) which covers the budget calendar for the year and detailed instructions on how the budget will be prepared. In reviewing the last three years' final budgets, the Team finds that they are well done and contain a very good analysis of the budget in both summary and detailed form. Information is presented at both the District and college levels and includes the general fund as well as the other funds of the District (i.e., bookstore, cafeteria, child development, building, financial aid, special revenue, and debt service funds). The plan includes the chancellor's recommendations on the use of \$57.67 million of State Mandated Reimbursement Revenues and how they were tied to the District's Strategic Plan Goals. (III.D.3-4, 6)

While the District's Financial Accountability Measures require that the colleges maintain position control for personnel, upon discussion with finance staff, it was noted that the District's information system does not currently have a tool to track and maintain personnel costs. While the District's percentage of salaries and benefits compared to overall expenditures is approximately 85 percent, several of the colleges significantly exceed this amount. (III.D.4)

The District has an internal audit department that regularly reviews all business and finance systems to ensure compliance with relevant policies, procedures, laws, and statutory regulations. The Internal Audit Plans for the last three years reflect a focus on cash controls, procurements/contracts, Associate Student organizations, foundations, human resources, special requests, financial aid, and the fraud hotline. Over the last three years the internal audit department averaged 7,500 audit hours per year. (III.D.5) (III.D.8)

The District has several reserves. Since 2013-14, the District has had a general fund reserve of six and one-half percent of expenditures and other uses, and a contingency reserve of three and one-half percent. Over the last three years, the District has maintained an ending balance over 13 percent. There is also a two percent set aside used to fund deferred maintenance projects, which is sometimes referred to as the Deferred Maintenance Reserve. (III.D.5) (III.D.9)

Audit reports are available for review on the District's website and the last three years' reports all included "unmodified" opinions rendered by the District's external auditors, the cleanest opinion an auditor can give. The Management, Discussion and Analysis (MD&A) for the last three years was well done and included a summary of the history of the District, a summary of economic factors, and explanations of changes between current-year and prior-year numbers. There were no "material weaknesses" reported in the audit reports for the years ending June 30, 2013, 2014, and 2015. There was a "significant deficiency" reported in each of the last three years' reports related to information technology controls, and "To Be Arranged" (TBA) hours that have been outstanding since the 2007 fiscal audit. In 2014, the audit report included several recurring significant deficiency findings in the EOPS/CARE programs, but those were cleared in



2015. In the last three years, there have been other findings that are considered significant deficiencies and/or compliance findings, but recent results show the District clearing those findings by the next audit year. (III.D.7) (III.D.10)

The District's audit reports for the bond program are posted on the District's website. There are two separate reports, one for performance audits and the second for financial audits. The performance audit reports (2006-07 through 2013-14) are quite detailed and address such things as analysis of change orders, completeness of operating procedures, and evaluation of the project close-out process. The financial reports (2007-08 through 2014-15) are broken down between Proposition A, Proposition AA and the Measure J bond programs, each with a separate opinion. For the 2014-15 financial report, all three opinions were all unmodified and the results of the auditor tests disclosed no instance of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards. For the performance audits, it was noted that there were several substantial improvements over key capital project delivery processes compared to what was found in previous years. There were several areas where additional improvements could be made which included two medium-priority opportunities and three low-priority opportunities. No high-priority opportunities were identified. (III.D.8)

The cash available to the District is sufficient as evidenced by the District not participating in Tax Revenue Anticipation Notes (TRANs) since the 2012-13 year, and the cash balance reported to the State Chancellor's Office in the CCFS-311Q. Over the last three years, the report showed a low of \$51,116,662 and a high of \$262,061,404 for cash balances. (III.D.9)

The District has adequate property and liability coverage in the amounts of \$600 million and \$40 million, respectively. The District's property deductible is \$25,000 per occurrence, and the liability self-insurance retention is \$1.5 million per occurrence. The District is self-insured for Workers' Compensation up to \$750,000 per claim through USI, with excess coverage through Safety National. Because some of the colleges have incurred huge debt to the District, the District Executive Committee of the District Budget Committee has recommended a debt repayment policy. The committee also proposed a plan for future STRS/PERS increases. In the 2015-16 budget, the District set aside \$20 million (later revised to \$22 million) of one-time funds to fund the future obligation for the STRS/PERS increases that will impact the District over the next few years. The District's plans call for using a portion of the \$22 million each year to cover two-thirds of the cost of the increase; this will cover the on-going increase through 2020-21. (III.D.10) (III.D.11)

The District has a significant, unfunded liability for retiree healthcare. As of the 2013 actuarial valuation, the liability was estimated at \$478,320,000 and the market value of assets in the District's Irrevocable Trust (PERS) was \$76,800,000, resulting in an unfunded balance of \$401,520,000. The District Annual Required Contribution (ARC) for 2014-15 was \$34,604,000, and the District made contributions of \$29,604,235. At the end of fiscal year 2014-15, the liability was 16.06 percent funded. While there was no official plan to fund the entire OPEB liability, steps have been taken to mitigate the liability. Examples of that include changing the health benefit plan to PERS Medical which reduced the liability by over \$120 million, the creation of the irrevocable trust through CalPERS, and the negotiated settlement with all six collective bargaining groups to take 1.92 percent of COLA in 2006 and apply it toward the ARC. Over the last two years, the District contributed 86 percent of the ARC payment. At the time of

the accreditation visit, the District was waiting for the draft of the 2015 Actuarial Valuation. (III.D.12)

The District’s long-term debt schedule reflects a liability of \$4.3 billion with most of the debt being General Obligation Bonds where debt payment resources will come from taxes on local property. Other long-term debt reported is Workers’ Compensation claims, general liability claims, compensated absences, and capital lease obligations. One liability that is not recorded is for load banking, an option available to faculty as part of the faculty collective bargaining agreement, Article 39. Discussion with District managers confirmed that the colleges have load banking obligations, but a liability has not been booked into the District’s financial statements. (III.D.12, 14) District audits reveal no locally incurred debt instruments. (III.D.13)

The District does not have any Certificates of Participation outstanding. Auxiliary activities, fund-raising efforts, and grant monitoring are done at each of the colleges, with some oversight from the District. Claims are done through the District’s Accounting Office. For example, the District’s Internal Audit department has spent significant hours auditing the Colleges’ Associated Student Organization funds and college foundations. The District also coordinates the external financial audits for the college foundations. The Los Angeles Community College District Foundation has not had much activity over the last several years. The last audit report was for the years ended June 30, 2012 and 2013; at that time, cash assets were \$328,845. Reviewing the District’s Financial Summary, the cash balance as of February 29, 2016, is \$384,975. There is a Representation Letter with the auditors to do a review of the financial statements for the years ended June, 30, 2014 and 2015. A review is proposed instead of an audit due to the limited activity. (III.D.14)

The District’s Financial Aid Unit (CFAU) coordinates the work of college Financial Aid offices and ensures college and District operations are legally compliant. The unit implements standardized policies and procedures throughout the District, reconciles student loan programs, and provides guidance to college administrators and Financial Aid managers. The CFAU also assures that the colleges clean up any audit issues as soon as discovered and tracks and makes phone calls to help collect on the Federal Perkins Loan Program. Default rates for the last four years were provided by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer.

**Perkins Default Rates**

	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
<b>LA City</b>	25.35%	22.67%	26.44%	28.00%
<b>East LA</b>	24.53%	18.33%	17.46%	14.52%
<b>LA Harbor</b>	33.33%	37.50%	33.33%	33.33%
<b>LA Mission</b>	10.00%	14.29%	28.57%	41.67%
<b>LA Pierce</b>	33.96%	33.33%	41.67%	35.90%
<b>LA Southwest</b>	31.58%	27.59%	34.00%	34.00%
<b>LA Trade-Tech</b>	36.66%	43.75%	38.54%	21.30%
<b>LA Valley</b>	12.68%	14.29%	12.63%	32.39%
<b>West LA</b>	46.88%	34.48%	39.13%	47.62%

Four colleges had a Perkins default rate that exceeded 30 percent for three, straight years. Los Angeles Harbor, Los Angeles Pierce, Los Angeles Trade-Technical (LATT), and West Los Angeles had total principal outstanding loans in default that exceeded 240 days in the amount of \$874,202. The District is phasing out the Perkins Loan Program and is moving to the Direct Loan Program. The published default rates for the Direct Loan Program only go through fiscal year 2012. Only one of the nine colleges had rates over 30 percent-LATT at 32.2 percent; however, it has been in the program for only one year. (ER5) (III.D.10) (III.D.15)

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standards and related Eligibility Requirements except for III.D.1, III.D.4, III.D.9, III.D.10, III.D.15, and III.D.16.

The College has been in a persistent budget deficit position for a number of years and it expects to end the 2016 fiscal year with a 1.9 million dollar shortfall. The Team did not have the time to conduct an audit of the College to determine the components of the shortfall, whether the shortfall has been caused by controllable or uncontrollable costs, and/or whether policies of the District have expenditure requirements in place that make it difficult for the College to conform to its allocation given the conditions of the area it serves, or to evaluate the efficacy of the District's allocation model in relation to the student needs in the area served by the College. These and other issues related to the shortfall and its impact on the College need to be addressed and solved collaboratively with the District.

However, the Team suggests that the College, in order to meet the needs of programs and services and ensure fiscal stability, should integrate all financial resources when prioritizing annual budget requests so that it can better make use of the appropriate funds for specific expenditures.

The Team concluded that the persistent budget deficit affects how much the College can respond to other financial-related issues such as default loans. For example, the Team concludes that improving students' loan literacy and financial aid services is hampered, at least partially, by a lack of funds for personnel. Also, the student loan default information presented by the District Team illustrates that the loan default issue is a District wide problem. The District Team reported that the District is phasing out the Perkins Loan Program and is moving to the Direct Loan Program. The Team suggests that the District and the colleges need to determine how the former will fund an effort to improve loan payback in its new Direct Loan Program and collaboratively determine the causes for excess default rates, and initiate policies, procedures, and actions to significantly reduce the rate to an acceptable level, as established by the District and colleges under the new system.

The Team suggests that the College improve its campus communications and information dissemination in order to improve transparency and accountability in the use of its financial resources.

The District Team commends the District for its substantial support of the internal audit function. With the exception of Standard III.D.7 and III.D.12, the District meets the Standards.

## **College Recommendations for Compliance**

See College Recommendation 1.4 and College Recommendation 5.

## **District Recommendations for Compliance**

### **District Recommendation 6.**

In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the District comprehensively responds to the recurring audit findings concerning: 1) the internal control weakness in information technology controls over the areas of security and change management; and 2) the state compliance exceptions related to “To Be Arranged” (TBA) hours attendance documentation and course classifications. (III.D.7)

### **District Recommendation 8.**

In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the District develop a process to capture the full impact of the District’s liability for load banking and to record the liability in the District’s financial statements. (III.D.12)

## **District Recommendations for Improvement**

### **District Recommendation 5.**

In order to increase effectiveness and better assess financial resource availability, the Team recommends that the District implement a District position control system to track and budget for personnel costs. (III.D.4)

### **District Recommendation 7.**

In order to increase effectiveness, the Team recommends that the District develop and publicize a plan to fully fund the Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB) Liability, which is currently funded at 16.06 percent. (III.D.12)

## **STANDARD IV LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

### **Standard IV.A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes**

#### **General Observations**

The College has developed and implemented shared governance systems that are designed to empower College stakeholders to participate and inform decisions that impact the College mission. It has a structured participatory governance process. The process provides an opportunity for all constituent groups to participate and share in the governance of the College. The *Participatory Decision Making and Integrated Planning Handbook* is the guidepost for decision-making and participatory governance. The structure is systematic and includes several councils and committees that are broad-based and inclusive which allows all stakeholders to share in the dialogue and decision-making process. A master calendar has been established for transparency and open communication throughout the campus community. This structure has representatives from the faculty, staff, students and administrative bodies. The communication

flow is clearly defined as well as the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder group. The College administers campus surveys to measure the effectiveness of its decision-making and governance process and solicits continuous feedback from each constituent group. It is evident that the College actively uses these governance structures to make decisions regarding student success and institutional effectiveness.

The President engages the campus in a reflective institutional dialogue that facilitates the internal decision-making process. However, there is indication that there are challenges with external processes that involve the District Office. While there are several governance structures and processes designed to empower constituency groups, the campus stakeholders have shared a number of concerns. As a result of these concerns, there is a desire to revisit the number of committees involved in the decision-making process.

The District Team, in reference to Standard IV.A.1 observes as follows. The LACCD has a seven-member Board that presides over nine colleges serving more than 225,000 students. The LACCD Board of Trustees establishes policies that are consistent with its mission statement and exercises oversight of the college's educational programs by means of its Board Rules and Administrative Regulations (Board Rules, Chapter 1, Article 2).

The chancellor of the District executes policies and procedures and presides over the daily operations of the colleges. The college presidents report to the chancellor of the District.

In reference to Standard IV.A.3-5, the District Team observes as follows. The District supports effective institutional governance through well-established practices, which ensure administrators and faculty exercise a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning, and budget. The shared governance process is the primary mechanism by which all campus constituents participate in decision-making. Faculty have primary responsibility for curriculum and student learning programs and services, but administrators are appropriately involved in the curriculum process. In some instances, classified staff are not included in the membership of District wide institutional governance committees regarding institutional planning and policies.

### **Findings and Evidence**

LASC has established a spectrum of shared governance structures that support the participation and inclusion of all constituency groups in the deliberative decision making process. The College leadership follows policies and procedures that support consultation and dialogue before internal administrative and District decisions are made. The decision-making processes are clearly defined in the governance documents and contractual agreements for all constituent groups. Through its shared governance structures, including the *Participatory Decision Making & Integrated Planning Handbook*, *Campus Climate Survey*, *Point of Service Surveys*, *Working Environmental Working Committee*, and the College Council. The College delegates the responsibility for recommendations about curriculum and student learning programs and services to faculty and academic administrators. The implementation of the handbook has served to assist committees. The College Council, College Hour, and Annual Retreats, Program Review Committee, and the Instructional and Non-Instructional Program Review Committees are examples of the mechanisms by which the shared governance is carried out. Agendas and meeting minutes document the participation of all stakeholder's respective roles in the governance process. Governance structures are periodically updated to insure that committee

membership is open to all stakeholders and to ensure maximum participation by all constituency groups. The College Council and its subcommittees have representation from all campus constituencies and collective bargaining units, which allows for participation and involvement from College stakeholders in institutional policies, planning, and budget related decisions. Each subcommittee has a charge and Sharepoint site to host agendas, minutes and documents of the committee's actions. Regular reports from the College president and each College committee are available on the College website. The Office of Institutional Research and Advancement has created a repository of documents on SharePoint to manage meeting agendas and minutes. Committee chairs have been trained on how to use SharePoint as a meeting management system. While systems are in place, the campus continues to refine and assess its processes to ensure alignment with the institutional goals and outcomes that impact the teaching and learning environment. Not all committees have fully migrated to Sharepoint; thus, all sites are not populated. Regular reports from the College president and each College committee are available on the College website. Interviews with various stakeholders affirm that the process and structure of the shared governance process is well established and clearly understood. (IV.A.1)

While the District and the College's processes are transparent and inclusive, many stakeholders expressed frustration and mistrust of the effectiveness of the shared governance. This sentiment was clearly expressed during the forums and interviews. Stakeholders consistently expressed concerns regarding the effectiveness of the decision-making and participatory governance process. Many stakeholders shared that their requests and recommendations are not always taken into considerations. They complained that they have not seen any tangible outcomes in the areas of human resources and fiscal resources. Consequently, there are clearly ongoing challenges in regard to aligning the campus needs with the external decision-making of the Governing Board. (IV.A.1, IV.A.2)

LASC has a decision-making and governance process that is transparent and provides opportunity for open dialogue and involvement of all constituent groups. Part-time faculty are invited to participate at all levels of the College. As a matter of fact, part-time faculty are included on various Committees and are assigned re-assigned time to cover crucial areas of operations (i.e. DE Committee and SLO Committee). Whether or not this is optimal for student success and institutional effectiveness is unknown. While opportunity is provided for all constituents to participate in the decision-making, classified staff and students shared that their voices were minimized by the voice of faculty members on committees. Additionally, they indicated that due to the limited number of classified personnel, their availability to serve is limited. The process is systematic and utilizes the website and the SharePoint meeting management system to record recommendations and decisions made by governance councils and committees. The Academic Senate established an ad hoc committee to assess and streamline the consultation process, however, implementing the new process, the decision was made to re-establish the former process. (IV.A.2)

The College provided evidence to illustrate that administrators and faculty, through policy and procedures, have a substantive and clearly defined role in institutional governance and exercise a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning, and budget that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise. (Standard IV.A.3)

The District Team finds as follows for Standard IV.A.1. The District has a culture that

encourages participation by all constituencies, described by the chancellor as “The Power of NINE!” in reference to the District’s nine colleges. Constituent participation includes the District- and college-level Academic Senate, the six collective bargaining units, the Associated Students, a seven-member Board of Trustees, and District/college management. These constituent bodies have the opportunity to provide input into decision-making as outlined in the *District Governance and Functions Handbook*. The governance functional map outlines the lines of authority and delineates the colleges and District roles. The *District Governance and Functions Handbook* describes the overall governance and decision-making structures for the colleges and the District (IV.A).

Also, the District Team finds as follows for Standard IV.A.3. Faculty and administrators have ample opportunity for providing input on institutional policies, planning, and budget through participation on college-level governance committees, District wide executive administrative councils, and District-level governance committees. At all the colleges, administrators serve on governance committees based on their areas of expertise. The LACCD and AFT (American Federation of Teachers) Agreement 2014-2017 (Agreement) emphasizes the importance of faculty representation from the union and senate on participatory governance committees. The LACCD and AFT Agreement specifies which committees require faculty representation and those for which it is recommended. The Agreement requires faculty membership for both Budget and Strategic Planning Committees. (IV.A.3.)

The College provided evidence that faculty and academic administrators, through policy and procedures, and through well-defined structures, have responsibility for recommendations about curriculum and student learning programs and services. (Standard IV.A.4)

The District Team finds as follows for Standard IV.A.4. Faculty and administrators follow well-defined structures in making recommendations about curriculum and student learning programs and services. All nine of the LACCD colleges reference in their self-evaluations the primacy of faculty in making recommendations about curriculum and student learning programs and services. Administrative regulation E-65 lays out in great detail a step-by-step process for curriculum development and approval. This process recognizes the primacy of faculty members in making curriculum recommendations while also ensuring administrative input in the curriculum process. (IV.A.4.)

The Team finds that through its system of board and institutional governance, the College provided evidence demonstrating that it has systems that are meant to ensure the appropriate consideration of relevant perspectives; that decision-making is aligned with expertise and responsibility; and that timely action on institutional plans, policies, curricular change, and other key considerations occurs. However, in practice, through forums and interviews, the Team observed that this was not always the case and that there was much frustration with the participatory decision-making processes. Standard IV.A.5

The District Team also finds as follows. There are well-defined processes for communication before internal administrative and external Board decisions are made that impact faculty, staff, and students. Recommendations from governance and contractually mandated committees are solicited before decisions are made.

In addition, the District Team finds as follows in reference to Standard IV.A.5. The roles of administrators and faculty in the development of District policy are delineated in Board Rule XVII, Article I-Academic Senate and Board of Trustees Shared Governance Policy and Article II-Students and Board of Trustees Shared Governance Policy and in Chancellor's Directive No. 70. LACCD does not have a classified senate. The AFT Staff Guild, Local 1521A, represents the full-time and part-time classified clerical/technical administrative staff. The Supervisory Employees' Union, S.E.I.U. Local 721, represents regular full-time and regular part-time classified employees of the District who are assigned to classifications in the Supervisory Unit.

The District Team finds that the "Role of the Unions," in the *District Governance and Functions Handbook*, describes District-level consultation between the administration and representatives of the six bargaining units. Consultation occurs through:

1. direct consultation during regular meetings between union representatives and the chancellor and/or the college presidents;
2. regular monthly grievance meetings between union representatives, the chancellor, the chancellor's designees and/or the college presidents;
3. participation in relevant District and college governance and decision-making committees, including the District Budget Committee, the Joint Labor/Management Benefits Committee, and the college governance councils; and
4. direct representation from the Resource Table during monthly Board meetings.

The District Team also finds that in some cases, it appears that classified staff do not have appropriate representation on District-level institutional governance committees regarding institutional planning, policies, and other key considerations. For example, the Student Success Initiative Committee (SSIC) states that the "overarching purpose of the Student Success Initiative is to create an effective District wide network of faculty, administrators and *staff* dedicated to improving student success." However, the committee's membership does not include representatives from the classified staff. Likewise, the committee membership of the District Planning Committee does not include representation from the classified staff. (IV.A.5)

The Team finds that the processes for decision-making and the resulting decisions at LASC are documented and widely communicated across the institution. (Standard IV.A.6)

Leadership roles and the institution's governance and decision-making policies, procedures, and processes are regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness. The institution widely communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement. (Standard IV. A.7)

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standards and related Eligibility Requirements except for Standard IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.3, IV.A.5. While the internal campus decision-making processes are well defined, the Team found that it is important the College work to refine its consultation process with all constituents and to further provide classified personnel and students opportunities to be engaged in a meaningful decision-making process, one in which they can realize their input was considered and valued.



The District Team concludes as follows for Standard IV.A.1. LACCD has clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of not only the colleges and the District, but also the Board members, the chancellor, and the college presidents. The District has completed and revised its governance structures and procedures, which demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement. The District meets this standard. LACCD meets Standards IV.A.3, IV.A.4, and IV.A.5.

### **College Recommendations for Compliance**

See College Recommendation 1.3 and College Recommendation 3.

### **District Recommendations for Institutional Improvement**

#### **District Recommendation 9.**

In order to increase effectiveness, the Team recommends that the District review the membership of institutional governance committees to ensure all employee groups, particularly classified staff, have formal input on institutional plans, policies, and other key considerations as appropriate. (IV.A.5.)

## **Standard IV.B. Chief Executive Officer**

### **General Observations**

The Team confirmed that the Chancellor serves as Los Angeles Community College District's chief administrator. The Board of Trustees appointed the Chancellor in 2014 in accordance with Board Policy. The Chancellor's duties are clearly defined in Board Policy, (BR 2300.10, and Chapter II - Article III). Delegation of authority is to the Chancellor and Presidents to administer the institutions. The district meets the requirement. (ER 4)

The current College president was appointed in August of 2014. The President has a student-centered approach to leading the College. She works closely with campus leaders in the administration, participatory governance groups, and collective bargaining units on a regular basis to ensure open communication, shared decision-making and a consistent flow of communication. The College president holds open forums with students to engage them in the governance process.

The president demonstrates a commitment to creating internal and external communication to ensure significant information is shared with the campus community and the community at-large. This includes institutional effectiveness data, planning and resource allocation decisions and student success priorities.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The College president was appointed in August of 2014. She has created a culture of collaboration and collegial consultation as evidenced by her having regularly scheduled meetings with the vice presidents, academic senate president and executive team, union representatives and the LASC Foundation. She also has forums four times per year with the students. The evidence supported the College president posting information on the campus website, internal

electronic message boards and media outlets to ensure internal and external communication. She enlists the support of her public information officer to ensure the appropriate information is disseminated to all stakeholders. Additionally, the evidence supported that the College president is engaged with the recruitment and special outreach to underrepresented communities, such as advertisements and other information that has been translated to the Spanish language. The College has also developed publications targeting Latino communities in the service area.

The President works closely with the Office of Institutional Research and Advancement to review data from comprehensive program reviews and annual program reviews in order to assess institutional effectiveness and make data-informed decisions that impact planning and link resource allocations to student learning and institutional outcomes. This was evidenced by the March 2015 Institutional Effectiveness Report and Annual Strategic Planning Retreat held in December 2015. (IV.B.1)

The College president has an administrative team, when full, that consists of the president, a vice president of academic affairs, a vice president of administrative services, a vice president of student services, three academic deans, Dean of Student Services, one Dean of Institutional Advancement, a dean of resource development, and a dean for TRIO (funded through grant funds). The President regularly assesses the effectiveness of the team and the administrative structure. In 2015, the administrative structure was reviewed and this entailed a review of job descriptions and changes to job duties to better meet the needs of the College. Consistent dialogue about roles and responsibilities is included in the weekly meetings with the administrative team. (IV.B.2) The evidence was reflected in master meeting calendar and group interviews.

The College provided evidence of established policies and procedures, through which the President guides institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment by; establishing a collegial process that sets values, goals, and priorities; ensuring the College sets institutional performance standards for student achievement; ensuring that evaluation and planning rely on research and analysis of external and internal conditions; ensuring that educational planning is integrated with resource planning and allocation to support student achievement and learning; ensuring that the allocation of resources supports and improves learning and achievement; and establishing procedures to evaluate overall institutional planning and implementation efforts to achieve the mission of the institution. (IV.B.3)

The College president has worked closely with campus constituencies to effectively provide leadership in the area of accreditation and compliance with its requirements. In collaboration with the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) and Accreditation Steering Committee in 2014, the President provided the leadership for the comprehensive site visit scheduled spring 2016. The committee consisted of the following: the President, the ALO, Dean of Institutional Advancement, a faculty co-chair, the chairs of each Standard, and faculty editor. Additionally, members of the campus community were invited to participate on the sub-committees. (IV.B.4)

Under the direction of the College president, campus-wide meetings were organized to educate faculty, staff, administrators, and students about accreditation. The president also hosted an off-campus accreditation retreat to share a detailed accreditation update. The president is instrumental in organizing accreditation workshops, trainings, and writing sessions. The

president also provides current communications from the ACCJC as evidenced in email communications and governance meeting minutes. (IV.B.4)

The Self-Evaluation Report reflects that the College president prepares reports for the Chancellor and works closely with the District CFO to ensure LASCs compliance with all board policies while guiding institutional practices that are in alignment with the College mission and adherence to the College budget. As demonstrated in the institutional planning and resource allocation process, there are mechanisms that have been established by the president to provide ample opportunity for new programs and initiatives to be considered for approval. The President works with the vice president of administrative services to monitor revenue, expenditures and strategies to resolve deficits. The president prepares monthly and quarterly reports to keep abreast of the fiscal forecast and for the planning and budgeting process. While there were challenges with compliance with external agencies, through reorganization, program visits and reporting, compliance has improved.

The College has a strong complaint process, which involves consultation with the District's compliance unit as evidenced in the audit reports. The president works closely with the Internal Audit Division to report on areas of high concern. (III.D; IV.B.5)

It is evidenced in the Self-Evaluation Report, in order to increase the awareness of LASC the College president meets regularly with the following groups in the South Los Angeles community: homeowner associations, civic groups, workforce investment boards, economic development boards, and other external groups to promote a positive image for the College. Additionally, the president has charged the administrative team to develop and strengthen partnerships in the community to increase outreach and collaborative opportunities for the College. The president also attends Foundation meetings and serves as a liaison to the College and Foundation. Monthly Foundation meeting minutes provide evidence that the president engages with community-based organizations at a high level, which serves to connect LASC to the community. Printed materials also reflect the opportunity for dialogue through campus forums held each semester to discuss critical issues and solicit feedback from the campus and key stakeholders in the community. Other forms of communication include emails, social media, electronic bulletin boards throughout the campus and website information that posts meeting agendas and minutes. (IV.B.6)

### **Conclusions**

The College meets the Standard.

## **Standard IV.C. Governing Board**

### **General Observations**

The District Team observes as follows for Standard IV.C.1-13. The Board of Trustees (Board) of the Los Angeles Community College District provides effective leadership for its complex system. The seven-member Board of Trustees has worked with the chancellor to develop clear lines of authority at the college and District levels.

## **Findings and Evidence**

The District Team finds as follows for Standard IV.C.

The roles and responsibilities of the Board and LACCD administrative leadership are codified in the Board Rules. The District administration implements those rules through creation of Chancellor's Directives and Administrative Regulations. In addition, the Board has four standing committees: Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success; Budget and Finance; Legislative and Public Affairs; and Facilities Master Planning and Oversight. Membership is limited to Board members only, has a specific charge, and is designed to ensure the Board exercises authority and responsibility to assure the colleges and District run effectively. Chaired by the vice president of the Board and made up of all Board members, the Committee of the Whole reviews District wide standards and performance for efficiency and quality. The governing authority rests with the entire Board, not with individual members. (IV.C.1-2)

The Board Rule (BR) found in Chapter X: Human Resources, Article III, Selection Policies #10308 clearly delineates the process for the hiring of the college CEOs; no such Board Rule exists for the hiring of the chancellor. However, the Board used a clearly defined process in the hiring of the most recent chancellor which has yet to be codified. HR E-210: Performance Evaluation, College President/Senior Academic Executive clearly delineates the process for the evaluation of college presidents. Chancellor's Directive (CD) 122 provides for an evaluation process for the chancellor and the college presidents and is outlined in the executive contracts. The process provided for in CD 122, however, is not evidence of a Board policy. (IV.C.3)

The Board holds regularly scheduled meetings that allow for public comment on general and specific agenda items. The Board holds meetings at the colleges as well as at the Education Service Center (ESC), where the chancellor and District's administrative offices are housed. At the Board meetings, there are opportunities for public comment in general or on specific agenda items. The Board uses the Legislative and Public Affairs Committee to engage discussion about issues related to the public interest. (IV.C.4)

Board policies are codified in Board Rules and are available on the District website. The Board Rules establish the Board's role in establishing policy with the acknowledgement that it has the ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity. The Board also has standing committees designed to ensure they are abreast of matters pertaining to its responsibility for financial integrity and stewardship of the District. (IV.C.5)

The Board consists of seven members elected at-large for terms of four years. Elections are held every two years, alternating with three members being chosen in one election and four members at the other. The president and vice president of the Board of Trustees are elected by the Board for a one-year term at the annual organizational and regular meeting in July, and a nonvoting student trustee is elected annually by students for a one-year term beginning June 1. The student trustee has an advisory vote on actions other than personnel-related and collective bargaining items. (IV.C.6)

Board Rule 2301 gives the Board general authority to establish rules and regulations that are consistent with law. This Board Rule also authorizes the Board to delegate rulemaking authority to LACCD officers (such as the chancellor), employees, or committees. Under Board Rule 2902, the Board expressly authorizes the chancellor to adopt and implement Administrative

Regulations. BR 2418.12, adopted by the Board in February 2007, directs the chancellor to perform periodic reviews of the Board Rules, Administrative Regulations, and procedural guides. Administrative Regulation C-12, also adopted in February 2007, establishes that reviews and revisions will be conducted by staff on a triennial basis and the process to be used. While there was evidence that revisions to Board Rules were forwarded to the Board for approval, there was no evidence that the triennial reviews were communicated to the Board when no revisions were made. No evidence was found that there is any assessment or review by the Board of the policies for their effectiveness in fulfilling the District mission. (IV.C.7)

As evidenced in its Board Rules, Chapter I, Article II, entitled the "Mission of the Los Angeles Community College District," the Board exercises oversight of the District's educational programs and has established an Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success (IESS) Committee to monitor the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services. Through the Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Committee (IESS), the Board of Trustees is kept regularly informed on key indicators of student learning and achievement. Additionally, Board agendas and minutes provide evidence of regular review of the colleges' academic quality and institutional plans. Cyclic approval of Educational and Strategic Master Plans; review of District wide completion data covering a six-year period with a focus on improving student success data and academic quality; and an annual review and analysis of the state's Student Success Scorecard, which reports major indicators of student achievement, is documented. (IV.C.8)

Board Rule 2105 requires a formal orientation for new trustees. The last orientation occurred in June 2015 and included an overview of the functions and responsibilities of District Office divisions, conflict of interest policy, and the Brown Act. (IV.C.9)

The annual process for regular self evaluations of the Board is delineated in BR 2301.10. The Board of Trustees has conducted its annual self evaluation during a public session in which they reviewed data results from the preceding year and established new annual goals. (IV.C.10)

The Board is in compliance with establishing a policy on Board member code of ethics and conflict of interest with Board Rule 14000, Chapter XIV, and the implementation of these standards is captured in the 2013 Actionable Improvement Plan (March 19, 2013). This plan outlines specific actions that Board members should take to reinforce these standards and to demonstrate its support as a collective entity by adoption of its Code of Ethical Conduct. (IV.C.11)

The Board sets policy with the delegation of responsibility to the chancellor and presidents for the execution of policies and procedures as well as day-to-day operational control of the District. Additionally, Board policy outlines the role of a trustee and identifies that "Authority is given to the Chancellor as the Trustees' sole employee" with a pledge to "work with the Chancellor in gathering any information from staff directly that is not contained in the public record." The chancellor's job description as well as BR 2902 authorizes the chancellor to adopt and implement administrative regulations and delegation of authority to the chancellor and presidents to administer the institutions. The functional map outlines the lines of authority and responsibilities. (IV.C.12)

The Board is extremely knowledgeable and fully engaged in all aspects of accreditation. The

Board has been deliberate in its acquisition and application of knowledge on accreditation. Board members are aware of the importance of their role in the accreditation process. All Board members participate in ACCJC's online training program on the topic. Meeting minutes document the formation of a Board ad hoc committee on accreditation in 2013 with the stated purpose of supporting all colleges participating in any aspect of the accreditation process. The Board has dedicated funds to support efforts and review any reports prior to submission to the Commission by any of the nine colleges. (IV.C.13)

### **Conclusions**

The District Team concludes that as follows. The District meets Standard IV.C., except IV.C.3 and IV.C.7.

### **District Recommendations for Compliance**

#### **District Recommendation 10.**

In order to meet the Standard, the District Team recommends that the Board adopt policies that clearly define the process for the selection and evaluation of the chancellor. (IV.C.3)

#### **District Recommendation 11.**

In order to meet the Standard, the District Team recommends that the Board establish a formal process for approving the review of policies in which no revisions are made and to regularly assess the effectiveness of all policies in fulfilling the District mission. (IV.C.7)

### **Standard IV.D. Multi-College Districts**

#### **General Observations**

The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) is a complex, multi-college system comprised of a District Office, which houses the chancellor, senior administrators and District classified professional staff, as well as nine comprehensive community colleges that provide services in 40 cities and communities and cover an area of more than 882 square miles in the greater Los Angeles basin.

In total, the District has 46 District wide councils, committees, and consultative bodies in which District and college administrative staff, faculty, classified staff, and students regularly participate. All governance councils and committees maintain agendas and meeting summaries/minutes on the District website.

In previous years, operations of the District Office, now referred to as the Educational Services Center (ESC), were highly centralized, and many college decisions related to finance and budget, capital projects, hiring, payroll and contracts were made by District personnel. Operations subsequently have been increasingly decentralized. Colleges have been given considerable autonomy and authority for local decision-making to streamline administrative processes, encourage innovation, and hold college decision-makers more accountable to the local communities they serve. Diligent work by the institution has clarified functions and delineated areas of responsibilities between colleges and the ESC. Original recommendations regarding role delineation and decision-making processes in 2009 were resolved, and, by 2012, the District was

commended for its work in this area. The ESC continues to evaluate these delineations on an ongoing basis.

In 2011, the District began a review of the budget allocation formula and policies, including base allocations, use of ending balances, assessments for District operations, growth targets, and college deficit repayments. In 2012, the District developed and approved a new, well-defined allocation model that appears to be understood widely across the institution.

In the 2012 accreditation visit to the colleges, the District received a recommendation to adopt and fully implement an allocation model for its constituent colleges that addresses the size, economies of scale, and the stated mission of the individual colleges. By 2013, the recommendation was resolved, and the District received a commendation for its effort as well as for its transparent and collaborative process.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The chancellor demonstrates his leadership and communication by various means. Evidence has shown that the chancellor communicates with all employees of the District about educational excellence and integrity through two publications posted on the District website: *Synergy* and *Accreditation 2016*. He leads a variety of meetings in which he communicates his expectations for excellence as well as reviews and discusses roles, authority and responsibility between colleges. These meetings include Chancellor's Cabinet, Presidents' Council, and meetings with faculty and classified leadership. In addition, he leads and meets with a variety of District committees in which he articulates and provides leadership for the effective operation of the District as a whole and individual colleges. The Board of Trustees has approved a District/college functional area map, developed in consultation with all major stakeholders across the District. The functional map clarifies the structure of District administrative offices and their relationship to the colleges, aligns District administrative functions with Accreditation Standards, and specifies outcome measures appropriate to each function identified. (IV.D.1)

The chancellor directs the ESC staff to ensure the delivery of effective and adequate District services to support the mission of each college. In addition to outlining the operational responsibilities and functions of the District Office, the 2013 *District Governance and Functions Handbook* details the District wide governance processes. The chancellor ensures effective and adequate District services in support of the colleges by requiring the ESC divisions to conduct an annual program review. As documented in the ESC Unit Program Review Guide, the ESC divisions monitor Service Area Outcomes (SAOs) with clear links to District-level goals and consider their main contributions to the mission of the colleges, goals, effectiveness, and/or student achievement or learning. In addition, an Educational Services Center User Survey was created to solicit college user feedback in support of the program review process. Common questions were developed for all units, with individual units having the ability to customize supplemental questions specific to their college users. Over 21 user groups, including District managers, deans, directors, vice presidents, and presidents participate in the survey. A review of the ESC program reviews reveal that all ESC divisions have completed at least one cycle of program review. Data from the ESC User Survey was disaggregated and used to identify strengths and weaknesses, receive feedback on the effectiveness of their services, and gather suggestions for improvement. Divisions with identified areas for improvement create plans to improve their services and strengthen their support of the colleges in achieving their missions.

The Board received a presentation on the status of the ESC Program Review process in spring 2015. As documented by the *District Governance and Functions Handbook*, the District Budget Committee (DBC) provides leadership on District-level budget policies. Membership includes all nine college presidents, District Academic Senate (DAS) representatives, and collective bargaining unit representatives. Its charge is to: (1) formulate recommendations to the chancellor for budget planning policies consistent with the District Strategic Plan; (2) review the District budget and make recommendations to the chancellor, and (3) review quarterly District financial conditions. (IV.D.2)

In 2011, the District undertook a full review of its budget allocation formula and policies, including base allocations, use of ending balances, assessments for District operations, growth targets, and college deficit repayment. DBC Minutes show that a review of other multi-college District budget models and policies was also conducted. This review led the District to adopt a model that established minimum-based funding. The Board of Trustees approved Phase I of the new allocation model in June 2012. This phase focused on the annual allocation of resources. During spring 2013, the District worked on Phase II, which covered the review of college carryover funds, reserve balances, college growth formula and college debts, and operating deficits. DBC minutes from September 18, 2013, show that these changes were all reviewed and discussed at the DBC and approved by the Board of Trustees at their October 9, 2013.

The allocation model begins with an annual base allocation to fully fund minimum administrative staffing for each college. In particular, the base allocation includes funding for the following positions: the president, vice presidents, an institutional research dean, a facilities manager, and a number of deans (based on size of the college). In addition, the base allocation includes Maintenance and Operations costs based on an average cost per-gross-square-footage (currently \$8.49/square foot). After allocating the minimum base allocation, all remaining revenue (with a few exceptions, such as international student revenues) is distributed based on the each college's proportion of the funded FTES for the District. In the event that a college suffered a reduction in funding due to the new model, provisions for transition funding are included in the model. The model also provides charges for Central Accounts, Educational Services Center functions, and appropriate reserve levels at both the District and the colleges. The colleges can retain up to five percent of their year-end balances of the prior year Unrestricted General Fund budget, excluding the prior years' carryover funds. The model also includes provisions regarding how colleges with prior-year over-expenditures can pay off the debt. The model was included in the 2014-15 Final Budget of the District as Appendix F, and implementation of the model can be tracked in the 2015-16 Final Budget. As of the end of the 2014-15 year, there were five colleges with a total debt of \$19.2 million owed back to the District for prior-year over-expenditures. The colleges continue to express concerns regarding the handling of outstanding debt. (IV.D.2-3)

The District provides comprehensive budget and financial oversight, including an annual finance and budget report (CCFS-311), a final budget, an annual financial audit, a bond financial audit report, a performance audit of bond construction programs, year-end balance and open-order reports, full-time Faculty Obligation Number (FON) reports and targets, enrollment projections, and year-to-year comparisons with enrollment targets. The District has established effective policies and mechanisms to control expenditures. The District website has detailed monthly expenditure reports for the District and the colleges to assist with tracking, monitoring, and



maintaining budgets, financial commitments, and expenditures. The colleges and District financial reports are reviewed by staff and are submitted to the Board of Trustees. Evidence in the self evaluation illustrates that college presidents have full responsibility and authority to conduct their work without interference from the chancellor. College presidents have full authority in the selection and evaluation of their staff and management team. (IV.D.3)

The framework for CEO accountability is established through annual goal-setting between the chancellor and each college president. College presidents then complete a yearly self evaluation based on their established goals. At least every three years (or sooner if requested), presidents undergo a comprehensive evaluation, which includes an evaluation committee, peer input, and, if necessary, reassignment or dismissal. Evaluations are reviewed with the Board of Trustees in closed session. College presidents are also given full authority over their budgets and in allocating resources at their campuses. In October 2013, the Board adopted fiscal accountability measures which explicitly hold college presidents responsible to the chancellor for their budgets, ensuring that they maintain “a balanced budget, as well as the efficient and effective utilization of financial resources.” (IV.D.4)

The LACCD Strategic Plan Vision 2017 (DSP) was created collaboratively among key constituent groups, with interviews confirming that faculty members, classified staff members, and administrators had ample opportunity for input. While written after the college strategic plans, the DSP generally integrates all of the college strategic plans by establishing a common framework through four overarching goals. The most consistent alignment, however, occurs through the annual Institutional Effectiveness Reports that are reported to the Board of Trustees. Using a standard report template and common metrics and data sources developed collegially by the District Planning and Accreditation Committee (DPAC), the colleges map college goals to the District goals, compare their progress against the District as a whole in their reviews, and provide an analysis of strengths and weaknesses in accomplishing planned objectives. These assessments, in turn, inform the Board of Trustees’ annual goals as well as future college and District planning priorities. Interviews and a review of District Budget Committee (DBC) minutes show the existence of integrated financial planning within the District. Incorporating college and District-level enrollment projections, the colleges and District jointly establish District wide FTES targets for the upcoming academic year in the spring semester. These targets are reviewed by the chancellor, the District Budget Committee, and the Board Budget and Finance Committee prior to final adoption of the budget in August of each year. (IV.D.5)

The District Budget Allocation Model utilizes these FTES projections and additional revenue streams to allocate funds to the colleges as well as to the Educational Services Center (ESC). In March, the colleges and the ESC develop budgets that reflect their planning and institutional priorities. Prior to adoption, college and ESC budgets are reviewed by the Board Budget and Finance Committee to ensure that priorities align with the DSP, Board goals, and the chancellor’s recommendations. The colleges and the District monitor revenue and expenditure projections throughout the year and have the ability to update financial plans and FTES growth targets. The District chief financial officer, college representatives, and ESC staff members meet on a quarterly basis to review revenue and cost projections and discuss adjustments or actions needed to maintain their alignment. (IV.D.5)

The Technology Planning and Policy Committee (TPPC) coordinates the activities of several

District-level, technology-related advisory groups and provides a forum for consultation on all technology-related issues. The TPPC developed the District Technology Plan, which created a framework of goals and a set of actions to guide District wide as well as technology planning. The District Technology Implementation Plan established measures and prioritized deployment of technology solutions in consideration of available resources. In addition, the TPPC serves as a clearinghouse for all policy issues related to District wide technology systems (e.g., updates on the SIS development). (IV.D.5)

District/college integrated planning also occurs during operational planning for District wide initiatives. Examples include joint marketing and recruitment activities, implementation of the Student Success and Support Program, Student Equity Plans, and the new student information system. These initiatives involve extensive District/college collaboration, coordination with centralized District service units, and interaction with various District-level committees. Interviews during the visit confirmed intra-District discussions that impacted integrated planning had occurred during the Council of Academic Affairs, Council of Student Services, the District Academic Senate, Student Information System Development Team, and the District Research Committee. (IV.D.5)

Various mechanisms are used to evaluate the effectiveness of District/college integrated planning. The Biennial District Governance and Decision-Making Survey is used to assess budget development and resource allocation, enrollment management, FTES, and facilities planning as well as the governance process as a whole. With the assistance of the Educational Programs and Institutional Effectiveness (EPIE) division, DPAC has analyzed three years of the survey (2010, 2012, and 2014) to look at trends and develop improvement plans based on the data. District-level planning and policy committees assess their effectiveness through annual committee self evaluation reviews. In its 2015-16 work plan, DPAC is charged with systematically reviewing these self evaluations and the Council will be making recommendations for improvement to the committees. Lastly, the ESC Program Review process assesses performance and outcomes through an annual User Survey and information specific to each service unit. A review of DPAC minutes as well as interviews with DPAC co-chairs and the vice chancellor of educational programs and institutional effectiveness provide evidence that the District regularly reviews its processes and provides opportunities for dialogue among key stakeholders. (IV.D.2, IV.D.5, IV.D.7)

A considerable amount of communication occurs between the nine colleges and the District. In total, the District has 46 District wide councils, committees, and consultative bodies in which District and college administrative staff, faculty, classified staff, and students regularly participate. All councils and committees maintain agendas and meeting summaries/minutes on either the District website (public) or on the District intranet. Seven District wide executive administrative councils meet monthly: (1) Chancellor's Cabinet; (2) Council of Academic Affairs; (3) Council of Student Services; (4) District Administrative Council; (5) Executive Committee of the District Budget Committee (ECDBC); (6) Human Resources Council; and (7) the Sheriff's Oversight Committee. (IV.D.6)

Four District-level governance committees meet monthly: (1) District Planning and Accreditation Committee (DPAC); (2) District Budget Committee (DBC); (3) Joint Labor Management Benefits Committee (JLMBC); and (4) the Technology Planning and Policy

Committee (TPPC). Committee members encompass a broad range of college faculty, college researchers, and college deans, with representatives from the unions, college presidents, college vice presidents, and ESC senior administrators. The District Academic Senate (DAS) represents the faculty of the District in all academic and professional matters. In this capacity, the president and Executive Committee regularly inform faculty of District policy discussions and decisions related to educational quality, student achievement, and the effective operation of the District and colleges. (IV.D.6)

In 2011, District Information Technology (IT) undertook a complete redesign of the District website. The updated website, which allows each division/unit in the ESC to manage its own content, launched in fall 2012. The District planned to implement a new intranet site in December 2015 to improve employee access to Educational Services Center divisions, units, and services; however, as of the evaluation visit, the intranet was still in the latter stages of implementation. Information Technology maintains 78 active listservs. These listservs include the District wide consultative bodies, administrative councils, and operational committees as well as subject-specific groups such as articulation officers, curriculum chairs, counselors, and IT managers. Each listserv has a coordinator/owner charged with maintaining an accurate list of members. Interviews during the visit revealed that while subscriptions to the listservs are typically comprised of members to the committees and councils, the subscriptions are open to any interested employee of the District. (IV.D.6)

Results from the Biennial District Governance and Decision-Making Survey and discussions with representatives from key stakeholder groups, however, indicate concerns over effective communication about District decision-making bodies. In all three years of the survey, over half of respondents (58 percent in the most recent survey) said decisions made through participatory governance at the District level are not communicated effectively to all affected stakeholders. Moreover, among the most frequently mentioned concerns about District participatory governance across the three survey administrations has been a “lack of communication or transparency” and “insufficient representation or unbalanced participation from stakeholders.” Responding to the results in the survey, the Educational Programs and Institutional Effectiveness (EPIE) division and DPAC members co-presented a workshop at the annual DAS Summit in September 2015. The workshop addressed District wide communication and discussed data from recent governance surveys related to communications. A facilitated discussion followed, with participants brainstorming communication strategies which will be reviewed by DPAC in upcoming meetings. On the other hand, there was no evidence of workshops with members of the classified staff or other stakeholder groups. (IV.D.6)

In 2009, the District Planning and Accreditation Committee (DPAC-formerly called the District Planning Committee or DPC) developed a District Governance and Decision-Making Survey and administered it in 2010. The DPAC implemented a cyclical process for system-level evaluation and improvement. The evaluation cycle has been institutionalized and District processes have been revised in support of institutional effectiveness as indicated in the development of new intranet sites for committee communication (IV.D.7)

With assistance from the EPIE division, DPAC established an annual self evaluation process for all District governance committees. These common self-assessments document the accomplishments, challenges, and areas for improvement for the committees during the prior

year. Results of the assessment are reviewed by each respective committee and serve as the basis for changes and improvements to committee function. Minutes confirm that DPAC reaffirmed their responsibility to ensure self evaluations are conducted by District governance committees, results are posted online, and that they are used to improve committee effectiveness. (IV.D.7)

Role delineations are evaluated during the regular review of functional area maps. Revisions are made based on input from governance committee members, governance surveys, ESC administrative units, the Chancellor's Cabinet, and college stakeholders. Functional area maps were expanded and revised in 2015 and are currently under review prior to finalization. (IV.D.1, IV.D.2, IV.D.7)

The *District Governance and Functions Handbook* is regularly reviewed and updated by District stakeholders under the coordination of the DPAC. A section of the handbook describes all District wide councils, committees, and consultative bodies. These entities were first formalized in 1994 by Chancellor's Directive (CD) 70: District wide Internal Management Consultation Process. Updates to CD 70, and its related committee/council structure, committee/council charge, membership, meeting schedule, leadership and reporting structure are currently in process as shown in DPAC minutes of November 20, 2015. (IV.D.7)

### **Conclusions**

The District meets the requirements outlined in the Standards for multi-college districts.

The chancellor clearly and appropriately delegates authority and responsibility to the college presidents and communicates expectations for educational excellence and integrity to the District community. The District has made consistent progress in detailing areas of responsibilities, creating administrative and governance decision-making processes, and evaluating these functions and processes regularly for continuous quality improvement. Clear evaluation processes for the services provided by the ESC have been established and institutionalized. In recent years, the District, in collaboration with the colleges, has created a completely new resource allocation model in order to adjust the differential impact of fixed operating costs on the colleges based on size. In addition to the Budget Allocation policy, the District also adopted new District financial accountability policies to help control expenditures and maintain fiscal stability. Both policies include provisions that identify processes for regularly evaluating the budget allocation model.

While college planning drives the overall planning in the District in a decentralized model, the District has provided frameworks and decision-making processes that maintain alignment across the District. In particular, the annual Institutional Effectiveness Reports given to the Board of Trustees' Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Committee provide excellent examples of integrated planning in the District. The District has been especially diligent in providing formalized mechanisms for evaluating its decision-making processes and services using data and collegial feedback for continuous quality improvement. In the future, evaluations of the decision-making process should include analyses on the effects of decentralization on institutional excellence.

Given the complexity and size of the institution, as well as the decentralized nature of the decision-making process, the efforts of the District and colleges to collaborate and work

collegially to support student learning and achievement are noticeable and commendable; however, unique challenges for effective and widespread communication about District wide decisions remain. The District should continue to address these communication gaps, particularly among classified professionals.

### **District Recommendations for Improvement**

#### **District Recommendation 12.**

In order to increase effectiveness, the District Team recommends that the District expand efforts to communicate decisions made in the institutional governance process to all stakeholders.

(IV.D.6.)

## Quality Focus Essay (QFE)

### Commentary

Based on the comprehensive site visit, it is possible to provide specific advice for each project.

#### Action Project 1.

For Action Project 1., Learning Outcomes Assessment, the College faces a significant challenge tracking the status of its assessments and storing assessment results. To do this effectively, the College would be well served to evaluate, select, and implement an automated system for tracking and documenting its assessments. Additionally, one of the items in this AP is mapping and evaluating its GE Learning Outcomes. This will be a significant undertaking for the College and it will need to be intentional in terms of how it organizes itself to accomplish this task. Additionally, in the Implement, Report, and Evaluate phases of this AP, there is no role specified for the SLO Coordinator. Although the operating units are responsible for implementing outcomes assessment, oversight from SLO Coordinator and SLO Committee will be critical to the success of this effort.

#### Action Project 2.

For Action Project 2., Planning Integration, a significant gap faced by the College is the lack of meaningful participation by classified staff and students in these processes. The College would be well advised to be intentional in how it includes these constituencies in the development and implementation of the Educational, Facilities, and Technology Master Plans. Additionally, with the entire District going to a common accreditation cycle, it is likely that the District will go to a common cycle for its plans. This will impact the College's timeline but will better align these plans with the District's resourcing efforts. Additionally, for its next cycle, the College should consider consolidating its Strategic Plan and Educational Master Plan and to have only one committee responsible for the consolidated plan.

For Action Project 3., Professional Development, the College has significant opportunities to improve the engagement of classified staff in College processes and to improve the morale of a unit that is relatively dispirited. From discussions with classified leadership during the evaluation process, the classified staff do not feel that they have a voice in decision-making nor do they feel that they are valued partners in the educational process. The development and implementation of professional development programs that cause faculty and classified staff to interact in a productive way could significantly improve the performance and productivity of these critically important employees.