EVALUATION REPORT

LOS MEDANOS COLLEGE

2700 East Leland Road
Pittsburg, CA 94565

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

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that
visited Los Medanos College from October 13 – 16, 2008

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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

A nine-member accreditation team visited Los Medanos College from October 13-16, 2008 for the purpose of evaluating the institution to determine its adherence to accreditation standards, assessing how well the college is achieving its stated purposes, analyzing how the college is meeting the Commission standards, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement, and submitting recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) regarding the accredited status of the college.

To prepare for the visit, all team members participated in a day-long training on September 4, 2008 at the LAX Hilton Hotel. The training, conducted by ACCJC, provided direction and guidance on all aspects of the team's responsibilities in reviewing the self-study (including the recommendations from the 2002 accreditation team) and related documents of evidence provided by Los Medanos College.

Approximately thirty days prior to the scheduled visit, team members received a copy of the Self-study for Los Medanos College. Approximately two weeks prior to the visit, each team member completed a review of the self-study and prepared questions to explore during the visit. Additionally, one-week prior to the visit, team members identified 54 individuals and 15 groups with whom they wanted to meet during the visit and provided this information to the team chair to communicate and schedule via the Accreditation Liaison Officer for Los Medanos College. On October 12, select members of the team met with the team chair to finalize questions to be addressed during that group's visit to the Contra Costa Community College District Office on October 13. On October 13, the whole team met for three-and-one-half hours to review the self-study report and finalize preliminary questions and issues to be addressed October 14-16 during the team visit to Los Medanos College in Pittsburg and its Brentwood Center.

During the visit, the team met with individuals and with groups totaling 321 college faculty, classified staff, administrators, students, and governing board members. Additionally, team members held two sessions that were open to all members of the college community. The open sessions were not well advertised and the first open meeting was poorly attended (7 people); however, attendance for the second open meeting improved (35-40 people). During all meetings and throughout the team visit, college employees and students freely expressed their thoughts about the college.

The Self Study addressed the elements required by the Commission, was very easy to read, and provided a broad array of information regarding the college's strengths and presented planning agendas designed to guide future college directions. The report was well organized and enabled the team to readily access most evidentiary documents via the college web site and also included a copious list of evidence links. When additional evidence was requested, the college was very responsive and provided the information quickly. Overall, the college was prepared for the team visit and key staff directly involved in the accreditation process were well aware of the purpose for the team visit;

however, broader communication would have enabled the college community as a whole to better understand the purpose of the team visit and participate in the open sessions. The team expressed appreciation for the college's preparation of a well written self study and thanked all involved in the planning prior to and during the team visit.

Team members were very impressed with the college's demonstration of commitment to the students of Los Medanos College and the communities it serves. Students also communicated with team members and expressed appreciation for the way college personnel interacted with them and spoke very highly of faculty, classified staff and administrators.

Major Findings and Recommendations of the 2008 Team

College Commendations:

The following general commendations are made as a result of the team's visit, October 14-16, 2008:

Los Medanos College is to be commended for the organization and thoroughness of the Fall 2008 self-study.

Los Medanos College is to be commended for developing and implementing a resource allocation process that links to program review and institutional planning.

Los Medanos College is to be commended for creating a campus climate that is welcoming and supportive of students, staff and the community. The team observed a strong sense of community and improved campus climate that are reportedly a result of the recent campus capital improvements including the creation of a college quad, construction of a new library and classroom buildings, and installation of solar power cells in the parking areas. The architectural and landscaping efforts demonstrate the college's commitment to create a positive place for learning to occur. (I.B.1, I.B.2, III.B.2)

College Recommendations:

1. Although the college has made significant strides in developing institutional and program SLOs, the team found that approximately 75% of the college's courses do not have student learning outcomes as part of the course outline of record. Therefore, the team encourages the college to accomplish what it set out to do in meeting its timeline for reaching proficiency in its course level SLOs by 2012. Furthermore, the team recommends that that process be implemented so that by 2012 the college will have developed and implemented methods for assessing those SLOs and use the results of those assessments to improve student learning in all of its courses. (Standards IB1, IIA1a, IIA1c, IIA2a, IIA2b, IIA2e, IIA2f, IIA2g, IIA2h, IIA2i, IIA3, IIA6, IIA6a, IIB4, IIC1a, IIC2, IIIA1c)

2. The team recommends that the college develop mechanisms to ensure the closer alignment of the Brentwood Center with college operations, services, and practices (IIB3a, IIC.1.c, III.C.1.c, IVA.1).
3. In order to increase effectiveness and respond fully to the previous team recommendation, the team recommends the college implement an integrated professional development plan to ensure employees have regular structured trainings on information technology and instructional design. (Standard III.C.1.d)
4. The visiting team recommends the institution comply with the audit recommendation to disclose all instructional materials fees in the class schedule or course catalog (Standard III.D.2.a)

District Commendations

1. The district has achieved an admirable financial recovery which allowed the restoration of employee salaries and the creation of a prudent reserve.
2. The district has successfully passed two capital construction bonds, in 2002 and 2006, totaling $406.5 million.
3. The district has undertaken tangible efforts to share information and communicate on an ongoing basis with the district and college community through the Chancellor's Highlights, rotating campus office hours, the District Governance Council and other strategies.
4. The district has launched a partnership with Chevron to improve energy efficiency at the colleges.

Based upon the team's examination of the college and the district in relation to the standards, the team offers the following recommendations.

District Recommendations

1. In order to improve its resource allocation process, the district should expedite development of a financial allocation model including the following (III.C.1, III.D.1.a, III.D.2.a, and III.D.3, IV.C.3):
   a. The model as a whole;
   b. Funding for adjunct faculty in a way that will support the district and college intentions to increase student enrollment;
   c. Technology funding.
2. In order to meet the standard, the district should establish a written code of professional ethics which includes managers. (III.A.1.d)
3. In order to meet the standard, the district should integrate student learning outcomes into the evaluation process for those who have a direct responsibility for student progress toward achieving student learning outcomes. (IIIA1c)
4. In order to meet standards, the district should develop a policy and implement procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of the district's administrative organization, the delineation of responsibilities of the district and the colleges, and the governance and decision making structures. The results should be widely

communicated and used as a basis for improvement. (IV.A, IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.3, IV.B.3, IV.B.3.a, IV.B.3.b, IV.B.3.e, IV.B.3.f, IV.B.3.g)

INTRODUCTION

Los Medanos College is a public, two-year, associate degree granting institution in California. It is one of the three colleges that comprise the Contra Costa Community College District. Los Medanos College was founded in 1974, on a 120-acre site near the boundary of Pittsburg and Antioch and serves primarily the communities of Clayton, parts of Concord, Bay Point, Pittsburg, Antioch, Oakley, Knightsen, Bethel Island, Brentwood, Byron and Discovery Bay. To serve the needs of the growing community from the "East County", the college has built three new buildings- library, math and science - which added 109,132 square feet to its facility. Moreover, the college opened a center in Brentwood in 2001. It serves nearly 9,000 very diverse students per semester. The enrollment of the college has been rapidly growing in line with the been rapid growth in Contra Costa's "East County", and it is projected that this growth will continue over the next 20 years.

The last comprehensive accreditation visit by the ACCJC was in 2002, and was followed three years later by a regular Midterm Report.

The college and the district have faced a severe budget crisis in the years since the last comprehensive visit. This resulted in budget cuts at a level of severity which were unprecedented in the district's history and included salary reductions for all employees and the loss of a number of positions. That situation, along with district governance practices at the time, strained relations between the district and the college.

Under new district leadership, including a new chancellor, the district has stabilized financially, built up a prudent reserve, and the salary reductions have been restored. The chancellor has reorganized the district office to better support the colleges and is committed to collegial governance and a generally collaborative atmosphere exists between the college and the district. In addition the district has passed two capital construction bonds—in 2002 and 2006, a matter of great importance to the college, which has been undergoing welcome renovations and new construction.

The current college president has worked at the college for over 24 years. The college has a family culture and many employees have worked at the college for fifteen years or more year. This has resulted in a close knit community where people feel very connected to the college and each other and to the broader college community.

RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREVIOUS EVALUATION TEAM

College Recommendations:

Recommendation 1: The team recommends that the college evaluate all of the newly adopted planning policies, procedures, and roles of various campus committees in order to meet the accreditation standards.

An examination and analysis of the evidence supplied by the college in support of the narrative contained in the self study as well as independent interviews with members from all of the constituent committees including the Planning Committee, President's Cabinet, President's Council, Academic Senate and Classified Senate support the college's assertion that the recommendation has been addressed.

The team believes that this recommendation has been met.

Recommendation 2: Implement plans to enhance effectiveness of Student Services through improved coordination among the units and expanded outreach efforts (5, II.B.).

Much effort has been put forth to improve coordination among student services programs since the 2002 self-study. The first Senior Dean of Student Services at Los Medanos College was hired in August of 2002 and charged with providing leadership for the integration of all student services. A Student Services Progress Report was compiled in 2006, which outlined the steps taken by the college to improve coordination in Student Services. This began with the formation of the following committees: Student Services Advisory Committee, Student Services Learning Outcomes Committee and, Student Services Planning Task Force. The Student Services Advisory Committee disbanded due to lack of progress. However, the Student Services Planning Task Force (SSPT) has gained in participation and effectiveness. The (SSPT), comprised of managers, faculty, staff and students, developed a Student Services Organizational Planning Proposal. The proposal outlines philosophy and goals, an analysis of trends, methodology, implementing principles of good practice, organizational structure, fiscal structure, and developing a culture of evidence.

In addition, the student services categorical programs recently completed a site visit by California Community Colleges System Review of Categorical Programs, which identified areas to streamline processes and coordinate services. As a result, programs requiring counselor contact are now tracking common students and have reduced duplication of services.

The responses to the previous recommendations were complete, concise and honest. The college did an exemplary job of identifying major undertakings since the last visit, particularly in the area of assessment, program review and the new Shared Governance

Council. There has been ongoing activity since the previous team's visit with the most recent efforts within the last two years.

Recommendation 3: Develop a unified approach to computer training, including software use and instructional and web design for both online and traditional courses (6.4, 7A.2).

The college is currently working on a revised professional development model. It will be important for the model to integrate a systematic approach to computer and instruction design training.

The college has partially responded to this recommendation.

Recommendation 4: Collaborate with District Office Human Resources to increase quantity and quality application pools in response to projected growth (7A.2.).

The district responded by allocating funding for hard to recruit positions such as fine arts faculty. Funding for the subject area enabled a faculty member to attend conferences to recruit new faculty. In addition, the district developed and implemented a web-based job application and tracking system. The new system has increased the applicant pool in addition to providing a tracking and management tool for the human resources office.

The college has met this recommendation.

Recommendation 5: Develop a mechanism to involve the campus community in planning for utilization of remodeled space vacated by math, science and the library (8).

The district in response to this recommendation engaged the campus community in a planning process that developed plans for the vacated buildings and received approval from the district governing board.

This planning endeavor included the development of the Los Medanos College Ten-Year Educational Master Plan. This comprehensive master plan was developed by the institution in conjunction with the college's Planning Committee with input from the campus community and approval from the college's Shared Governance Council, college president, and district board of trustees.

In response to and in conjunction with the Ten-Year Educational Master Plan, the institution developed the Los Medanos College 2007 Facilities Master Plan. The college's Planning Committee, with the assistance of tBP/Architecture and the campus community, developed an inclusive facilities master plan.

The committee meeting minutes and team interviews with college employees provided evidence that the college developed a mechanism to broadly involve the campus

community. Moreover, subject area master plans provide evidence the college planned for utilization of remodeled space vacated by math, science and the library.

The college has met this recommendation.

Recommendation 6: Complete and implement the Enrollment Management Plan that integrates the Financial Planning Model to guide:

> · **The development of a clearly defined staffing plan**
> · **Course offerings**
> · **Space utilization**

The Self Study narrative as well as the visiting team's review of the evidence that accompanied the self-study revealed that Los Medanos College, through a steering committee, reviewed and revised the 2001 Enrollment Management Plan at the end of the spring 2003 semester. During the campus visit, additional documentation was supplied and demonstrated that a three-year Enrollment Management Strategic Plan (2005-2008) was indeed developed and implemented by the college. The team confirmed that oversight for the enrollment management process is conducted by a network of advisory teams and committees along with the senior management.

The team examined the relevant artifacts, minutes and meeting agendas that verified the college had utilized the enrollment management plan and program review process to address the specific sub-issues contained in the recommendation. First, an analysis of the documentation as well as direct dialogue with management and certificated staff disclosed evidence that program enrollment and trend data were utilized to establish new faculty positions and convert some adjunct faculty positions to full-time slots. The college is currently reorganizing management and classified positions in the student services division and is attempting to use the information from the enrollment plan to better align job descriptions and tasks. Second, enrollment trends were evaluated as part of course development and review in a large number of instructional program review documents, especially in efforts under the Basic Skills Initiative (BSI). Finally, the Educational Master Plan and the Facilities Master Plan were utilized to justify expansion of classroom and library space as part of the college's significant capital improvements that have occurred since the last accreditation review. Importantly, the allocation of resources was connected to enrollment data and assisted in the completion of the staffing, instruction and space improvements on the campus.

The college has met this recommendation.

Recommendation 7: Review internal control of foundation and other auxiliary business activities, and institute routine control mechanisms.

The college, by working with the Los Medanos Foundation and in conjunction with an external audit firm, reviewed the internal control of its finances. The duties that were previously all controlled by the scholarship coordinator are now split between the

president's senior executive assistant, the college business office, the district office comptroller, and the scholarship coordinator.

The visiting team reviewed the 2002 audit report and the draft audit reports for 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008. The subject audit documents provided evidence that no material weaknesses are present. In an interview with the business office and foundation executive director, the visiting team learned that process improvements have been made. The revised process indicated that the foundation executive director reviews all deposits and bank reconciliations. The executive director, along with the foundation finance committee, prepares all financial statements. Also, the college's auxiliary functions have similar cash flow control procedures and separation of duties.

The college has met this recommendation.

Recommendation 8: Work collaboratively as administrative, faculty, and staff leadership to clarify and stabilize the governance structure and to undertake a major communication effort to ensure that the college decisions, initiatives, and processes are well understood and supported by all college stakeholders.

Since the previous accreditation visit, the college has created the Shared Governance Council to provide for the participation of faculty, classified staff, and students in the decision-making process. Managers have the President's Council and other governance committees as avenues to provide input into the decision-making processes. The council, established in 2004, has undergone one cycle of evaluation of its Shared Governance Council and the results of that evaluation demonstrate widespread satisfaction with the structure of the Shared Governance Council. The college should continue on a regular basis to assess the effectiveness of the council and make adjustments as necessary.

The college uses several means to disseminate information about decisions made by the Shared Governance Council, including e-mail, newsletters, and college assemblies. Other campus groups, such as the Academic Senate and the Classified Senate, assume responsibility for sharing information about the governance process. In interviews with college employees, the team found that some still seem unaware of many of specific actions taken by the Shared Governance Council and its various subcommittees. However, the college has put into place various mechanisms for the sharing of information about decisions, initiatives, and processes.

The college has met this recommendation.

Recommendation 9: The team recommends that the district and college leadership work collaboratively to ensure that centralized functions are received and adapted to be responsive to the needs of the college in fulfilling its changing mission and function.

In 2007, the district published a document entitled *District and College Roles, Responsibilities and Service Outcomes*, which outlines those areas for which the district

assumes responsibility and those for which the college has primary responsibility. The creation of this document followed an administrative reorganization at the district level, a consolidation from the former structure of five vice chancellor positions to two vice chancellors under the current structure. The district has also decentralized services in several areas, giving the three colleges more local control over the areas of buildings and grounds, bookstores, the hiring process for classified personnel, and some aspects of information technology. Given the recent nature of these changes, the district has not yet had an opportunity to evaluate their effectiveness.

The college and the district have met this recommendation.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Los Medanos College meets the ACCJC Eligibility Requirements.

1. AUTHORITY
   The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College receives Board of Governors' approval of its programs and services from the California Community College system and is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association for Schools and Colleges. The college is authorized to operate as an educational institution and to offer undergraduate education. The degree-granting authority is stipulated in the college catalog.

2. MISSION
   The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College's Mission Statement is clearly defined. The Mission Statement was last reviewed and adopted by the Board of Trustees for the Contra Costa Community College District on September 26, 2007. The mission statement is included in the college catalog, web site and Educational Master Plan. The mission statement is appropriate to a degree granting institution of higher education and the community it serves. The mission statement addresses the college's commitment to student learning.

3. GOVERNING BOARD
   The visiting team confirmed that the Contra Costa Community College District has a functioning Board of Trustees responsible for quality, integrity, and financial stability of the institution. The board has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that financial resources are used to provide a sound educational program. Its membership is sufficient in size and composition to fulfill all board responsibilities.

The board functions as an independent policy-making body capable of reflecting constituent and public interests in its activities and decisions. The board adheres to a conflict of interest policy and code of ethics that assure that potential issues are disclosed and do not interfere with the impartiality of governing board decisions.

4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College has a chief executive officer who is appointed by the governing board, serves in that capacity on a full time basis, and is provided with the authority to administer board policies.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY

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

6. OPERATIONAL STATUS

The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College is operational with students actively pursuing its degree, certificate, and transfer programs.

7. DEGREES

The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College offers 35 associate degree programs and 24 certificate programs and that nearly 8000 students (out of a student body of 9181 in Fall 2007) are enrolled in degree applicable courses.

8. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College's principal degree programs are congruent with its mission, are based on recognized fields of study, are conducted at levels of quality and rigor appropriate to the degrees offered, and culminate in identified student learning outcomes. A number of associate degree programs are two academic years in length.

9. ACADEMIC CREDIT

The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College awards academic credits based on Title V, Section 55002.5 of the California Administrative Code. Appropriate information about the awarding of academic credit is available in college publications (both written and web-based).

10. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College defines and publishes student learning outcomes for college programs. The college demonstrates that students who complete programs achieve these outcomes.

11. GENERAL EDUCATION

The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College incorporates into all of its degree programs a substantial component of general education designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry, includes demonstrated competence in writing and computational skills and an introduction to major areas of knowledge. Degree credit for general education programs is consistent with levels of quality and rigor appropriate to higher education. Student learning outcomes have been defined for general education courses.

12. ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College faculty and students operate under a Governing Board policy on academic freedom in which they are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as judged by the educational community in general.

13. FACULTY

The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College employs 105 full time faculty as of October, 15, 2008. The number, breadth, and qualifications of faculty are sufficient to support the full range of educational programs delivered by the college. Faculty responsibilities include development and review of curriculum as well as assessment of learning.

14. STUDENT SERVICES

The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College provides appropriate student services to its diverse body of students that support student learning and development as stated in the college mission

15. ADMISSIONS

The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College has adopted and adheres to admissions policies consistent with its mission and that specifies the qualifications of students appropriate for its programs.

16. INFORMATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES

The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College provides specific long-term access to sufficient information and learning resources and services to support its mission and educational programs.

17. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

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

18. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College is audited on an annual basis by an independent audit agency, that the audit is certified, that it employs *Audits of Colleges and Universities*, and that the governing board reviews audit findings, exceptions, and letters to management and any recommendations made by the audit firm.

19. INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND EVALUATION

The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College systematically evaluates its processes and outcomes and communicates results to the college and external community. Evidence is provided of planning for improvement of institutional structures and processes, student achievement of educational goals, and student learning. The college assesses progress toward achieving stated goals and implements the cycle of evaluation, planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation.

20. PUBLIC INFORMATION

The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College publishes a catalog that provides accurate and current information about the institution, major policies affecting students, and information on where other policies can be found.

21. RELATIONS WITH THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION

The visiting team confirmed that Los Medanos College adheres to the eligibility requirements and accreditation standards and policies of the Commission in its policies and actions and in its validation of the self study. The college represents itself accurately to all accrediting and governing agencies.

Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

Standard I.A. Mission

General Observations:

Los Medanos College has developed a mission statement that reflects its broad-based educational purposes. The mission statement recognizes the changing and diverse needs of the communities served. Furthermore, the mission statement emphasizes student learning and achievement as well as life-long learning.

The mission statement was developed through a collaborative process ~~in~~ parallel to the Educational Master Plan process. Student demographics, enrollment trends and other environmental scanning considerations were incorporated into the planning process. The Educational Master Plans for Los Medanos College and for the Brentwood Center speak directly to the nature of students at each site.

Findings and Evidence

The college has developed an Educational Master Plan which includes its mission, goals, strategic initiatives, and program and service directions. The mission statement reflects that student learning is core to the institution. Survey results indicate agreement that the college aligns its educational programs and services with its mission statement, reflective of student learning. This was confirmed in interviews with the college president, Academic Senate president and a senior dean. (I.A.1)

The mission statement has been approved by the Governing Board and is widely published throughout the institution (e.g. the college catalog, web site, the Educational Master Plan). The self study indicates an earlier problem with prior versions of the statement still appearing around the campus. This problem was addressed and no evidence was found that this problem still exists. (I.A.2)

The mission statement was revised in conjunction with the development of the Educational Master Plan. According to planning documents and interviews with various members of the campus community, the adopted statement emanates from college-wide dialogue about institutional values and vision and was approved through the shared governance processes. The self study indicates that the planning committee has established a six-year cycle for review of the mission statement in tandem with the Education Master Plan. The planning calendar was revised in September 2007 to include the review cycle. (I.A.3)

Conclusions: The College meets the standard.

Standard I.B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

General Observations:
Los Medanos College demonstrates that processes are in place to set goals and objectives for the institution that support student learning and are measurable. It has developed a diverse set of mechanisms for ongoing dialogue within the college and in the larger community on matters of planning and institutional effectiveness.   Evidence is presented that research is conducted to assess progress toward goals and that the results are disseminated broadly. Mechanisms for supporting institutional effectiveness include program review, curriculum review, faculty evaluation, surveys, and performance indicators. The college is in the process of developing the mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of their planning processes.

Findings and Evidence:

Dialogue at the college is evidenced by the creation and implementation of a number of college committees including the Planning Committee; the Shared Governance Council; the Academic Senate; the Classified Senate; the Teaching Learning Project (TLP); the Developmental Education Committee; the Library and Learning Support Services Committee; the Occupational Education Committee; and the Student Services Committee. Actions of the committees are reported in person, on the intranet and in hard copy form. The college's elaborate organizational structure is designed to meet the unique needs of the Los Medanos College community. The update of the Educational Master Plan as well as a number of supporting plans provides measured opportunities for input by the campus groups and community itself.

All campus stakeholders are invited to participate directly in institutional planning through their involvement in collegial processes, shared governance and representative groups. The Educational Master Plan and Resource Plan are examples of broad based planning efforts. The use of the Shared Governance Council (SGC) appears to be a concerted effort to build a team of professionals to hear respective issues from all constituent groups. In addition, department chairs are also involved in planning initiatives.

In the area of student learning, the Teaching Learning Project (TLP) has established institutional level and program level SLOs (i.e. *General Education, Occupational Education, Developmental Education, Student Services and Library and Learning Support).* The TLP has identified course SLOs and begun developing and implementing assessment of the SLOs at this level. The college's wide-ranging efforts to establish outcomes assessment at these levels have now compelled the college to systematically address course level assessment and data analysis. Alignment of the course level SLOs with institutional level and program level SLOs occurs in the course outlines of record and in program review. (Standard IB.1)

The program review process now includes instructional and student services programs to develop SLOs and to propose assessment plans. The TLP is involved in the review process. The greatest progress has been in the area of student services which has made a concerted effort to implement outcomes assessment in its program review and departmental improvement.

Los Medanos College has established strategic directions and incorporated significant goal setting at the institutional and program levels. Evidence during interviews with college personnel demonstrated buy-in to the model as established and all constituent groups indicated that they felt they played a meaningful role in the planning and review process. The college establishes goals to improve its effectiveness consistent with its stated objectives. Also, the institution articulates and disseminates its goals to the college at large with performance outcomes stated in measurable terms to ensure progress achieved can be more readily assessed. This provides the college with a viable mechanism to introduce change based on the results of the indicators and implement changes needed.

The Planning Committee and other college groups have developed the institutional vision, values and goals, including measurable objectives, which have helped direct the Educational Master Plan. Environmental scans, both internal and external, have been conducted systematically to determine student and community needs. Institutional goals were revised in fall 2005 and fall 2006. Each administrative unit was asked to develop individual goals based on the institutional goal revisions. Data from surveys establish that employees feel that the college goals are either clearly or adequately identified.   The Chancellor's Cabinet and the District Governance Council work collaboratively to identify funding priorities beyond standard district funding formulae to the meet district/college goals and planning efforts. Funding through the college's Resource Allocation Process is required to show how proposals speak to at least one institutional goal. Advancement of projects is updated to measure how well the project implementation supports college goals.

Current goals at the college include: improving student learning and achievement of their educational goals; offering high quality programs that meet the needs of students and the community; enhancing a culture of originality, inclusiveness and partnership; ensuring the fiscal welfare of the college; establishing a culture of planning, implementing, assessing and improving; and increasing the number of transfers, degrees and certificates. A method to communicate the level to which the institution attains its goals to the college community on a regular basis was developed by the Planning Committee. (IB.2).

Los Medanos College assesses progress toward achieving its stated goals and evaluates its institutional effectiveness. Specifically, the college has used data from the campus to implement some academic and support interventions. Changes have occurred in the areas of facilities development including, an impressive new library, increased classroom space and creation of a campus quad. In addition, there is a reading and writing center and solar electric parking facilities. Further, there have been technological improvements including the creation of smart classrooms and computer labs. Student supports have

been improved with the re-institution of the Puente Program, the creation of IDEA and UMOJA. The college notes the need to continually improve college-wide participation on committees and attendance at college meetings. It will be critical for the college to include adjunct faculty in these activities, especially in the area of student learning outcomes.

The self study states that the college has a long history of using program review, curriculum review, faculty evaluation, student and staff surveys, and performance indicators to improve institutional effectiveness. There is evidence to support that the college has made an effort to put into practice a more integrated planning process that would tie together program review, planning, and resource allocation and that would also include a mechanism for measuring, tracking and evaluating success. The team learned that the college has spent a great deal of time "planning to plan" and is now ready to augment its efforts in this area. As this new Integrated Planning process has not yet been implemented evidence that the institution will assess its progress in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation is forthcoming. (IB.3).

The team confirmed that the college is implementing a new model of integrated planning which is broad-based, offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of college effectiveness. Ultimately, the goal is to include input by appropriate constituencies by placing goals in program review documents which have been tied to the strategic plan into an action plan that will include timelines, persons responsible, and resource requests. A system of tracking the action plans is also included in the proposed integrated planning process. The team established that there is sufficient evidence that the planning processes are broad based. (I.B.4)

Through a review of the evidence and in the course of the interviews conducted with the relevant campus personnel, the team did confirm that the institution presently communicates the documented assessment results regarding the quality of its programs and services in a variety of ways. The district research department produces a newsletter that provides essential information at the "fingertips" of the community. The college research office produces a newsletter and posts studies on the campus intranet. The college documents assessment results that demonstrated attempts to increase academic quality by: presenting demographic statistics; the publication of program review documents on the intranet; relating information on academic achievement and scholarships; and the publishing data sheets. The institution demonstrates to the public the quality of its programs and services through accreditation efforts, reports to the state, newsletters, statistics, and publications through the intranet. The research does need to be more proactive in nature and there should be an increased commitment and capacity in the way the college uses research on the campus and the information that it generates.

Institutional effectiveness includes performance indicators for each of the institutional goals in the Educational Master Plan. The Planning Committee reviews the results and delivers them to the Shared Governance Council which develops improvement plans.

Support for meeting this standard was provided by the college via an explanation of the interplay between the Shared Governance Council and the Planning Committee in the area of evaluating the college's evaluation mechanisms. The college has assessed the new program review process for instruction and student and administrative services. Program evaluations were conducted for accreditation of specialized programs including Nursing, Automotive Technology and Child Development and for categorical programs such as VTEA, EOPS and DSPS were conducted.

The college has a functioning research department which conducts data generation for decision making. The research office works with the Planning Committee to determine what type of information is needed for program review. In addition, other committees, departments, units, programs and personnel utilize the resources of the institutional research office. Research agendas are established to meet the evaluation and planning needs. The department publishes results on the internet and though a newsletter that is emailed to the college personnel. Surveys are conducted to cull information from the college as a whole as well as from constituent groups and committees. (IB.5)

Planning and resource allocations are effectively linked based on the new program review and planning model as implemented by the Institutional Planning Committee. The team found evidence that budget allocations at the departmental level are being related to the faculty and classified staff. The college is encouraged to review the planning and governmental cycle so that a longer range view of resource allocation and technical support can be incorporated into the planning process. Most recently, in 2008, the college began a method to interpret the effectiveness of the planning process, but this mechanism is newly instituted and will need to be reviewed periodically for utility and function. (IB.6)

The institution is in the process of assessing its evaluation mechanisms. The team examined the charge of the Shared Governance Council to evaluate the internal mechanisms. The Council has taken specific interest in SLO assessment. The primary need in this area is the meaningful collection of data in advance to permit informed decision-making. The efforts by the college to conduct research are significant in light of its limited resources and personnel. A commitment of the college in this area will certainly empower the college to improve its institutional effectiveness for the next cycle.

In addition, the Office of Research has assessed the performance of the college goals through the indicators of institutional effectiveness. The college, through its Planning Committee, changed its program review process to more efficiently evaluate program development. The Program Review and Planning Model include timely updates. SLO assessment is now the stated focus of the program review. The Teaching and Learning Project (TLP), developed jointly through administration, Academic Senate and Student Services, coordinates assessment of SLOs at the course, program and institutional level. The TLP read all completed instructional program reviews and provides follow-up and feedback to the instructional departments. The Financial Planning Model (FPM) classifies units for funding projects through a detailed application process.

The Institutional Planning Committee (IPC) evaluates the college planning processes. Specifically, the committee developed new program review and planning models based on feedback and evaluation of previous college models and a review of other college program reviews and plans. The committee selected a six-year program review and planning cycle. Process changes have been recognized by a research and planning organization for effectiveness. (IB.7) The team determined that the college has taken steps to improve the assessment of evaluation models and processes. The TLP used rubrics to provide feedback to programs on outcomes based assessment. The college has improved plan achievement rates. (IB.6)

Conclusions:

Los Medanos College meets the standard. The college is conducting dialogue, systematically evaluating progress and adequately linking the assessment cycle to planning and resource allocation. The team commends the college for the size, scope, and the degree of work the college has exhibited in its effort to redevelop and rebuild its program review and planning process, creating a stronger institution based on more active dialogue among constituencies, consistent goal-setting, and sound resource allocation. (Standards IB.2, IB.4, IB.5)

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

Standard II.A. Instructional Programs

General Observations:

Los Medanos College clearly understands that its instructional program is the backbone of its mission and service to students. Not surprisingly, the college dutifully assesses the environmental landscape and designs programs and courses that both meet the needs of potential students as well as those of potential employers. Additionally, the college carefully looks after the needs of its current students by designing programs that deliver instruction using various modalities and exercises a culturally sensitive pedagogy. In the last several years, the college has begun to create traditions of learning by focusing on developing student learning outcomes beginning at the institutional and program levels and moving on to course levels. Given the schedule the college has set for itself, there will be a need to carefully monitor progress on course level SLOs and assessment.

Findings and Evidence:

The college's office of institutional research identifies the various needs of its students by profiling and analyzing the data on current students. Additionally, the office generates data on the demographics of the feeder communities. Prior to each semester, the senior dean of instruction meets with new faculty to review ways in which students can best be served. In regard to assessment, there are five committees charged with "Next Steps in Institutionalizing Assessment", which are responsible for direct measures of student learning, indirect measures of student learning, and student perceptions of their learning. (IIA1a).

Presently, the college is engaged in regular and intense dialogue around the delivery of online education particularly as it relates to the quality of instruction, faculty evaluation, and measurement of student learning. Moreover, for 2008-2009, the college has charged the Distance Education Committee and the office of intuitional research to work collaboratively in studying the effectiveness of online courses and report on the feasibility of a complete online associate degree. (IIA1b).

Using a collaborative method between the Academic Senate, student services, and administration, the college developed student learning outcomes (SLOs) for all of its degree programs, which were approved by the Academic Senate in 2006. In 2006, all programs were required to develop SLOs. Although one area of institutional SLOs is still in the developmental stages, the evidence collected by the visiting team strongly suggests that the college has reached proficiency in the remaining four areas of institutional SLOs. While a few programs are still in the developmental stages of SLOs, the vast majority of the college's programs are either at or approaching the proficiency stage for program SLOs, The curriculum committee has revised its course outline template to include SLOs and developed a timeline to have all course outlines updated to include SLOs and assessment methods by 2011. At the degree level, at least one of the SLOs has been assessed and the results have been disseminated to the campus constituency. At the degree level, the results of the SLO assessments mentioned above were used to make improvements in the areas of nursing, student services, in the Reading and Writing Center, and in the Math Lab. At the program level, some programs, i.e., those that actually developed SLOs were reported on the college web site. Although the college has made significant strides in developing institutional and program SLOs, the team found that approximately 75% of the college's courses do not have student learning outcomes as part of the course outline of record. For those courses which have implemented course level SLOs, instructors are responsible for assessing the SLOs. (IIA1c)

The curriculum committee of the Academic Senate is charged with developing SLO procedures. Curriculum procedures require inclusion of SLOs developed at the course, program, and institutional levels. Curriculum procedures require outline updates every five years. Two funded faculty members (curriculum coaches) are charged with facilitating the addition of SLOs and assessment criteria.

The curriculum committee reviews and approves courses and programs and sends them on to the chief academic officer for final approval. Following the most recent program review cycle, newly developed program-level SLOs were added to the college catalog. In order for program

faculty to make resource allocation funding requests, program reviews (which must now contain SLOs and assessment measures) must be completed and any such request must reference the relevant portion of the review. (IIA2a).

Every vocational program has an advisory board, and faculty schedule regular meetings with these boards. Advisory boards are asked for their input and expertise in helping to develop program SLOs. In addition, department faculty have a responsibility to remain current in their field and regularly take sabbaticals, attend conferences, seminars and workshops, and are subsequently evaluated as part of their peer evaluations to ensure currency in their respective fields. Additionally, the program review process requires SLOs and self-evaluation by program faculty. Finally, a committee of faculty members serves as part of the Teaching and Learning Project which is a key campus resource for assisting in developing program SLOs. (IIA2b).

Programs are designed by faculty and in the case of vocational programs also rely on the guidance of advisory committees. The Academic Senate, Shared Governance Council, and college president must give preliminary approval to all new programs. In addition, course outlines must be approved by the curriculum committee, the local board, and the state chancellors' office. Furthermore, a department must demonstrate that a fulltime student can complete the program within the 60 unit guideline, including meeting GE requirements, in a two year timeframe. Finally, qualified faculty teach and regularly undergo professional development training and all programs systematically undergo a program review process. (IIA2c).

The college offers full term, short term, weekend, off-site, self-paced, online, and hybrid classes. All delivery modes and curriculum matters must pass through and be approved by the curriculum committee. The team found in numerous interviews and various staff development documents sufficient evidence to collaborate the claims of several onsite interviews which claimed that the college is engaged in extensive dialogue about the necessity of adapting to student learning styles. The pedagogy of individual instructors is enhanced by professional development activities that provide them with the ideas and skills to implement classroom practices to adapt to student learning needs. (IIA2d).

The college requires all programs to systematically undergo program review. In 2006, a revised program review process was implemented. That year programs were required to respond to questions posed by their dean based on review of the program data, advisory board recommendations, development of SLOs, assessment of SLOs, evaluation of program curricula, and program resource needs. In addition, the district uses the Educational Policies Committee to review programs in trouble and make the appropriate recommendations regarding their continuance or discontinuance. Since 2006, all of the college program reviews have been completed and posted on the college web site. In addition, annual updates are being conducted and posted on the web site. The college meets this standard (IIA2e).

Beginning in fall 2007, the six year program review cycle required all of the programs to annually report progress on their assessment plans; therefore, the newness of this requirement does not allow for full implementation of these processes, however some programs such as developmental math and English, conduct assessment on a regular basis and use results for program improvement. The college has developed the Teaching and Learning Project (TLP) in

which mechanisms for ensuring systematic and on-going assessment of students learning, as well as developing plans that are responsive to assessment results are being implemented. Evidence posted on the web site corroborated with interviews shows that the TLP project is working well, particularly in regard to assessment of institutional and program SLOs. (IIA2f).

The college does not use departmental or program examinations (IIA2g).

For each credit course which has SLOs, they are included on the outline. The class syllabus is required to contain the assessment and measurements of the course outline SLOs. By the nature of the review cycle, all course outlines will be reviewed and, subsequently, have assessable SLOs by 2011. The college follows the national standard for unit hours in the classroom (Carnegie hours) as one measure of reflection for generally accepted norms and equivalences in higher education. At the current time, the college has only completed approximately 25% of its courses outline revisions to include SLOs. (IIA2h).

The college has had most of its degree and certificates in place for some time, but current courses must have clearly defined SLOs and assessment criteria by 2011. The college is seeking to reach a level where there is alignment between SLOs in the course, program, and degree levels and grading in the courses. By the nature of the review cycle, all course outlines will be reviewed and, subsequently, have assessable SLOs by 2011. By this time, the college expects to have achieved an optimum level of alignment of course level SLO outcomes with program and degree level SLO outcomes resulting in degree and certificates and begin awarding on the basis of achievement of those outcomes. (IIA2i)

The college curriculum has defined general education in five broad areas: 1) communication/critical thinking; 2) science; 3) creative arts; 4) humanities; and, 5) behavioral and social sciences. Students are required to take at least one course in each of the five areas. SLOs are embedded in each of the general education course outlines. (IIA3a).

The college mission statement commits the institution to "help students to build their abilities and competencies as life-long learners." All of the skills required in this standard are part of the GE curriculum. (IIA3b).

Every general education course at Los Medanos deals with ethics, diversity, and global perspective. Most students completing GE take Philosophy 2, while Citizenship is fulfilled in Political Science 10 or 20 (a board mandated course). The GE committee ensures that each course outline incorporates SLOs that include ethics and global perspective and ensures that they are effectively integrated into the curriculum. (IIA3c).

All degrees have three components: 1) major; 2) general education; 3) competency and other graduation requirements. Major components contain at least 18 units which focus students on a particular discipline or interdisciplinary curriculum to prepare them for transfer to four-year institutions. (IIA4).

The Occupational Education Committee is composed of representatives from all of the occupational programs. This committee established SLOs based on business and industry

standards for all occupational programs. All vocational and occupational programs conduct program review every six years. Student success rates on external certification exams are excellent. (IIA5).

The college publishes information to students (current and prospective) in several ways, e.g. brochures, catalog, class schedule, and course syllabi. SLOs were first published in the catalog in 2007-08. The college requires all instructors to produce a syllabus for each class they teach and distribute them the first day of class. In addition, instructors are held accountable through departmental, peer, managerial, and classroom evaluations. (IIA6).

The college accepts units from other regionally accredited institutions and this policy is published in the catalog. The college articulation officer works to secure agreements with other institutions for transfer of credit units. The articulation officer provides course update information to ASSIST. The college has a transfer center to work with students to understand transfer polices. (IIA6a).

When programs are eliminated or requirements are significantly changed, students retain catalog rights. Also, students are able to maintain continuous enrollment in primary terms. The college's discontinuance policy is published on its web site. During the past accreditation cycle the college has not discontinued a program that allowed for the use of this policy. (IIA6b).

The college provides many publications to the public, prospective students, and current students both in print and in electronic format. Print versions of the catalog are reviewed and updated regularly. The college constantly monitors the quality of the dissemination and use of this information through the survey of student experiences and in monitoring in showing the exponential growth in college website hits. Furthermore, the quality of the college's publications has resulted in the college receiving various awards for its publications from print marketing organizations. (IIA6c).

Academic freedom is a strong value of the college expressed in its mission statement, legitimized in its board rules, and published in its catalog. In addition, the institution has adopted a student code of conduct. (IIA7).

The faculty handbook presents the board policies which require balance and detail student rights to hold opinions different from their professors. All college employees are to distinguish fact from opinion and use data fairly. Faculty undergo a peer review process which also administers student evaluations and whether or not the faculty presents information fairly and objectively. In fact, students rate the faculty high in this area. (IIA7a).

The catalog contains an academic integrity statement. The academic senate has adopted an academic integrity policy, as well. In addition, the governing board has adopted a student code of conduct. (IIA7b).

Los Medanos College does not seek to instill specific beliefs or worldviews (IIA7c).

Los Medanos College does not offer courses in foreign locations (IIA8).

Conclusions:

The team found Standard IIA to be written succinctly with evidence to support the descriptive summaries and self evaluation sections. In those areas that were written and supported with anecdotal claims, the team was able in almost all instances to find and verify at the site visit the necessary collaborative evidence to support the self-study. The college was particularly strong in the area of program review, in that all programs had undergone a comprehensive program review within the last two years and most had begun the annual update process in fall 2007. Regarding SLOs, the college had both strengths and weaknesses. The team commends the college for making significant progress in the development of student learning outcomes (SLOs) at the institutional and program levels. [Standards IB1, IIA1a, IIA1c, IIA2a, IIA2b, IIA2e, IIA2f, IIA2g, IIA2h, IIA2i, IIA3, IIA6, IIA6a, IIB4, IIC1a, IIC2, IIIA1c].

College Recommendation 1: Although the college has made significant strides in developing institutional and program SLOs, the team found that approximately 75% of the college's courses do not have student learning outcomes as part of the course outline of record. Therefore, the team encourages the college to accomplish what it set out to do in meeting its timeline for reaching proficiency in its course level SLOs by 2012. Furthermore, the team recommends that that process be implemented so that by 2012 the college will have developed and implemented methods for assessing those SLOs and use the results of those assessments to improve student learning in all of its courses. (Standards IB1, IIA1a, IIA1c, IIA2a, IIA2b, IIA2e, IIA2f, IIA2g, IIA2h, IIA2i, IIA3, IIA6, IIA6a, IIB4, IIC1a, IIC2, IIIA1c)

Standard II.B. Student Support Services

General Observations:

Student Services has implemented a staffing and management plan and hired a senior dean of student services, a dean of student development, and an in-reach coordinator. Several classified staff positions were also reinstated through the Resource Allocation Process (RAP). The Student Communities initiative, led by the HSI coordinator, has linked the Umoja Scholars, AVID, American Experience, Puente, Honors and Classroom Without Borders programs in a coordinated manner. Staff and management from each of these programs have developed an events calendar and meet regularly to coordinate specific program activities and support each other in ensuring the events are successful.

Outreach efforts have been increased significantly and include targeted recruitment in the local high schools where assessment testing is conducted, workshops are presented to high school students and their parents and, the Outreach department collaborates with many other student service programs to provide accurate and comprehensive information. In addition, EOP&S has also recruited male participants and enrollment materials have been translated to Spanish. The college is presently experiencing significant enrollment growth.

The quality of the report is good. The college satisfactorily explained issues of administrative leadership turnover and facility restraints that have impeded their efforts over the last six years. Despite these challenges, the college has made much progress. The self-study narrative indicated the trials experienced by the college without obscuring their ability to provide focus and evidence of the work they have completed.

Findings and Evidence:

Student Support services recruits a diverse student population through Outreach Services. The program works closely with the local high schools by regularly providing informational sessions at the high schools and several middle schools. During these visits, they also provide assessment services. The workshops conducted at the high schools have been integrated into ongoing college recruitment efforts for the East County community. There has been a concerted effort to recruit African American and Hispanic student populations and enrollments in both groups have increased. Special programs such as EOP&S and Financial Aid are included at high schools where these populations are higher. Information and presentations are conducted in English and Spanish (II.B).

Student support services at the Pittsburg location are comprehensive and include Admissions & Records, Financial Aid, EOP&S, DSP&S, Outreach Services, Transfer Center, Student Activities, Career Center and Counseling. These programs are linked to the college goal number one of "offering high quality programs that meet the needs of the students and the community". However, these services are offered on a very limited basis at the Brentwood Center either by appointment during scheduled time blocks or via online services. In 2006, the most recent annual student survey conducted at the Brentwood Center, students identified counseling and tutoring as services that would enhance student success. While limited resources have hampered the college's ability to provide these services, as the Brentwood Center continues to grow, delivery of these services onsite will become necessary. Currently, according to the Brentwood staff, there is a critical need for a more ongoing DSP&S presence (II.B.1).

Student Services units have come together with the assistance of the Teaching Learning Project to develop consistent and common SLOs that focus on meeting the institutional mission to " …commit our resources and design our policies and procedures to support the mission [to help students build their abilities and competencies as life-long learners]". The two Student Services Institutional Level Outcomes (ILOs) are: 1) students will demonstrate proficiency in the use of online services, and 2) students will demonstrate proficiency in self-advocacy. The Student Services ILOs function as the common themes and the basis for program level outcomes (II.B.1).

The institution provides a catalog for its constituencies with precise, accurate, and current information. The institution publishes a paper catalog annually and it is also available online (http://losmed.forest.net/losmedanos/catalog/FMPro?-db=Catalog&-lay=Web%20Layout&-format=search4.htm&-view). The catalog contains the official name and address of the college, contact information and website address, the college

mission statement, course, program and degree offerings, the academic calendar, a statement on academic freedom based on board policy, information on financial aid and learning resources. The catalog also lists the names and degrees of administrators and faculty and Governing Board members. Further, the catalog provides information on student requirements such as applicable fees, degree, certificate and transfer, academic regulations for grading, attendance, academic renewal, and course repetition policy. There are statements regarding non-discrimination and sexual harassment based on board policy and grievance and complaint procedures (II.B.2).

There are some inconsistencies among major documents including the student handbook, the schedule of classes, and the catalog. This can cause confusion to students, complaints, lack of clarity for required processes and time consuming administrative waivers and appeals necessary to rectify the inconsistencies. Updates to the website are not timely. The college acknowledges these inconsistencies and has shown a proactive response toward improvement by proposing that an in-reach coordinator is hired whose primary role will be to provide updates to the web site and to review materials regularly to ensure consistency (II.B.2).

The 2007 Student Experiences With LMC survey indicated general satisfaction with the core college services (II.B.3.a).

The college has developed online support services to provide access to students at both the Pittsburg and Brentwood locations. According to the self-study report, they have recently scheduled blocks of time for general and EOP&S counselors to meet with students four days per week at the Brentwood Center. However, a visit to the Brentwood Center revealed that EOP&S counseling services have discontinued at that site. Enrollment has increased significantly at the Brentwood Center and increased student support services will be necessary to adequately serve the student population (II.B.3.a).

Online application is available for the general population and for EOP&S. From 2006 to 2007, online applications increased by 12% (II.B.3.a).

An online counseling tool is being developed to enhance the already implemented "Web Advisor" product. Limited space, shared space and other facility issues restrict expansion of services to the level that the college would like to attain. The college has responded by implementing a "one-stop shop" philosophy and is in the development stages of a facilities remodel which, according to the Facilities Master Plan, is anticipated to be completed in 2011. Student Services has responded to the facility and resource limitations by focusing on development of online services and offering limited core services at the Brentwood Center (II.B.3.a).

Awareness and use of specific categorical programs such as EOP&S and DSP&S that are designed to assist special populations, as well as Transfer Center services, is low at the Pittsburg campus. According to the results of the 2007 Student Experiences With LMC Survey, the most revealing lack of knowledge and use of services to enhance student learning is that of tutoring. Assessment of tutoring services is underway with the

intention of improving those services to students. A Tutoring Proposal, submitted in spring 2008, indicates that the administration of the proposed tutoring services is still in question and whether it will be housed administratively under Instruction, Student Services, or Library Services is yet undetermined. While tutoring is discussed in a limited fashion in Standard II.C, it is also listed under Student Services in several documents including the schedule of classes. The college is actively working to improve tutoring services through the Shared Governance Council and the Tutoring Committee (II.B.3.a).

The college conducts a wide variety of activities to meet this standard including Service Learning. Campus events provide a range of interests from the arts to social issues. Included in the many activities that are conducted are community partnership conferences and an active Student Club constituency. Most impressive is the three-course graduation requirement for General Education centering on ethics, critical and analytical thinking, and cross disciplinary studies – American Institutions, distributed in the Counseling Handout – GE/General Requirements (II.B.3.b).

As a result of a college partnership with California Tomorrow's Campus Change Network, Los Medanos College implemented the Institutional Development for Equity and Access (IDEA) project. According to an IDEA Assessment Survey conducted in spring 2008, IDEA has promoted equity and access throughout the campus. "IDEA's analysis of college data such as student, faculty and staff characteristics, retention, success, persistence and goal achievement rates (degrees, certificate and transfer) determined areas in need of critical attention. The areas of concern focus on three points: (1) conditions of academic success amongst African American and Chicano/Latino students; (2) student leadership and engagement; and (3) development of shared language amongst the college's professional community on the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion" (http://www.losmedanos.edu/intra-out/idea/). This initiative has resulted in the implementation of the Umoja program for African American students, an important agenda for the college given the increased African American population and low student success rates among this group (II.B.3.b).

The Student Communities initiative at Los Medanos College is a model of collaboration and commitment to civic engagement and personal development for student services programs. This uniquely institutionalized program integrates the Umoja Scholars program, AVID, American Experience, Classroom without Borders, the Puente Program, the Honors Program and, the Office of Student Life by defining them as student communities, meeting regularly to ensure scheduling of program activities do not overlap and, promoting and supporting each program in a unified manner. Student Communities also incorporates both Student Services and Instruction divisions (II.B.3.b).

Currently there are fifteen active clubs at Los Medanos College; a healthy number for a college of its size, and an indication that student involvement is high. During the team visit, Student Club Day was held. Several clubs including Puente, Scuba Squad, and Umoja Scholars club had booths providing information on voter registration, entertainment, and club information (II.B.3.b).

Counseling services, outreach and relationship building with the local high school counselors and, involvement in instructional initiatives, is vast. The Counseling department has been responsive to improving the completion rate of educational plans by students through stated Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) contained in their program review: 1) Complete an educational plan with the assistance of a counselor and 2) Learn to use the college web site successfully to view his/her educational plan. There was a 26% increase in the number of created and modified educational plans for students from 2006-07 to 2007-08. The number of educational plans completed during that time frame jumped from 2486 to 3136 (II.B.3.c.).

The Counseling department developed a Crisis Intervention Manual for distribution to all faculty and staff. The department has worked especially closely with the Puente Program, ESL and Development Education programs to address advising needs. The Puente program instituted a Phase II English course to prepare participants for transfer which had an average 62% enrollment rate in the course among Puente students from 2002 through 2004 (II.B.3.c.).

In addition to an increasingly active Transfer Center, which conducts Transfer Day and College Night activities once annually, the department hosts several onsite visits by 4-year institutions such as CSU East Bay and UC Davis. They also sponsor annual visits for students to the local campuses of UC Berkley, UC Davis, San Francisco State University and St. Mary's College. These events indicate a commitment to successful transfer matriculation by the college and the department. Finally, the Counseling department is active in encouraging and maintaining professional development for all counseling faculty (II.B.3.c.).

Los Medanos College has been exceptionally committed to addressing issues of diversity since the last accreditation visit in 2002. The Student Experience at LMC Survey conducted in 2007 indicates that close to 75% of the students felt the college does a good job of supporting diversity. This high rate of satisfaction is especially significant due to the 10% increase of minorities attending the college since 2002 (II.B.3.d.).

The college is active through the Institutional Development for Equity and Access (IDEA) project to maintain, expand and address issues of diversity at Los Medanos College (http://www.losmedanos.edu/intra-out/idea/). This initiative instills a philosophy of collaboration among various special population groups and programs. IDEA is highly visible throughout the college. Knowledge about the project is high and participation is great (II.B.3.d.).

Through student activities and a wide range of student clubs, several ethnic, social and political student groups are involved in campus life on an ongoing basis. There is also an ethnic and multi-cultural studies course requirement that can be met through a variety of discipline specific courses. The college is strong in its commitment to promoting activities, programs and services that practice an understanding and appreciation of diversity (II.B.3.d.).

The college regularly validates a state approved assessment test according to the requirements set by state matriculation regulations. It also conducts a Disproportionate Impact Study, which revealed that the test scores are lower for "certain ethnic groups". The college believes this is due to the under-preparedness of those student populations. There is no evidence supplied to support this assertion (II.B.3.e).

The use of CCCApply, an online application system now used by the majority of the California Community Colleges, provides a consistent application process that ensures legal compliance. The college has increased access to admissions by adding the online application. The application is provided in English and Spanish (II.B.3.e).

In 2006, Los Medanos was under investigation because grades of eight students had been changed without authorization. The breach in security actually took place at a sister college in the Contra Costa Community College District. As a result, the number of employees who have access to the grade change screens has been reduced to two employees in the Admissions and Records Office. Employees must also sign an "Internal Policy for Grade Change form. There is also monthly monitoring and validation by the director of Admissions and Records of all grade changes that have been made in the Datatel student information system (II.B.3.f).

The imaging system purchased by the college has not been fully utilized due to staff shortage. "Tapes" are used to backup student records nightly. The college does publish policies for release of student information and FERPA requirements according to Board Policy and Student Services Procedure 3026, in the Schedule of Classes, Catalog and the college web site (II.B.3.f).

The institution frequently evaluates student support services through the following surveys and feedback reports: 1) Evaluation of High Tech Center SLOs, 2) EOP&S Student Survey, 3) High School Counselor Conference Evaluations, 4) Annual Brentwood Center Student Satisfaction Survey, 5) Student Services Program Review Feedback and, 6) Student Experiences with LMC Survey (II.B.4).

Student Services programs utilize program review, including stated student learning outcomes, to identify, evaluate and use results to improve student learning. With the exception of the Puente Program and Student Activities, Student Services programs had completed at least one cycle of evaluation and improvement linked to program specific student learning outcomes (II.B.4).

Further, the categorical programs completed an extensive review by the California Community College System's Office in 2008. As a result of the evaluation, the EOP&S program implemented a recruitment effort of males, where the program had shown low participation among this population group (II.B.4).

The greatest barrier to meeting student demands has been the restriction of adequate physical space to house the various Student Services units, along with an inability to

address student adjacency issues. This issue is being dealt with through a prioritized facility remodel plan included in the Educational Master Plan and the Facilities Master Plan. Despite these limitations, student support services consistently evaluate and strive to improve services to students at the Pittsburg location. A more focused effort for providing student support services needs to be established at the Brentwood Center. The student support service units are presently working with the Teaching and Learning Project to ensure results-based improvements are linked to student learning outcome benchmarks (II.B.4).

The Student Services Planning Task Force has developed an Organizational Planning Proposal to further enhance an effective leadership and management structure within the division. A consultant facilitated the work of the Planning Task Force, beginning in the summer of 2007, and assisted the group in evaluating and linking aspects of the proposal to college goals and student needs. This extensive, research-based proposal includes a proposed reorganization of the management structure designed to further address the changing dynamics at the college along with the increase of programs and services (II.B.4).

Conclusions:

The college is consistent in identifying its student and potential student populations. They are knowledgeable about the diverse range of students attending the college and living in the community and evidence support there is an authentic commitment and focus on improving student success rates. Student Support Services understands the college's mission and its role in meeting it. In the self-study, the college provides evidence that all requirements for Standard II.B, including all sub-standards, are being met and have identified two planning agenda items. Student Services has done a thorough job in informing, guiding, and supporting students attending the college. Continuing efforts and improvements at the college directly link to improving student success.

Through a clearly intentional collaborative process, Student Support Services has accomplished much within the past few years. Committee involvement is high among staff, students and management. Cross-divisional efforts with a focus on academic student success are promoted widely by all staff, especially the Interim Dean of Student Development and the Senior Dean of Student Services; both new positions since the last accreditation visit. This exemplifies a commitment by the administration in supporting the efforts of Student Support Services through allocation of needed resources.

Los Medanos College is to be commended for the commitment by Student Services to inform, guide, and support an increasingly diverse student population. Student Services is to be commended for their unified dedication to equity, access, and diversity by implementing, supporting and sustaining the IDEA project, the Umoja program, AVID, the Student Communities Initiative and, the Puente Program. These continuing and collaborative efforts are directly linked to Institutional Goal #2: to Create an Educational Environment in Which All People Have a Chance to Fully Develop Their Potential and Achieve Their Educational Goals. (II.B.d.)

Recommendations:

College Recommendation 2. The team recommends that the college develop mechanisms to ensure the closer alignment of the Brentwood Center with college operations, services, and practices (IIB1a, IIB3a, IIC.1.c, III.C.1.c).

Standard II.C. Library and Learning Support Services

II. General Observations

The college demonstrates a clear commitment to providing library and learning resources to its students and larger college community. A new library, opened in summer, 2007, provides extensive resources to support student learning, housing the library, tutoring center, 100 station computer lab, wireless computer access, study rooms, and meeting rooms. Online library resources have also been developed. In addition, there is a reading and writing center, program-specific computer labs located throughout the

campus, and a high tech center to support students with disabilities. The services of the reading and writing center and tutoring are being developed in response to the changing student population. There are efforts underway to evaluate the need for an information literacy requirements or proficiency and to find an appropriate administrative "home" for college tutoring services. While the services of the reading and writing center and tutoring are available on a limited basis at the Brentwood Center, library services are provided through online access only.

III.   Findings and Evidence

The library has an extensive collection of print and non-print resources to support student learning as evidenced in the college catalog. The collection, which includes both print and eBook titles, electronic databases, media collection, and interlibrary loan options, is developed by the librarians in accordance with the library's Collection Development Policy and in consultation with teaching faculty through the curriculum process. The library's web site serves as a portal to library resources, facilitating student access to library and learning resources. Additionally, the library staff is providing access to current textbooks to support students with limited resources. In the area of campus computer labs, the new library houses a 100 station open computer lab, as well as wireless access throughout the building. Additional program-specific computer labs are located throughout the college, with a total of 500 student computers available. The Reading Writing Center develops programs in consultation with faculty. The tutoring program is in transition from a decentralized model to a centralized model. Tutoring services are being relocated to a more central area on campus and are being assessed to determine appropriate focus and leadership. The college's High Tech Center provides services to a targeted student population and is evaluated by its student clients on a regular basis. (IIC.1.a)

The college provides library orientations to individual students and classes, as well as offers courses in library research and information literacy. Reference support is available to students through direct contact with a librarian or through email.   The college does not yet have a graduation requirement in the area of information competency, although discussions are being conducted with the Academic Senate and interested faculty. The Reading Writing Center, campus computer labs, and High Tech Center provide individual support for technology based questions. (IIC1.b)

The opening of the new library has expanded access students have to onsite library and learning resources in terms of both new resources and hours of service. The further development of eBooks and online databases provides additional access to library resources from on and off campus for both students and faculty and staff. Interlibrary loan services have also expanded access to print materials.   Surveys are being conducted to assess student knowledge of library hours and resources as well as satisfaction with library services. The Reading Writing Center has extensive hours on campus; the campus computer labs have extended hours during the week and Saturday. Additional hours are planned for the tutoring program and High Tech Center. The college is taking steps to ensure that library and learning resources services are provided to students in distance education programs by having a librarian on the Distance Education Committee. Survey results indicate that on-campus computer labs provide services to students taking distance education courses. Library and learning resources services at the Brentwood

Center are limited. Despite the enrollment growth that is taking place at the Brentwood Center, library services are limited to online access (which is itself limited) and a librarian who provides orientation services to specific classes. There is a computer lab at the Center, as well as limited tutoring and Reading Writing Center services. (IIC1.c)

The college has taken appropriate measures to secure the new library through such systems as key card access systems, security strips, physical cables, and onsite monitoring by staff. Campus computer labs are monitored by staff. Maintenance for campus computer labs is part of the college's Resource Allocation Process. (IIC1.d)

The library is a member of the Online Computer Library Corporation, which allows the college to participate in a shared cataloguing system. The college is also a member of the Community College League of California for consortium pricing on electronic subscription databases using standard licensing agreements. The college also participates in an informal agreement with California State University East Bay for access to library resources. The High Tech Center participates in a district consortium for the purchase of hardware and software. (IIC.1.e)

The college engages in a number of activities to evaluate the effectiveness of its library and learning resources with respect to student learning outcomes and uses the results to improve programs and services. The library has been participating in the Teaching and Learning project to develop program level SLOs as well as engaging in program review. The opportunities generated by the opening of the new library have also led to a reassessment of staff assignments and services. The Reading Writing Center has also been developing service level SLOs. The computer labs have not yet participated in the SLO process. The Reading Writing Center, tutoring services, and campus computer labs administer assessments of services and use the results modify services. (IIC2)

IV.   Conclusions

The new library complex, which supports both traditional library services and developing online and computer based resources, demonstrates the strong commitment that the college has made to library and learning resources. The high number of program specific computer labs is additional evidence of the college's commitment to learning resources, as are its use of grants to expand the Reading Writing Center and tutoring program. The team commends the college for the extensive library and technology services that support student learning with the completion of the new library complex. (2C.1.a.b.c.d.e.2) Library staff has been participating in the Teaching and Learning Project related to SLO development as well as participating in the college planning and resource allocation processes. Specific attention should be focused on implementing the information competency requirement, implementing the recommendations of the tutoring/academic support proposal, and advertising the new resources and services associated with the library, Reading Writing Center, and tutoring. While the college has focused considerable resources on library and learning resources at its Pittsburg campus, the same quality of services cannot be found at the Brentwood Center. With the strong growth that the college is experiencing occurring largely at the Brentwood Center, additional library and learning resources services are needed.

Recommendations

See Recommendation (2) in Standard 2B.

Standard III: Resources

Standard III.A. Human Resources

General Observations:

The self study report is well organized and effectively addresses the standards. The college is recovering from a hiring restriction imposed on the basis of fiscal challenges in fiscal years 2004/05 and lifted in 2006/07. During this period only critical positions were approved for hire.

To assist in the fiscal recovery of the district, according to the Salary Schedule and District Benefits Premium History, 6.9 % to 7% salary reductions occurred during fiscal years 2004/05 and salary reductions of 3.38% to 6.9% occurred in fiscal year 05/06. Salary restoration started in fiscal year 2006/07 and continued in 2007/08.

Although the district has now allocated more positions to the college, the need for additional faculty and classified staff to keep up with the enrollment growth has been identified. The college is anticipating the district revised staffing allocation formula will provide additional funding to assist with staffing needs.

The institution is now experiencing delays in hiring due to the district's human resources staff reduction. Major changes in the institution also include the college's management structure re-organization. Reorganization precipitated by the president has occurred twice in a five-year period, evidence that additional administration may be needed.

It should be noted the current faculty contract with the district does not include student learning outcomes as an evaluation requirement for faculty.

Findings and Evidence:

The college follows district established hiring processes as outlined in the District Hiring Procedures. A random sample of personnel files provided evidence that the hiring process is followed and that faculty and academic managers meet the standards set forth in the current Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges. Qualifications for classified staff and managers are included in governing board approved job descriptions.

The district and college have established procedures to hire highly qualified employees. Based on district personnel procedures and the United Faculty contract, faculty plays a primary role in the selection of their peers. The instructional department involved in hiring leads the respective committee. Degrees held by full-time faculty, classified staff,

and managers are listed in the college catalog. A review of a random sample of the faculty personnel file provided evidence that the college accepts only degrees from accredited institutions or the equivalent. (III.A.1.a)

A random sample of employee personnel files provided evidence that employee evaluation of each employee category is systematic and conducted at stated intervals, as per legal requirements and bargaining unit contracts. Review of management files found that two of three personnel files provided evidence that administration evaluations are not being completed systematically as outlined in the District Management Personnel Manual. Written criteria exist for all employee groups and are the basis of the evaluation processes. The college should develop and implement a strategy to evaluate administrators on a systematic basis. (III.A.1.b)

Faculty evaluation criteria clearly emphasize teaching effectiveness. However, in reviewing the current faculty contract, there is no evidence that student learning outcomes are part of faculty evaluation requirement. The self study report does not identify a planning agenda to address this standard. As personnel is a district function, the district and college should develop and implement a strategy to include student learning outcomes as a component unit of the faculty evaluation process. (III.A.1.c)

The district has a written code of professional ethics (Employee Code of Ethical Behavior – HR1040.08). College employees follow the policy and interact with each other and with students on a professional basis as evident with various interviews on campus. Departments and/or management have responded to disagreements. On two occasions outside consultants assisted in reestablishing collegial communication. (III.A.1.d)

The institution's leaders have identified the need for additional full-time faculty. Although the number of full-time faculty has increased in recent years, the increase in many disciplines has not kept pace with the growth in enrollment. At the district level, based on AB1725 mandates on the ratio of full-time to part-time instructors, the district exceeds the state-mandated "maintenance of effort" target. However, in reviewing the Fall 2007 Faculty Analysis report, in Los Medanos College the ratio is 47.8% - below the ratio of sister colleges, Contra Coast College at 56.9 percent, and Diablo Canyon College at 52.2 %. The college is anticipating the district revised staffing allocation formula will provide additional funding to assist with staffing needs. (III.A.2)

The district provides a Human Resources Procedure Manual that establishes written polices to insure fairness in all employment procedures as reviewed by the visiting team. A random sample review of personnel files provides evidence that the college adheres to the subject procedures and that implementation is the responsibility of the district human resources, the college director of business services, and the respective hiring manager. (III.A.3.a)

A visual inspection by the visiting team provided evidence that the college business services office maintains employee personnel file in a secure manner. Employees have access to their files upon request in addition to authorized access by respective managers.

It should be noted that personnel files should be stored in a fire and water proof file cabinet to provide security. (III.A.3.b)

In various meetings it is evident the institution advocates and demonstrates integrity in the treatment of its administrators, faculty, staff, and students. This commitment for integrity is outlined in the district's mission statement. The college catalog also published evidence of this values statement. Student survey results provided by the college suggest students strongly agree that college employees treat them with respect. (III.A.3.c)

The report articulates the district's and college's commitment to equity and diversity. The college and student clubs sponsor events that enhance cultural awareness. Professional development activities are provided to employees. Climate surveys provide evidence that the institution understands issues of equity and diversity. (Standard III.A.4.a)

Although data relative to diversity is collected during the recruitment and hiring of new employees, it is not used during the hiring process. The district has developed a draft diversity plan that is currently under review prior to submittal to the State Chancellors Office. The district and college plans to implement the subject plan by June 2009 once approved. (III.A.4.b)

The formalized professional development program has seen a decline since the district and college experienced fiscal challenges. In response, the college president has set-up a taskforce to develop and recommend a new professional development program. III.A.5.a and III.A.5.b)

The Educational Master Plan, revised during the 2006-07 academic year, drives all planning at the college. The Shared Governance Council considers the plan in making classified hiring recommendations. Program review asks all programs to state their human resource needs, projecting three years. (III.A.6)

Conclusions

The college employees should be recognized for their contributions, commitment, and personnel sacrifice to the students and the institution for successfully maintaining and recovering from the previous year's fiscal challenges.

Although the district has now allocated more positions to the college, the need for additional faculty and classified staff to keep up with the enrollment growth has been identified. The college is anticipating the district revised staffing allocation formula will provide additional funding to assist with staffing needs.

Recommendations:

See district recommendation 3 (IIIA1c)

Standard III.B. Physical Resources

General Observations

The college has made great accomplishments in the area of planning for physical resources and completing projects, specifically capital construction. The 2002 local facilities bond measure provided the college with approximately $81M in capital construction funding. The bond funding was used, in part or in whole, to construct the new library building, science building, math building, and various site improvements. These projects are outlined in the district's Five-Year Construction Plan and are included in the bond measure progress reports. The above-mentioned projects are a response to the 2002 Facilities Master Plan. The successful completion of these construction projects changes the look for the institution and provides a new gateway for students and the campus community as they enter and navigate the campus.

The voters approved an additional bond measure in 2006 providing the college with roughly $68M for capital construction projects. The projects funded under this second bond measure are identified in the district 2010-14 Five-Year Construction Plan. The projects listed for the college are also listed in the 2006 Bond Implantation Project Allocation spread sheet provide by the district.

Major organizational and reporting restructuring has occurred at both the district and campus regarding facilities. When the previous vice chancellor for facilities left the district in 2004, the position was restructured. The position is now the chief facilities planner who was hired within the past year. Another new hire at the district facilities office is the facilities support director. The oversight for day to day maintenance of Los Medanos College is now decentralized under the maintenance and operations manager. That position reports to the college president rather than to the district facilities support director. Interviews conducted by the visiting team suggest that the restructuring changes positively impact delivery of services to the college's physical plant.

The district public safety efforts are led by the district's chief of police.   A police lieutenant is assigned to the college to oversee and coordinate daily policing activities. Mutual agreements with local law enforcement agencies are maintained to further enhance campus safety.

Findings and Evidence

Facilities planning and construction oversight is provided by the district chief facilities planner in conjunction with district project managers. The organizational chart reflects that the oversight for daily maintenance and operations services is provided by the college's maintenance and operations manager, supported by the district's facilities support director. The reporting relationship changed during 2007, with the college's maintenance and operations manager reporting to the college president. Interviews conducted by the visiting team suggest that the restructuring changes positively impact delivery of services to college's physical plant.

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The district has received a land donation from The Cowell Foundation to construct initial permanent facilities for the Brentwood center. The current Brentwood center is in leased facilities. In an interview conducted at the district office, the visiting team learned of a preliminary finding which discovered burial grounds on the site. The district and college are exploring if measures are available to mitigation this condition.

A visual inspection of the Los Medanos College physical plant provides evidence the institution maintains its facilities in a manner that supports its programs and services. (III.B.1.a)

The report outlines a number of facility, equipment, and safety issues that have been addressed over the past few years with the advent of new construction and modernization

projects on campus. However, the college has a back log of scheduled maintenance projects attributed to lack of funding. Funding from the 2006 bond measure will allow renovation work on vacated buildings, address various Americas with Disability Act (ADA) projects, and improve pedestrian and vehicular access.

Physical safety hazards are identified and reported by both the campus police and maintenance/operations staff. An automated work order system assists the maintenance/operation staff in prioritizing and managing requests for service.

Safety services for the college are provided by on campus police under the direct supervision of a police lieutenant, and overseen by the district chief of police. Police officers are armed and P.O.S.T certified. Mutual agreements with local law enforcement agencies are maintained to further enhance campus safety. The campus emergency preparedness plan is managed by the campus police and ongoing training is provided to officers, security personnel, and the campus community. (III.B.1.b)

The Los Medanos College 2007 Facilities Master plan, district Five-Year Construction plans, and project proposals for the science, math, and library buildings reflect that long range capital construction projects are being addressed by the institution. However, there is no evidence that suggests long range plans reflect the total cost of ownership of new facilities and equipment. Moreover, the college has no planning agenda to address this substandard. The college is encouraged to incorporate the total cost of ownership as part of the of its long range capital construction planning. (III.B.2.a)

The report suggests the institution is addressing the ongoing equipment needs of the college. Equipment needs are developed at the unit level and evaluation for funding is provided by the Shared Governance Council and the college president. Facilities resource planning is integrated with institutional planning by way of the link between the educational master and facilities master plans. (III.B.2.b)

Conclusions

The team commends the college for its great accomplishments in the area of facilities planning and capital construction including the creation of a college quad, construction of a new library and classroom buildings and installation of solar power cells in the parking areas. The architectural and landscaping efforts demonstrate the college's commitment to create a positive place for learning to occur. (The college assures that instruction and services are provided in safe and secure facilities. The college has integrated planning for physical resources into its college planning processes. The college has taken on an ambitious endeavor of seeking land to construct permanent facilities for the Brentwood center which, despite setbacks, continues a commitment to serving the students and community. Long range planning does not employ the total cost of ownership concept.

The institution meets this standard.

Standard III.C. Technology Resources

General Observations:

It is evident that technology is important to delivering instruction, supporting students' learning and providing a backbone to manage the college. The college has committed significant resources to expanding student access to technology, completing state of the art new facilities, and investment in infrastructure. The Information Technology department has articulated goals to support the college's mission and educational goals. Departmental technology requests are integrated into the college's resource allocation and program review processes. The Technology Advisory Committee is a participatory governance committee to provide a forum for discussion and recommendations related to technology to the Shared Governance Committee and the Information Technology department.

District staff is responsible for the exchange email system, wide area network, document imaging system, Datatel enterprise management system, application support for the bookstore, police, facilities department and district office, and centralized licensing for anti-virus software and Microsoft applications. The district has implemented the major components of the Datatel enterprise management system including human resources, finance, payroll, admissions, and financial aid.

Findings and Evidence:

Technology clearly plays a valuable role in instruction and student support at the college. The Information Technology (IT) Department lists several primary goals including "Create a technology-enriched learning environment that is student-centered, all encompassing and responsive to student needs". The college has made significant investment in expanding technology resources, including new or upgraded SMART classrooms, increased computer access in the new library building, and four online service kiosks. (III.c.1)

The college has robust technology services, facilities, hardware and software to support teaching and learning and to enhance the effectiveness of the institution. As part of the resource allocation process (RAP) the Shared Governance Council (SGC) evaluates proposals submitted from college departments and areas for technology needs. Approved proposals are implemented by the Information Technology Department. There has been substantial one time funding towards upgrading faculty and staff computers over the last several years. (III.c.1.a)

A technology survey was administered to both students and college employees asking their level of satisfaction with general technical support on campus. 8 percent rated campus technical support "Excellent"; 14 percent "Very Good"; 16 percent "Good"; 9 percent "Fair"; and 5 percent "Poor". This reflects campus comments that at times there is a disconnect between Information Technology and departments. It was noted that

individuals and departments commonly bring forward finalized technology proposals without consulting the professional expertise of the Information Technology Department. (III.c.1.a)

The college has responsibility for support of distance education. The college uses the Blackboard system to facilitate the delivery of distance education. The college has contracted to host the Blackboard system off campus. Primary technical support is provided by a faculty member on re-assigned time. A three year Distance Education Plan, Distance Education Best Practices Guide, and Blackboard Handbook was developed in conjunction with the Distance Education Committee. 34% of responses from the 2005 Technology Survey stated they were very likely or likely to teach completely online courses in the next five years. (IIIc.1.a)

The college self study states that lack of dedicated staff has limited the ability to provide effective training. With the vacancy since 2005 of a dedicated staff development position, there is no regular structured technology training for faculty and staff. Faculty training regarding distance education and using the Blackboard system is supported by an instructor with partial reassigned time. There is no staff position to facilitate and manage instructional design training for faculty. The college has responded to training needs by offering one time trainings and FLEX day activities on topics including Datatel, Outlook email, Microsoft Office 2007, and the college computing environment. (III.c.1.b)

The District employee training manual provides basic information on using the Outlook email and Datatel systems. A Datatel Colleague Training Plan Proposal was approved by the Chancellor's Cabinet in April 2008. (III.c.1.b)

The college provides technology training opportunities to students both formally and informally. The college has a computer literacy graduation requirement for students earning a degree or certificate of achievement. Instruction of the use of Internet and wireless technology and information search and evaluation techniques are provided to the library in reference desk interactions and orientation sessions. (III.c.1.b)

The IT department has developed baseline policies, procedures and purchasing guidelines for desktop computers, laptop computers, PDA's, and other electronic devices to ensure optimal performance, security, sustainability and efficiency. The District and College Roles, Responsibilities, and Service Outcomes document delineates the functions of the district and college. (III.c.1.c)

Since 2001, there has been an extensive growth in campus technology and the need for support has commensurately expanded. The number of network nodes has increased from 2,000 in 2001 to 5,382 in 2007 and student computers from 240 to 600. There was a reduction of 2 FTE information technology staffing in 2003, of which, one was restored in 2007. The Brentwood Center is increasing in enrollment and has no dedicated technology and media support staff. (III.c.1.c)

A faculty and staff desktop replacement plan was written in 2005. Replacement of desktop computers is based on a computer inventory maintained by IT. One time funding was allocated in 2004 to replace 40 computers and another one time allocation was made in spring 2007 to replace 100 additional staff and faculty desktop computers. (III.c.1.c)

Media Services is responsible for upgrading existing classrooms to be SMART classrooms and ongoing maintenance of the equipment. There are 19 second generation SMART classrooms throughout campus. Additionally there are 9 teaching labs on campus with student computers, teaching station, and ceiling mounted projector. (III.c.1.c)

The planning process has lead to the widespread adoption of technology across campus. Computers are located in departmental offices, 22 student labs and classrooms, and most faculty and staff offices. The Technology Advisory Group is charged to maintain and update the college Technology Plan. Technology proposals that are related to functions assigned to the District Office are approved through the Chancellor's Cabinet. (III.c.1.d)

Dialog between the district and college is institutionalized through the District Technology Council and District Technology Managers listed in the Contra Costa Community College District Committee List. Campus conversations confirm that the District Technology Managers regularly meet at the district office to discuss operational issues. Meeting minutes and campus comments mentioned that the District Technology Council has met once in the past four years. (III.c.1.d)

Technology planning is integrated with institutional planning through the program review and resource allocation processes. The Information Technology Department and the Technology Advisory Group are charged with updating the technology plan. Technology Advisory Group meeting minutes validate that the updating process has begun. The Technology Advisory Group, an advisory body to the Shared Governance Council, is a participatory governance committee that regularly meets to discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of campus technology and to make recommendations for improvement. The district 2001-2004 Information Technology Strategic Plan was developed to support and coordinate with college technology plans. (III.c.2)

Conclusions:

Los Medanos College serves an area of growth collating to increased enrollment, new campus facilities, and expansion at the Brentwood Center. To address these trends the college has committed to increased student access to technology, new facilities that support technology enhanced teaching modalities and robust services to support teaching and learning. The college has had to balance an increased demand for technology support, especially at the expanding Brentwood Center with limited staff to meet these demands. The Information Technology department at Los Medanos College faces the challenge of adequate staffing and equipment replacement costs to meet college needs. The college therefore is encouraged to infuse the concept of Total Cost of Ownership when developing a new technology plan and when addressing resource allocations

proposals.

Recommendations:

College Recommendation 3: In order to increase effectiveness and to respond fully to the previous team recommendation, the team recommends the college implement an integrated professional development plan to ensure employees have regular structured trainings on information technology and instructional design. (Standard III.C.1.b)

See Recommendation (2) in Standard 2B.

Standard 3D: Financial Resources

General Observations:

According to the 2006 audit report, since 2003-04, the district has initiated several cost-cutting initiatives to offset the effects of reduced state funding as well as increases in ongoing costs, especially those associated with health premiums, and other employer paid benefits.

Prior to 2004-05, the district had already made sizable cuts in its operating expenditures, including layoffs of several classified employees. During 2004-05, the district froze college carry-over funds, and placed a "hiring restriction" on all unfilled permanent positions. The district also sought, and negotiated with its employee groups, on-going cuts in salaries, a 6 percent employee co-payment of health insurance premiums, and, for new employees hired after July 1, 2005, a cut-off of retiree health benefits upon reaching Medicare eligibility.

Thanks to these measures, and the sacrifices made by employees, the district was able to maintain an adequate ending reserve for 2004-05. By maintaining the cuts of the previous year and receiving some unexpected state funding, the district doubled its unrestricted ending fund balance by the 2005-06 fiscal year-end.

The district and college conduct financial planning to ensure that funds are available to meet with long term and short term financial obligations. Processes are in place to ensure that financial planning is integrated with college planning, that audits are conducted and the results used to correct processes, and appropriate oversight of financial processes occurs at both the district and college level. Financial information is available at different levels within the college community.

Findings and Evidence:

The district and college have developed and implemented a planning model integrating fiscal planning in support of institutional planning. The planning models include a new Program Review and Planning Process implemented in fall 2006, and a new Resource Allocation Process. Both of these processes are fundamentally guided by the revised Educational Master Plan, updated in fiscal year 2006/07. The Resource Allocation Process supports institutional planning, integrating financial planning with institutional planning. (III.D.1.a)

The district conducts a yearly budget allocation workshop based on guideline principles to develop its district budget. The college receives a funding allocation through this process for staffing and operations. The college president and director of business services are charged with the responsibility of matching project funding needs with current and long range funding availability.

The president provides an allocation for planning purposes. However, the college develops and submits project proposals irrespective of potential funding sources. Once the projects are received and ranked, the institution works to identify funding source (s).

The Shared Governance Council and other shared governance committees are charged with reviewing project proposals and making funding recommendations. To ensure an objective ranking of project proposals, the council is informed after the fact what funding sources are used to support approved projects. (III.D.1.b)

In the unrestricted general fund, as part of the budgeting process, the district segregates one-time revenues and expenditures from those that are ongoing and presents them separately in all internal budget and quarterly financial reports. Under the direction of the board, the district maintains an unrestricted fund reserve balance of ten percent.

Short range planning is incorporated into a four year, cost projection model as part of the district's budgeting process. The model projections includes FTES, state COLA, and local revenues. In addition, the model considers expenditures in the area of employee salaries, and other operational costs. The planning document provides an evaluation tool to gauge the long range net effect on the district fund balance of various short range plans that the district is considering.

The June 2006 audit report identifies that the district's long term liabilities consist primarily of general obligation bonds, accrued compensated absences, certificate of participation for the Diablo Valley College Student Body Center, capital lease obligations, and other post employment benefits. There is evidence of plans that reflect that the district will meet its long term obligations.

The most significant fiscal issue facing the district is liability for unfunded retiree health benefits. The 2006 audit report outlines that in 2007-08 the district must implement GASB-45, which will require the district to begin accruing its liability for unfunded

retiree health benefits (over the next 30 years). As of June 30, 2006, the district's total liability is $225 million, for which the district has set aside a little over $27 million. Currently the district pays retiree benefits on a "pay-as-you-go" basis, and additionally makes an annual contribution of $1 million to the benefit fund. Per the actuarial schedules, if continued at this rate at the end of 30 years, the district would still have an unfunded liability of nearly $71 million. In response to this, the district has put together a plan that adds an additional $15.6 million to retiree funding (during 2007-08); the effect of which will cause the liability at the end of 30 years to be $0.

The institution clearly identifies and plans for payment of liabilities and future obligations. (III.D.1.c)

In the last accreditation self study, the district indicated that the district and colleges would review and make changes to the current resource allocation model to "provide the colleges with considerably more discretion and responsibility for college funds." The district continues to use this allocation method by which colleges receive three pots of money each calculated using a formula, primarily driven by the college's FTES. The three colleges continue to struggle to stay within their part-time faculty budget. There appears to be a lack of clarity with the district's practice of requiring colleges to pay back any over-expenditure in their part-time faculty budget. The study done by Mike Hill suggested that the district review productivity as this can be a valuable tool that can be used to improve FTES generation and thereby increase funding for the colleges. District and college staffs continue to work together in finding ways to improve the allocation methodology. (III.D.1.d, III.D.2.a, III.D.3)

The district and college uses program review and planning and resource allocation processes to clearly define a process to assist financial planning. During the fiscal year 2005/06 the college revised its program review and planning process. Interviews with various faculty, classified staff, and members of the college's shared governance council communicate the revision has enhanced shared governance participation in the college's financial planning process and that the process is effective. Once the final financial decisions are made, the president communicates with the Shared Governance Council and then sends a communication to the college community. The institution meets this substandard. (III.D.1.d)

The district contracts for auditing services to perform an independent audit of the business-type activities and remaining fund information of the Contra Costa Community College District as outlined in the 2006 audit report. The audit is conducted in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States, the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, and the *Contracted District Audit Manual,* issued by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

The standards require the audit process to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures on financial statements. An

audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In the auditor's opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the business-type activities and remaining fund information of the District, as of June 30, 2006, as well as the respective changes in financial position and, where applicable, its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States.

The management of the District is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal control over compliance with requirements of laws, regulations, contracts, and grants applicable to federal programs. The 2006 audit report noted no matters involving internal control over compliance and the district's operation that the auditor consider to be material weaknesses.

The annual financial and budget report, CCFS-311, and the 2006 audit report suggest the district is allocating appropriate levels of the budget to support student learning programs and services.

The 2006 audit report provides an opinion that the district complied, in all material respects, with the requirements to each of its major federal programs for the year ended June 30, 2006. Moreover, the results of the auditing procedures disclosed no instances of noncompliance with those requirements that is required to be reported in accordance with OMB Circular A-133.

The report further provides an opinion that the district complied, in all material respects, with the compliance requirements for the state programs listed and tested above, except as outlined below in the findings.

Additionally, as a result of the aforementioned procedures, evidence indicates that the district had complied with the terms and conditions of state-assisted educational programs not selected for testing.

The district 2007 audit did find some material findings; however, the district is addressing the auditor's recommendations. A recurring finding that is now noted as a material weakness in the audit report for Los Medanos College, was noted as far back as 2004, under the category of STUDENT FEES – INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FEES. The finding states Los Medanos College did not include all instructional materials fees, subject to required disclosure, to students in the class schedule or course catalog. This is an area of concern and the visiting team recommends the institution comply with the audit recommendation to disclose all instructional materials fees in the class schedule or course catalog. (III.D.2.a)

The business office provides monthly budget reports to each department and to college administration. The governing board is provided with quarterly financial reports. A recent business services survey reported 98 percent of the respondents indicated business

services provided useful accounting information and 94 percent reported the business office provides clear and useful interpretation of business procedures (III.D.2.b)

Under the direction of the board, the district maintains an unrestricted fund reserve balance of ten percent. The sizable reserve balance is a strategy by the board to mitigate any unforeseen fiscal emergencies. The 2006 and 2007 audit report suggests the district maintains an adequate cash flow and reserves. (III.D.2.c)

The management of the district is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal control over compliance with requirements of laws, regulations, contracts, and grants applicable to federal programs. The 2006 and 2007 audit reports noted no matters involving the internal control over compliance and the district's operation that the auditor consider to be material weaknesses for Los Medanos College.

The district audit report indicated the foundations (Diablo Valley, Contra Costa and Los Medanos) are separate not-for-profit organizations. A majority of their boards of directors are elected and are independent of any district board of trustees appointments. The foundation boards are responsible for approving their own budgets and accounting and finance related activities. The district provides in-kind contributions to the foundations in the form of salaries, facility use, equipment, supplies, and utilities. The value of these in-kind contributions for the year ended June 30, 2006, was estimated to be $240,000. The last full foundation audit for Los Medanos foundation was dated 2003. The visiting team reviewed the 2002 audit report and the draft audit reports for, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008. The subject audit documents provided evidence that no material weaknesses are present.

The director of business services and accountant I provide oversight by reviewing all externally funded programs monthly to ensure budgets, expenditures, and spending are in order. In addition to the monthly reports provided by the business office, the college uses Datatel financial that allows for real time access to financial reports. The vice chancellor of finance and administration approves the college's contracts for the board.

The foundation is audited by an outside firm. The visiting team reviewed the 2002 audit report and the draft audit reports for, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008. The subject audit documents provided evidence that no material weaknesses are present.

The college's financial aid director, in conjunction with the other district financial aid directors, have formed a team to address financial aid system processes including new requirements, mandated changes, and operational compliance issues that arise or are reported in an audit finding. (III.D.2.d)

The student activities office reviews all activities and transactions conducted by student clubs to ensure that they conform to established guidelines. The business office oversees the creation and use of all trust accounts and ensures that their activities are consistent with the purpose for each trust account. The internal and external auditors periodically

test transactions from both the Student Club account and Trust account and have found that the transactions adhere to District Business Procedures.

The district office is responsible for the accounting tracking system for grants. The district has recently developed and implemented a district wide Grant Information system. The business office and grant managers use the information to monitor grant funds; this is in addition to reconciling the information to the financial Datatel system. (III.D.2.e)

Departments developing contractual relationships with outside organizations may consult with both the director of business services and the district's vice chancellor of finance in establishing these formal relationships.

All departments submit proposed contracts to the director of business services for review. The vice chancellor of finance has final review prior to board approval. The review includes legality of the contract terms, necessary indemnification and insurance provisions, sufficiency of funds and alignment of the contract services to college and district mission and goals. (III.D.2.f)

The district evaluates financial management regularly by using the annual audit report to provide a detailed and comprehensive review. The annual audit report is a major means to evaluate the effectiveness of financial management systems and to provide recommendations for improvement.

In addition, the quarterly financial reports presented to the governing board and State Chancellor's Office are designed to evaluate both the current financial condition of the district and to provide trend information necessary to evaluate financial controls and the integrity of the financial management system.

Regular meetings with college business directors, the District Governance Council and Chancellor's Cabinet provide opportunities for college and constituency representatives to comment on any financial management issues and to suggest improvements. (III.D.2.g)

The district conducts a yearly budget allocation workshop based on guideline principles to develop the district budget. The institution receives a funding allocation through this process for staffing and operations of the college.

Yearly the director of business services and president review the effectiveness of the budget. Budgets under development are compared to the prior year's budget to assess effectiveness. As part of the Resource Allocation Process, the college conducts a review of current year projects at both mid-year and end-year to confirm that the projects are meeting their established objectives in order to obtain continued funding for the subsequent fiscal year. (III.D.3)

Conclusions:

Funds coming to the district and college are carefully tracked and documented. The district maintains adequate financial reserve levels. The college and district maintain sound financial management policies and practices in order to ensure continued fiscal stability.

The college is audited on an annual basis by an independent audit firm. The Governing Board reviews the audit findings, exceptions, letters to management and any recommendations made by the contracted firm. The findings in the 2006 and 2007 audit reports reflect the institution is fiscally sound.

The team commends the college and its employees for its sacrifices, efforts and commitment to provide fiscal stability in an environment of declining state funding and external adverse economic conditions. In addition the college should be commended for its realistic fiscal planning model that integrates planning and budget (III.D1.a, IIID.b. and D.2 .d).

Recommendations

College Recommendation 4: The visiting team recommends the institution comply with the audit recommendation to disclose all instructional materials fees in the class schedule or course catalog (Standard III.D.2.a)

The following are recommendations at the district level.

> **District Recommendation 1: In order to improve its resource allocation process, the district should expedite development of a financial allocation model including the following (III.C.1, III.D.1.a, III.D.2.a, and III.D.3, IV.3.c):**
> a. **The model as a whole;**
> b. **Funding for adjunct faculty in a way that will support the district and college intentions to increase student enrollment;**
> c. **Technology funding.**
>
> **District Recommendation 2: In order to meet the standard, the district should establish a written code of professional ethics which includes managers. (III.A.1.d)**
>
> **District Recommendation 3: In order to meet the standard, the district should integrate student learning outcomes into the evaluation process for those who have a direct responsibility for student progress toward achieving student learning outcomes. (IIIA1c)**

STANDARD IV: Leadership and Governance

Standard IV.A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

1. General Observations

The college leadership has made a concerted effort to create an environment where each stakeholder group has the opportunity to participate in planning and decision-making. The restructuring of the governance process has clarified roles and allowed broad-based input from all campus constituencies. The college itself has developed and/or updated critical planning documents to guide the development, implementation, and support of programs and services that are relevant to the communities served by the college.

The president clearly takes responsibility for the overall operations, quality and effectiveness of the college. He provides strong leadership through a participatory management style and demonstrates a commitment to strengthening the institution. The college community understands the role and responsibilities of the president as the leader of the college. Through a consultative process, the president initiated a reorganization of the administrative structure to improve managerial effectiveness, particularly in the area of student services and instruction. Senior- and mid-level managers are delegated the authority and accountability for their respective areas of responsibility.

The district has adopted and published policies that define the roles and responsibilities of the governing board, the chancellor, and three college presidents. Furthermore, the district has developed and distributed a document that defines and maps the functional roles of the district office staff and the college staff.   The district currently has in effect a comprehensive policy on institutional governance. There are also several district-wide committees that facilitate consultative processes among constituents in the district office and three colleges.

2. Findings and Evidence

Board Policy 1009 clearly provides for the participation of faculty, staff, and students in institutional governance at the college and district levels. Consistent with this policy, the college fosters an environment that encourages input from all constituent groups, although interviews with various campus employees indicates that participation in campus leadership and governance activities can be sporadic. In particular, the college does not appear to have a mechanism in place for the systematic inclusion of input from and participation by the faculty and staff of the Brentwood Center (IV.A.1).

The establishment of the Shared Governance Council in 2003 has led the campus to have a more comprehensive discussion of the ways campus decisions are made. The reasons for its creation and the membership of the council are carefully detailed in the Shared Governance Position Paper that initiated its creation. The position paper also describes the role of the council, various roles of the stakeholders, and functional relationships of other college committees to the council. These relationships are illustrated in a flowchart that also shows the movement of recommendations through the governance and decision-making process.   (IV.A.2). The voting membership of the Shared Governance Council is

comprised of nine voting members: three each from the ranks of the faculty, classified staff, and students. Each of those groups also has opportunities to provide input on various campus issues through such campus bodies as the Planning Committee, the Academic Senate, the Classified Senate, the Associated Student Senate, among others. The managers provide input through meetings of the President's Cabinet, the President's Council, and the Vice President's Council (IV.A.2.a). The college has put its philosophy of participatory governance into practice, as confirmed in meetings with representatives of the Shared Governance Council, Academic Senate President, Classified Senate members, officers of the Los Medanos College Associated Students, and college administrators, and it is clearly reflected in the meeting minutes of various committees (IV.A.2).

The Academic Senate is an active body on campus, with representatives serving on every major governance and decision-making committee, and under Board Policy 1009, it is the main governance body for making recommendations about educational programs and services. The Curriculum Committee, as a subcommittee of the Academic Senate, holds the primary responsibility on campus for recommendations regarding educational programs and courses (IV.A.2.b).

The Shared Governance Council and its subcommittees, the Faculty Senate, the Classified Senate, the Associated Students, the President's Council, and numerous other bodies on campus provide opportunities for collaborative work. Once decisions are reached, information is distributed in a variety of ways, including e-mail, newsletters, campus assemblies, and reporting to constituent bodies (IV.A.3).

Los Medanos College has submitted all required self studies, midterm reports, and progress reports to the Accrediting Commission and has attempted to address recommendations made by previous visiting teams. It has received a five-year federal grant awarded to Hispanic-serving institutions and has been the recipient of two recent grants from the U.S. Department of Education focusing on developmental education and transfer initiatives. The college has consistently submitted reports required as a part of receiving such grants (IV.A.4)

The college has conducted some evaluations, primarily through surveys and accumulated institutional data, and recently published a draft document on Institutional Effectiveness that reports on the progress toward the Educational Master Plan goals; however, the document offers very little narrative or analysis on the implications of the data presented. The college has conducted some evaluation of its processes—for example, the fairly new Resource Allocation Process—and some adjustments were made based on feedback received. Similarly, some evaluation of groups has taken place via surveys but with low response rate. For example, in February 2007, the Academic Senate conducted a survey of all faculty and received 23 responses, which is less than 25 percent of the full time faculty. The Shared Governance Council conducted surveys two years ago regarding its effectiveness. Among those surveyed were members of the Shared Governance Council, representatives of the three senates who are represented on the body, and the campus at large. Decisions made at the Shared Governance Council are disseminated through e-

mails from the meeting facilitator and/or the college president, and representatives of the constituent groups have the responsibility of sharing at the meetings of their respective groups. One faculty member described the council as "the hub" of the college committee structure, and other people on campus shared this perspective. Other campus bodies, including the President's Council and the Curriculum Committee, have been evaluated in recent years, but the college does not appear to have a systematic process for the evaluation of its governance committees and decision-making processes (IV.A.5).

Standard IV.B: Board and Administrative Organization

General Observations:

The self study report presents a commitment to standard IV. The college has a system of shared governance that was recently been modified to create a Shared Governance Council (SGC) as a mechanism for ensuring input and participation by all constituents. While the college had demonstrated a long term commitment to shared governance, the SGC strengthens that commitment. The various leadership groups such as President's Cabinet, Faculty Senate and Classified Senate, and Associated Students have likewise demonstrated commitment to the shared governance process. The college is to be commended for developing and effectively implementing an inclusive and functional process and the descriptive summaries and self evaluation sections of the self study are thorough and complete.

Findings and Observations:

The Contra Costa Community College District has a five-member governing board that meets twice monthly. The five voting members are elected from the residents of the district, and a non-voting student trustee is elected on a rotating basis from the three colleges in the district (IV.B.1). According to minutes of the board meetings and interviews with board members and with district and college employees who regularly attend board meetings, the board frequently reaches unanimous agreement in its decisions and dissent is infrequent (IV.B.1.a). The governing board has regularly updated its policies and procedures under the auspices of Board Policy 1001 and its accompanying procedures as a guide (IV.B.1.e). The board's rules and regulations, including the conduct of its meetings, are published on the web site with the rest of the policies and procedures that have been adopted (IV.B.1.d).

For example, the board has recently revised and re-adopted its policy on the Review, Establishment, Modification, and Discontinuance of Courses and Programs (Board Policy 4008), giving it oversight of the quality of the educational programs. Other board policies on Standards of Scholarship and on the Philosophy and Requirements for Associate Degree and General Education, for example, further illustrate the board's commitment to quality educational programs and services in the district. However, according to the self study, the board has not developed a system for evaluating the education programs at the colleges. While the board's self-evaluation report of January 2007 noted that reports from

the Educational Planning Committee, updates on student learning outcomes assessment, and the Accountability Report for Community Colleges were a part of the discussion, the report also identified a need to develop metrics to monitor the educational programs of the district (IV.B.1.b, IV.B.1.c).

The governing board has spent a significant amount of time in recent years ensuring the financial stability of the district. After years in which employees faced salary reductions, the district managed to restore salaries in the 2006-2007 academic year, and its budget reports for recent years indicate that the district has maintained a healthy financial reserve of more than 10 percent (IV.B.1.c)

Terms of office for members of the governing board are staggered to ensure continuity of membership and last four years. The student trustee serves a one-year term. The district chancellor and the current board president have the responsibility for providing an orientation for new board members (IV.B.1.f)

Board Policy 1015 outlines the self-evaluation process that the board undergoes annually. As a part of its self-evaluation process, the governing board might consider including input from the various constituencies who have regular representatives at board meetings as a part of its self-evaluation process (IV.B.1.g). Board Policy 1010 details a code of ethics for the governing board, including provisions for dealing with violations of the code (IV.B.1.h). These policies and others related to the governing board are readily available on the district's web site.

Minutes of the governing board meetings reveal that members held study sessions on the accreditation process at the three campuses in the district. Each self study was also reviewed by the governing board at an open meeting. The board president's signature on the self study is an indication of the board's acceptance of the final draft of the self study (IV.B.1.i).

The governing board assumes the responsibility for selecting and evaluating the chancellor under the Rules and Regulations of the Governing Board. The chancellor is responsible for the selection and evaluation of the presidents of the colleges in the district. Annual evaluations of the chancellor are required under Board Policy 1016. The current evaluation process examines the chancellor's and presidents' involvement in helping the district make progress toward achieving the board's four strategic directions (IV.B.1.j).

The president has taken decisive steps to refine the governance structure and processes of the college, and the efforts have been supported by the campus community. The self study indicates that through this structure, the president guides planning efforts that lead to the improvement of teaching, learning, support services, and the college as a whole. This assertion was borne out in interviews with representatives from the Academic Senate, Classified Senate, Associated Students, key administrators, and other individuals on campus.

The president has set a working agenda that emphasizes data-supported planning and evaluation. Through the governance groups, the college has revised the Educational Master Plan incorporating updated college values, goals, and priorities. The college has integrated educational planning with the resource allocation process and all financial and classified staffing requests must be directly related to college goals.   Departments submit requests in a specified format and must provide substantial justification for the requested funds. This allocation process was developed and refined through a collaborative process involving all campus constituent groups.

In 2005, the college finalized a draft of the Los Medanos College Goals, Strategic Initiatives and Assessment Indicators. Furthermore, according to planning documents, in fall of 2006, the college developed objectives and strategies to achieve the goals of the Educational Master Plan. These documents clearly show the college's intent to measure and assess progress and outcomes of the goals defined in the Educational Master Plan.

The self study indicates that in September 2006, the college president, along with the Shared Governance Council, reauthorized the Planning Committee and charged it with evaluating the college's planning and implementation efforts. The charges to the Planning Committee for 2008-2009 are : 1) Facilitate the implementation of the Educational Master Plan; 2) Measure effectiveness indicators; 3) Administer program review and planning progress reports; 4) Evaluate program improvement and development projects; 5) Update and revise planning calendars; and 6) Assess planning processes and instruments.

The college's own assessment of where they are in regard to planning as defined in the Accrediting Commission's rubric for evaluating Institutional Effectiveness is at the proficiency level. An excerpt from minutes of the May 1, 2008 Planning Committee meeting states:

"A discussion of the rubric was a valuable tool to understand where we are as an institution.
- Part I: Program Review –the college is mostly at the *proficiency level*. Items are in progress with positive forward movement.
- Part II: Planning –the college is still at development phase with strong positive movement in the direction of *sustainable continuous quality improvement.*
Overall the college is making progress towards proficiency."

The evidence shows that the college is moving forward with an integrated planning and improvement cycle, but a systematic method to evaluate all major planning processes and the groups responsible for planning and decision-making is in the infancy stage (IV.B.2.b).

The president is ultimately responsible for the effective operations of the college but delegates authority for operational areas to the respective managers. He meets regularly with executive staff (the President's Cabinet) and with all managers (the President's Council) to discuss key issues, share information, and to provide direction, as

appropriate. According to an interview with the chancellor, she stated that she holds the college presidents accountable and evaluates them on their performance in achieving college goals and contributions to the District Strategic Directions through a comprehensive evaluation review process. A systematic accountability process was implemented in 2006-2007 (IV.B.2.c, IV.B.2.d, IV.B.3.a, IV.B.3.e).

The district office has experienced multiple executive level staffing changes and reorganization over the past few years, which led to some turmoil in operations and services that was exacerbated by the fiscal crisis. To assist in developing a more effective staffing structure, the district hired a consultant to conduct an organizational study. As a result, some functions were decentralized with operational responsibility moving to the college level (for example, management of the bookstore and supervision of the buildings and grounds staff). After these transitions were made, the district developed a document entitled *Delineation of Responsibilities* to clarify the functional relationships between the district office staff and college employees. Interviews with college and district level staff showed that the district has emphasized its service role in relation to the colleges and continues to provide support in areas such as policy development, educational planning, and information technology backbone functions (networks, email, WebAdvisor, data warehousing, for example). However, the college has raised some issues about the adequacy of technology support and these concerns are being reviewed by senior level district staff. This operating model is still quite new and its long term efficacy is unknown. Currently, there is not a plan in place to evaluate the new administrative structure (IV.B.3.b).

The Contra Costa Community college District has a formula-driven resource allocation process. According to interviews with the chancellor and various college leaders, the formulas are under review to address district-wide concerns about adequate and fair distribution of funds, particularly the available budget for hourly faculty (IV.B.3c).

Interviews with the Board of Trustees and the chancellor, as well as college administrators and staff, revealed that the district experienced significant financial setbacks between 2003 and 2005. Drastic but essential measures were required to regain fiscal stability. The district was compelled to make multi-year, across-the-board salary cuts and initiate other cost-cutting measures. Since that time, the Board and the chancellor, along with college leaders, have worked diligently to restore the financial health of the district (IV.B.3d).

The self study describes the District Office as the liaison between the governing board and the colleges and details the various methods of communications between the entities. Interviews with the chancellor and with Los Medanos faculty, staff, and students confirm that there are frequent opportunities, both formal and informal, for the college president and representatives from the Faculty Senate, Classified Senate, and Associated Students to interact with the chancellor for a variety of purposes. There has been some criticism of the lack of clear communication and timely sharing of information by the district to the colleges; however, interviews with the chancellor and college constituents indicate that there has been a determined effort to correct this perception. Most interviewees were of

the opinion that part of the issue has been the neglect of individuals to avail themselves of the information that is available and widely distributed. This appears to be the case, as the evidence shows. A variety of communiqués dating from the present back to 2005 are posted on the Contra Costa Community College website, for example, the monthly Board Report, issues of the *Chancellor's Cabinet Highlights*, and the monthly district newsletter *The News*. In addition, the chancellor has implemented a series of visits (90 minutes at a time) to all sites throughout the district during which any staff member or group may meet with her for 15-minute appointments on any topic of their choosing. The schedule shows visits to all sites between September 29 and October 9 of this year (IV.B.3.f).

The district has multiple structures in place for governance and shared decision-making, each with defined roles and purposes. Interviews revealed that the college community is widely aware of the various district committees and councils that are intended to facilitate district-wide communication and consultation on matters that have widespread impact on all institutions, particular employee groups, or students in the Contra Costa Community College District. Evaluations of the various structures have occurred but on a limited basis and not for all groups. For example, the Chancellor's Cabinet established its vision, mission, and goals in 2005 and conducted a self-evaluation in 2006. The District Governance Council conducted an effectiveness survey in 2007 but the response rate was low (12 percent). There is reference to an annual climate study conducted by the district and including all sites, but the published document is dated 2005, which indicates this review does not occur on an annual basis as implied. This is perhaps due to the staffing changes and fiscal challenges in the district (IV.B.3.g).

Conclusions:

The team commends the Los Medanos College for the creation of the Shared Governance Council. The document that established the council outlines very clearly the need the college attempted to address with the creation of the Shared Governance Council, and participants in the council and the campus at large are aware of and supportive of its purpose. The team commends the college for how its collaborative approach to planning has strengthened the college governance structure and process.

The college has made a concerted effort to nurture an environment where each stakeholder group has the opportunity to participate in planning and decision-making. In addition, the college has made a firm commitment to the philosophy of participatory governance. Through campus-wide dialogue, the college has developed a common understanding and definition of "shared governance" and has articulated the role of each constituent group as well as how the decision-making processes are implemented through the governance structure. The college, through its president and the Shared Governance Council, may want to continue in its efforts to identify impediments to participation in all institutional governance processes and to pursue actively the planning agenda item in the self study to increase employee and student involvement. The college should also continue in its efforts to evaluate and improve its methods for ensuring that all stakeholders are informed of decision-making processes and the decisions that result from those processes.

It is evident that, within the past two years, the college has focused much attention on evaluating performance in many areas and that significant progress has been made. However, more work is needed in order for assessment processes to be institutionalized and for the college to implement a full planning and evaluation cycle resulting in sustainable continuous quality improvement. The same is true at the district level. It may be beneficial to have a district-wide dialogue on the importance of research and evaluation as a basis for institutional planning and effectiveness.

The district is emerging from an extended period of financial distress, and it continues to address the impacts of the lean times. It should be commended for the speed with which it achieved its financial recovery, which allowed for the restoration of employee salaries and the creation of a prudent reserve that will allow the district to weather the current state and national economic challenges. The president of Los Medanos College and his team have been creative in sustaining managerial oversight of all college operations while minimizing expenses for administrative staff. Board members, as well as staff at the district office and at the college, all agree that the district and the colleges have moved into more positive circumstances. The evidence shows that all are working together to improve communication, reform resource allocations, and secure the future of the district with the shared goal to support student learning.

The district should be commended for its demonstrated and tangible efforts to share information and communicate on an ongoing basis with the district and college community through the Chancellor's Highlights, rotating campus office hours, the District Governance Council, and other strategies. However, the district should continue to evaluate and improve its methods for ensuring that all stakeholders are informed of decision-making processes and the decisions that result from those processes.

The district has begun the development of a strategic plan that would ensure the systematic evaluation of all educational programs and services. Working in conjunction with the colleges, the district should continue its efforts to meet this planning agenda item.

Given the number of changes that have taken place at the district level in recent years and the changes in personnel in key positions, the district needs to develop methods for determining the effectiveness of its restructuring/reorganization and the redistribution of duties and responsibilities to the colleges. No such mechanisms for evaluation currently appear to be in place.

Recommendations:

College Recommendation 5: The team recommends the college establish a regular cycle for the evaluation of its governance bodies and decision-making processes (IV.A.2.a, IV.A.3, IV.A5, IV.B.2, IV.B.3b, IV.B.3g).

See Recommendation 2 (IV.A.1)

District Recommendations 4: In order to meet standards, the district should develop a policy and implement procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of the district's administrative organization, the delineation of responsibilities of the district and the colleges, and the governance and decision making structures. The results should be widely communicated and used as a basis for improvement. (IV.A, IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.3, IV.B.3, IV.B.3.a, IV.B.3.b, IV.B.3.e, IV.B.3.f, IV.B.3.g)