

Standard 1: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

The institution has a clearly defined mission that reflects its character, values, organizational structure, and unique student population. The mission outlines the institution's explicit commitment to achievement for all students and serves as a guiding principle for institutional planning, action, evaluation, improvement, and innovation.

1.1. The institution has established a clearly defined mission that appropriately reflects its character, values, structure, and unique student demographics. The institution's mission articulates its commitment to ensuring educational opportunities and successful outcomes for all students.

- The institution's mission appropriately reflects the community and students it serves.
- The institution's mission appropriately reflects the nature and structure of the institution (public, private, non-profit, corporate, etc.).
- The institution's commitment to successful educational outcomes for all students is informed by an understanding of the characteristics and needs of its students.
- The institution's mission demonstrates alignment with ACCJC's Policy on Social Justice.

1.2. The institution establishes meaningful and ambitious goals for institutional improvement, innovation, and successful outcomes for all students.

- The institution establishes its goals in a process that is appropriate for its character and context.
- The institution has clearly defined institutional goals that align with its mission, are appropriately forward-looking, and include consideration of successful outcomes for all students.
- The institution's goals align with key initiatives within its scope of responsibility.

1.3. The institution holds itself accountable for achieving its mission and goals and regularly reviews relevant, meaningfully disaggregated data to evaluate its progress and inform plans for continued improvement and innovation.

- The institution has established and published standards for student achievement (i.e., institution-set standards) in accordance with Commission policy.
- The institution regularly reviews and discusses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate its progress toward achieving the mission, enhancing understanding of students' experience, informing short and long term planning, and implementing improvements as needed.
- The institution regularly reviews meaningfully-disaggregated data, identifies achievement gaps, and engages in planning and improvement to close these gaps.

1.4. The institution's mission directs resource allocation, innovation, and continuous quality improvement through ongoing systematic planning and evaluation of programs and services.

- Institutional systems for comprehensive planning are designed to support accomplishment of the mission and lead to institutional innovation and improvement.
- Institutional systems for planning are integrated such that information from program planning informs processes for resource allocation, decision-making, and short- and long-term operational planning.
- Institutional systems for planning are designed to occur on a regular basis, include appropriate participation from institutional constituencies, and are informed by relevant data and information.

1.5. The institution regularly communicates progress toward achieving its mission and goals with internal and external stakeholders in order to promote understanding of institutional strengths, priorities, and areas for continued improvement.	• The institution regularly communicates the results of its progress assessments with internal and external stakeholders, as appropriate to its character and context. • Institutional evaluation reports and program reviews can be accessed by constituencies. • Data and evidence related to institutional strengths and areas for development are used to inform and document discussions of institutional priorities.
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Standard 2: Student Success

In alignment with its mission, the institution delivers high-quality academic and learning support programs that engage and support students through their unique educational journeys. Academic and learning support programs promote equitable student success, and the institution evaluates student learning and achievement data to inform improvements and advance equitable outcomes.

2.1. Academic programs at all locations and in all modes of delivery are offered in fields of study consistent with the institution's mission and reflect appropriate breadth, depth, and expected learning outcomes.	• Consistent with the institution's mission, academic programs are structured to lead to degrees, certificates, transfer, employment, or other similar credentials. • The institution's processes for curriculum design and development ensure all academic programs align with the institution's mission. • The institution's processes for curriculum design and development reflect generally accepted practices in higher education for ensuring breadth, depth, and rigor appropriate to the level of instruction (e.g., associate or baccalaureate level) and across all modalities.
2.2. The institution, relying on faculty and other appropriate stakeholders, designs and delivers academic programs that reflect relevant discipline and industry standards and support equitable attainment of learning outcomes and achievement of educational goals.	• The institution's processes for curriculum design and development include appropriate faculty oversight for ongoing review, monitoring, and revision of programs in order to close identified gaps in student achievement. • The institution's processes for curriculum design and development includes dialogue around student equity and maximizing equitable student success outcomes. • The institution defines student learning outcomes for courses and academic programs (including degree and certificate programs). • Development of learning outcomes includes consideration of feedback from workforce/industry partners, as appropriate for the institution's mission and program discipline. • The institution provides students with accurate, current, and consistent student learning outcomes for the courses and programs in which they are enrolled.
2.3. All degree programs include a general education framework to ensure the development of broad knowledge, skills, and competencies related to communication, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, information literacy, civic responsibility, and the ability to engage with diverse perspectives.	• The institution has a rationale for general education, developed with appropriate input from faculty, which serves as the basis for inclusion of courses in general education and is listed in the catalog. • The institution's general education philosophy reflects its degree requirements and is consistent with expected norms in higher education for lower division coursework (and upper division coursework, if applicable). • The institution's general education offerings provide opportunities for students to engage with the arts and humanities, sciences, mathematics, and social sciences.
2.4. The institution communicates clear, accurate, and accessible information regarding programs, services, and resources that foster success in students' unique educational journeys.	• The institution provides students with accurate, current, and consistent student learning outcomes for the courses and programs in which they are enrolled. • The institution has mechanisms for ensuring effective communication with its students in multiple modalities regarding the programs, services, and resources available to support the student journey. • The institution regularly reviews its communication practices, policies, procedures to ensure clarity, consistency, accuracy, and relevance.
2.5. The institution holds itself accountable for students' success by scheduling courses in a manner that ensures degree and certificate programs can be completed in the expected period of time.	• The institution schedules classes in alignment with student needs and program pathways to ensure students have the opportunity to complete programs (including baccalaureate programs, if offered) within a reasonable period of time. • The institution evaluates the degree to which scheduling facilitates timely completion of degrees, certificates, and transfer. • The institution reflects on time-to-completion data in program review and institutional evaluation, and devises plans to improve completion rates.

2.6. The institution uses delivery modes and teaching methodologies that meet student and curricular needs and promote equitable student learning and achievement.	• The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its delivery modes and teaching methodologies to supporting equitable student learning and achievement, and uses results to guide improvements. • Institutions have practices in place to ensure ongoing alignment with federal requirements for distance education and correspondence education, as defined in ACCJC's Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education (if applicable).
2.7. The institution designs and delivers equitable and effective services and programs that support students in their unique educational journeys, address academic and non-academic needs, and maximize their potential for success. Such services include library and learning resources, academic counseling and support, and other services the institution identifies as appropriate for its mission and student needs.	• The institution designs and delivers effective processes for identifying students' academic, non-academic, personal wellness, and basic needs. • The institution designs and delivers effective intake and onboarding services such as orientation, registration, counseling, educational planning, financial aid workshops, and/or similar services that maximize preparation, success, and retention. • The institution designs and delivers effective learning support resources such as library collections, library instruction, learning labs, and tutoring services in a variety of modalities (face to face, hybrid, online, etc.) dependent on institutional mission and student need. • The institution designs and delivers effective student support services such as counseling, academic advising, first year experience, veterans services, disability services, mental health services, etc. in a variety of modalities (face to face, hybrid, online, etc.) dependent on institutional mission and student need. • The institution provides clear information and supports for students regarding transfer and career opportunities. • The institution's documentation of and communication to students (catalogs, policies, procedures, etc.) regarding support services and expectations for their use are clear and consistent. • The institution systematically collects and analyzes disaggregated data to evaluate the effectiveness of its support services and learning support resources in supporting equitable student success and uses the results for planning and improvement.
2.8. The institution fosters a sense of belonging and community with its students by providing multiple opportunities for engagement with the institution, programs, and peers. Such opportunities reflect the varied needs of the student population and effectively support students' unique educational journeys.	• The institution creates formal and informal opportunities for students to engage with the institution, programs, and peers (e.g., cultural, academic, clubs, political, ethnicity-based engagement, networking, athletics, internships, career trainings). • The institution establishes co-curricular and/or student engagement activities based on the needs of the students and community it serves, including the needs of student populations that have been historically under-resourced. • If these programs are offered the institution ensures the quality of such programs and frequently assesses activities and programs (qualitative/quantitative).
2.9. The institution conducts systematic review and assessment to ensure the quality of its academic, learning support, and student services programs and implement improvements and innovations in support of equitable student achievement.	• The institution follows established processes that include analysis of data related to student learning (i.e., outcomes assessment results) and achievement (e.g., course completions and degree/certificate completions), disaggregated for student subpopulations and/or learning modalities as appropriate. • Faculty and other educators engage in dialogue about learning and achievement data, disaggregated for student subpopulations and/or learning modalities as appropriate, in order to guide program improvement and curriculum development, address achievement gaps, and inform institutional goal-setting. • The institution's dialogue about disaggregated learning and achievement data informs institutional goal-setting.

Standard 3: Infrastructure and Resources

The institution supports its educational services and operational functions with effective infrastructure, qualified personnel, and stable finances. The institution organizes its staffing and allocates its physical, technological, and financial resources to improve its overall effectiveness and promote equitable student success. The institution actively monitors and assesses resource capacity to inform improvements to infrastructure and ensure long-term health and stability.

3.1. The institution employs qualified faculty, staff, administrators, and other personnel to support and sustain educational services and improve student success. The institution maintains appropriate policies and regularly assesses its employment practices to promote and improve equity, diversity, and mission fulfillment.

- The institution has a process to determine the staffing levels and organizational structure it needs to support its mission, educational programs, and operations.
- The institution plans for the recruitment of personnel in accordance with its institutional mission and goals.
- The institution uses appropriate hiring criteria (including minimum qualifications criteria for the system in which it operates and/or degree level, if applicable) to ensure all employees are qualified for their roles.
- Faculty job descriptions are appropriate for the level of instruction offered, and include the responsibility for teaching and learning, curriculum oversight, and the assessment of student learning outcomes.
- The institution verifies the education (including equivalency of degrees for non-U.S. institutions), training, and experience of all new hires to ensure they possess the minimum qualifications outlined in job descriptions.
- The institution tracks and evaluates its record in employment equity and diversity.
- The institution regularly reviews its policies and/or procedures for equitable hiring practices to ensure currency and relevancy.

3.2. The institution supports its employees with professional learning opportunities aligned with the mission and institutional goals. These opportunities are regularly evaluated for overall effectiveness in promoting equitable student success and in meeting institutional and employee needs.

- The institution has methods to identify employees' professional learning needs relevant to educational services and operational functions, including professional learning opportunities designed to support institutional efforts to close student achievement gaps.
- The institution evaluates its training and professional learning offerings and uses the results to improve effectiveness in supporting employee needs.

3.3. The institution evaluates its employees regularly, using clear criteria that align with professional responsibilities and reflect the institution's mission and goals.

- The institution regularly and systematically evaluates all of its employees based on their professional responsibilities and uses this information to foster employees' development and success. This process is continuous and ongoing in support of the mission.
- The institution has methods to determine the kinds of support its personnel need to be successful in their roles.

3.4. The institution develops, maintains, and enhances its educational services and operational functions through the effective use of fiscal resources. Financial resources support and sustain the mission and promote equitable achievement of student success.

- The institution has resources to support essential program needs, as well as educational improvement and innovation when warranted.
- Funds are allocated in a manner to help achieve the institution's stated goals for student learning.
- The institution's resource allocation process provides a means for setting priorities for funding.
- The institution manages its resources in order to sustain educational services and improve institutional effectiveness at all locations where over 50% of a program is offered.

3.5. The institution's mission and goals are the foundation for financial planning. Financial information is disseminated to support effective planning and decision-making and provide opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the development of plans and budgets.

- The institution considers its mission and goals as part of the annual fiscal planning process.
- The institution's processes are used to ensure appropriate stakeholder participation in financial planning, prioritization, and budget development.
- Individuals involved in institutional planning receive accurate information about available funds, including the annual budget showing ongoing and anticipated fiscal commitments.

	• Sound financial planning, including a realistic expectation of financial resource availability, is a foundational element of the institution's plans and goals.
3.6. The institution ensures the integrity and responsible use of its financial resources and regularly evaluates its fiscal outcomes and financial management practices to promote institutional mission fulfillment.	• The institution has effective internal and external control mechanisms in place to ensure that dependable, accurate, and timely financial information is available for sound financial decision-making. • Audits demonstrate the integrity of financial management practices, and audit findings and/or compliance issues are addressed in a timely manner. • Information about budget, fiscal conditions, and audit results are communicated with stakeholders as appropriate to the institution's mission and structure.
3.7. The institution ensures financial solvency. When making short-range financial plans, the institution considers its long-range financial priorities and future obligations to ensure sustained fiscal stability.	• The institution reviews its past financial results as part of planning for current and future fiscal needs. • The institution continually monitors, evaluates, and adjusts its institutional budgets and cash management strategies to ensure both short-term and long-term financial solvency. • The institution has reasonable plans for payments of long-term liabilities and obligations (health benefits, insurance costs, building maintenance costs, other post-employment benefit obligations, other college-incurred debts, etc.) and considers these plans in annual budget development and other short-term fiscal planning. • The institution ensures that locally incurred debt repayment schedule does not have an adverse impact on meeting all current and future financial obligations.
3.8. The institution constructs and maintains physical resources to support and sustain educational services and operational functions. The institution ensures safe and effective physical resources at all locations where it offers instruction, student services, and/or learning supports.	• The institution aligns planning and maintenance of facilities and other physical resources with the institutional mission and goals and needs of programs and services. • The institution has processes and/or procedures in place to ensure the safety of all facilities, including procedures for reporting of unsafe physical facilities. • The institution evaluates the effectiveness and sufficiency of its facilities and equipment on a regular basis, taking utilization and other relevant data into account, and uses the results to improve.
3.9. The institution implements, enhances, and secures its technology resources to support and sustain educational services and operational functions. The institution clearly communicates requirements for the safe and appropriate use of technology to students and employees and employs effective protocols for network and data security.	• The institution aligns technology planning, implementation, and maintenance with the institutional mission and goals. • The institution's technology infrastructure is appropriate to support educational services and operations. • The institution clearly communicates guidelines/rules for appropriate use of its technologies to all users. • The institution's networks are secure and data is protected. • The institution regularly evaluates its technology infrastructure (including network security) to ensure ongoing effectiveness in supporting educational services and operations.
3.10. The institution has appropriate strategies for risk management and has policies and procedures in place to implement contingency plans in the event of financial, environmental, or technological emergencies and other unforeseen circumstances.	• The institution has policies and procedures in place that will mitigate emergencies and unforeseen occurrences that would significantly impact availability of its resources. • The institution has sufficient insurance to cover its needs. If the institution is self-funded in any insurance categories, it has sufficient reserves to handle financial emergencies. • The institution routinely reviews and updates their insurance coverages. • The institution has protocols for back-up and recovery of sensitive data systems, including student and employee information systems.

Standard 4: Governance and Decision-Making

The institution engages in clear and effective governance practices that support the achievement of its mission. Governance roles and responsibilities are delineated in widely distributed policies, and institutional decision-making processes provide opportunities for meaningful participation and inclusion of relevant stakeholders.

4.1. The institution upholds an explicit commitment to principles of academic freedom, academic integrity, and freedom of inquiry.	• The institution communicates its commitment to principles of academic freedom and freedom of inquiry to relevant stakeholders, including students. • The institution communicates clear expectations for academic integrity and freedom of inquiry to relevant stakeholders, including students. • The institution follows clearly communicated procedures for addressing instances of academic dishonesty and violations of its principles of academic freedom and freedom of inquiry.
4.2. Roles, responsibilities, and authority for decision-making are clearly defined and communicated throughout the institution. The institution's structure for decision-making provides opportunities for stakeholder participation and ensures the inclusion of relevant perspectives.	• Structures for decision-making are appropriate for the institution's mission and organizational structure. • Procedures for institutional decision-making are documented and widely available to relevant stakeholders. • Roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for participation in decision-making are clearly defined.
4.3. The institution's decision-making structures are used consistently and effectively. Institutional decision-making practices support a climate of collaboration and innovation that advances the mission and prioritizes equitable student outcomes.	• The institution holds itself accountable for implementing its decision-making practices consistently to ensure inclusion of appropriate stakeholders and shared understanding of decisions. • Decision-making practices result in decisions that support institutional innovation and advance the mission of the institution. • The institution evaluates its decision-making practices and makes improvements when needed to improve effectiveness.
4.4. Acting through policy, the governing board takes responsibility for the overall quality and stability of the institution, and regularly monitors progress towards its goals and fiscal health.	• The institution has appropriate policies that delineate the governing board's accountability for academic quality and achievement of equitable outcomes. • The governing board regularly reviews key indicators of student learning and achievement and institutional plans for improving academic quality and equitable outcomes. • The institution has a policy manual or other compilation of policy documents that delineates the governing board's role and responsibility in ensuring the financial stability of the institution. • The governing board regularly reviews key fiscal information and documents regarding the stability of the institution.

	• The governing board has a system for evaluating and revising its policies on a regular basis.
4.5. The governing board selects and evaluates the institution's chief executive officer (CEO). The governing board gives the CEO full authority to implement board policies and ensure effective operations and fulfillment of the institutional mission.	• The governing board sets clear expectations for regular reports on institutional performance from the chief administrator. • The governing board has policies outlining the delegation of administrative authority to the institution's chief administrator. • The governing board adheres to its policies for delegation of administrative authority to the institution's chief administrator.
4.6. The governing board functions effectively as a collective entity to promote the institution's values and mission and fulfill its fiduciary responsibilities. The governing board demonstrates an ability to self-govern in adherence to its bylaws and expectations for best practices in board governance.	• The institution's governing board outlines its expectations for working as a collective unit in support of the mission. • The governing board demonstrates the ability to act in the best interest of the institution, independent from undue influence. • Once a collective decision has been reached, board members, individually, demonstrate their support for board policies and decisions. • The institution's governing board has documented procedures for self-governance and/or addressing behavior that does not align with its policies. • The governing board improves its own effectiveness through orientations, professional development, and regular board self-evaluation.