

# **External Evaluation Report**

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*Accrediting Commission for  
Community and Junior Colleges*

**Cosumnes River College  
8401 Center Parkway  
Sacramento, CA**

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

This report represents the findings of the  
External Evaluation Team that visited  
Cosumnes River College on October 5-8, 2015

Linda D. Rose, Chair

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

DATE: January 8, 2016

INSTITUTION: Cosumnes River College  
8401 Center Parkway  
Sacramento, CA 95823

TEAM REPORT: Comprehensive Evaluation Report

This report represents the finds of the evaluation team that visited Cosumnes River College October 5-8, 2015.

SUBJECT: Commission Revisions to the Team Report

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

1. The Commission finds that the District is not out of compliance with Standard III.C.1, and that Standard reference should be removed from District Recommendation 1.
2. The Commission finds that District Recommendation 3 should be written as a recommendation to meet Standards rather than an improvement recommendation.

### Visiting Team Members

Dr. Linda Rose (Team Chair)  
President  
Los Angeles Southwest College

Dr. Bonita Nahoum Jaros (Team Assistant)  
Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment  
Coordinator/ALO  
Santa Ana College

Ms. Cheryl Stewart  
Librarian  
Coastline Community College

Mr. Thomas Watkins  
Professor of Business and Marketing  
Solano Community College

Dr. Tania Beliz  
Professor of Biology  
College of San Mateo

Dr. Angela Fairchilds  
President  
Columbia College

Dr. Rebecca Bocchicchio  
Dean, Liberal Arts  
Sierra College

Ms. Kerrin McMahan  
Dean, Academic Affairs  
East Los Angeles College

Dr. Lui Hokoana  
Chancellor  
University of Hawaii Maui College

Mr. Daniel Villanueva  
Vice President of Administrative Services  
Los Angeles Mission College

Ms. Inge Bond  
Director of Research,  
Planning, Institutional Effectiveness  
West Valley College

Dr. Michael Bagley  
Professor of Mathematics  
Feather River College

## Summary of the Report

INSTITUTION: Cosumnes River College

DATE OF VISIT: October 5, 2015 through October 8, 2015

TEAM CHAIR: Linda Rose  
President, Los Angeles Southwest College

A twelve-member accreditation team visited Cosumnes River College from October 5, 2015 through October 8, 2015 for the purpose of evaluating whether Cosumnes River College meets the 2002 Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, and Commission Policies.

The team chair conducted a pre-visit to Cosumnes River College on August 17, 2015 to meet with the College president and the Accreditation Liaison Officer to discuss logistics for the upcoming site visit. During that visit the team chair toured the campus as well as visited the Elk Grove Center, an offsite facility.

To prepare for the site visit to Cosumnes River College, team members attended a training session conducted by ACCJC on Tuesday, September 1, 2015 from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. The team received training materials prepared by ACCJC to facilitate the review of the accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, and Commission Policies. The team chair also attended an all-day training session on Thursday, July 9, 2015 from 7:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Prior to the site visit, team members read the 2015 Institutional Self-Evaluation Report and assessed, to the extent possible, evidence provided by the College in support of their report. Team members also completed written summaries of their evaluation of the Institutional Self Evaluation and began to identify areas for further investigation. Pre-visit preparations also included team members determining which college employees and constituent groups they wanted to interview as well as a list of additional evidentiary documents that should be available in the team room during the site visit.

The visiting team found the President, administrators, faculty, staff, and students at Cosumnes River College to be very responsive and accommodating. The team also found the college to be engaged in the Accreditation process. College facilities were appropriate for our team, and the multi-purpose room in the Winn Center was conveniently located and comfortable. The team also had access to a room at the hotel that was used each day for team meetings and a place for the team to work together in the evenings.

The day before the formal start of the visit the team met in the team room at Cosumnes River College to review and discuss the written materials and additional evidence provided by the College, as well as other materials submitted to the ACCJC since the last comprehensive visit in 2009.

## **Introduction**

Cosumnes River College is one of four community colleges within the Los Rios Community College District. The Los Rios District was founded in July 1965. The formation of the District initially covered 2,400 square miles and included then existing Sacramento City and American River Colleges. Eventually, in 1967 a 180-acre site, 12 miles south of metropolitan Sacramento was selected as the place to establish the future home of Cosumnes River College. The college offers associate degrees, certificates, courses in general education, transfer preparation, career and technical education and training, developmental education, and English as a Second Language to name a few. The team was impressed with the College's instructional programs, in the Career and Technical areas and the active engagement of faculty and staff with industry partners and the surrounding community. These relationships provide students with opportunities for Service Learning, paid and unpaid internships, and job training. Further, the team commends the College on its entrepreneurial attitude in identifying innovative campus-based initiatives and professional growth opportunities that are funded by the College. These activities align with the College's mission and vision and compliment the CTE programs as well as activities to provide instructional and counseling support to students to ensure their success.

The College also provides instruction and support services for students at its Elk Grove Center in Elk Grove. The Elk Grove Center is approximately six miles south of the main campus. The Center officially opened in August of 2013. The facility includes nine classrooms, computer and other instructional labs, a learning resource center and office space for staff, administrators, and faculty. A Substantive Change proposal was submitted to the Commission, and subsequently approved in fall 2013. A required follow-up visit to the Elk Grove occurred in April 2014 to confirm the status of the Center. The California Community College Board of Governors approved the Elk Grove location as an educational center in January of 2015. A majority of the 2015 evaluation team visited the Elk Grove Center and commends the College for creating and maintaining a clean, safe, functional, and positive environment that fosters student engagement. This is also true for the main campus as team members observed, during the visit that students congregated in several areas of the main campus in spaces with seating that was clean and safe.

The process for the College's last comprehensive self-evaluation began during the fall of 2008 culminating with an ACCJC site visit in October of 2009. As a result of the October 2009 team visit, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges took action to reaffirm Cosumnes River College's accredited status. The team received three recommendations which were addressed in the College's mid-term report. The mid-term report was submitted to the Commission in fall 2012. In fall 2013 the College submitted a Substantive Change Proposal for Distance Education. The proposal was approved by the Commission in the fall of 2013.

The team also commends the College for the seamless relationship between the Elk Grove Center and the main campus. This relationship between staff, administrators, and faculty at the Elk Grove Center and the main campus reflects an effective collaboration to ensure the delivery of instruction and services that help students achieve their academic goals, without disruption.

## **Responses to Recommendations of the Previous Evaluation Team (2009)**

### **Recommendation 1:**

*The College has crafted a well-thought-out process and plan to establish and assess student-learning outcomes. As a precautionary measure, to ensure that the college will meet the Commission's expectation of reaching the proficiency level regarding student learning outcomes and assessment by 2012, the team recommends that the college develop benchmarks to monitor its timeline for defining outcomes in every course, assessing outcomes in every course, and using assessment for improvement at the course level.*

The 2015 evaluation team confirmed that the College has established benchmarks to monitor its timeline for defining outcomes in every course. An academic Senate resolution dated October 28, 2011 required the inclusion of learning outcomes in all syllabi. The College's *Program Overview and Forecasting* (PrOF) system was also improved in 2011 to include learning outcomes assessment data. The evaluation team also conducted a random sampling of course outcomes and found that outcomes were consistent, measurable, and well-purposed for evaluation, action, and improvement. However, the College has not conducted assessments of the defined outcomes for approximately 50 percent of its courses. For example, after a review of the College's Course Assessment Summaries the team found that only 420 of the 960 currently active courses have been assessed. Thus, the College has not met the commission's expectation of reaching the 2012 proficiency level regarding student learning outcomes and assessment. This does not fulfill the requirements of this recommendation, nor does it meet the Commission standards.

The College has established the LODS committee which is tasked to promote comprehensive SLO completion and assessment, set benchmarks for SLO completion, develop processes to encourage faculty participation in assessment, and formalize the assessment reporting process. This committee is also tasked with incorporating SLO assessment data into program assessment, and developing a schedule so all course and program SLOs are assessed every 6 years.

After an interview with the College researcher, and subsequent evidence was provided, at the time of the 2015 evaluation team visit, all course outcomes have been scheduled for assessment and 465 courses out of approximately 1000 have been assessed one or more times. Nevertheless, this still does not meet the Commission's expectation that the College would reach the proficiency level regarding student outcomes by 2012.

### **Recommendation 2:**

*CRC has a number of established planning processes. In order to move the institution to the Commission's expectation that institutions be at the "Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement" level of planning, the college should integrate planning processes such as Strategic Planning, the management goals and objectives, the shared governance committees' plans, PrOF, unit plans and budget allocation processes, educational master planning, and distance education planning, to achieve broad educational purposes and improve institu-*

*tional effectiveness. This integration should include publication of the criteria on which the final prioritization in the resources allocation process is based.*

The team found that while the College has implemented an integrated planning process that includes strategic planning and the components of the strategic plan are evaluated on a regular basis, the integration of the planning process for other planning documents, such as *The Educational Master Plan*, and *The Facilities Plan*, are integrated in the strategic planning process. Moreover, the evaluation of the integrated planning process is conducted on a regular basis to achieve broad educational purposes and to improve institutional effectiveness. These plans are integrated with the other strategic planning component to ensure college wide integration of planning processes. While there is a lack of integration of the planning processes for all shared governance planning documents, resource allocation requests are identified and prioritized through CIPS, based on the criteria published in the Cosumnes River Resource Guide, developed in 2014.

**Recommendation 3:**

*In order to improve, the institution should clarify the purpose of each of its shared governance committees and communicate the results widely to the college community.*

The Team reviewed data from the College's shared governance committee website and found that the College has revised and established a database for most, but not all, shared governance committees to clarify each committee's purpose. The website also includes information about membership on each committee. This information is readily available to the college community via the Shared Governance Committee Database. The team found that committees such as the *Classified Senate*, *Learning Outcomes Dialog Subcommittee*, *CC&E*, and *Curriculum* had not been updated at the time of the Teams visit.



## **Recommendations of the 2015 Evaluation Team**

### **College Recommendation 1**

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College accelerate the completion of the assessment cycle of learning outcomes and achievement rates for all courses, programs, and degrees in all delivery modes and in all locations and that the College identify and communicate the ownership, analysis, use and responsibility to address all outcomes research. (Standards I.B.1, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.A.6)

### **College Recommendation 2**

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the College consistently and systematically document the dialogue about institutional effectiveness, specifically learning outcomes assessment, as discussions occur throughout the shared governance process. The team further recommends that the College clearly delineate persons and programs responsible for implementing plans and that the results of the implementation be made public to all constituencies in support of continuous quality improvement. (I.B.1, II.C.2, III.C.1.a, IV.A.5)

### **College Recommendation 3**

While the team recognizes the progress made in the provision of disaggregated data for use in program review, institutional effectiveness, and integrated planning, in order to improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends the College complete a regular cycle of integrated planning and assessment and consistently document dialogue demonstrating the use of the data for assessment results. Integrated planning includes strategic planning; management goals and objectives; shared governance plans; unit plans; educational master planning; distance education planning; technology planning; facilities master planning, and resource allocation alignment. (Standard I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.4, I.B.5, II.A)

### **College Recommendation 4**

While the team recognizes the progress the College has made since 2009 in developing the tools to conduct outcomes assessment, program review, and integrated planning, in order to improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that the College establish, implement, and document a regular and systematic cycle of evaluation of the effectiveness of all processes including planning, training, decision-making, communication, resource allocation, and governance practices. (Standards I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.6.c, II.C.2, IV.A.5, IV.B.3.g)

## **Recommendations of the 2015 District Evaluation Team**

### **District Recommendation 1:**

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

#### **Comments:**

The LRCCD has made significant strides recently in addressing critical Information Technology needs. It has also addressed critical infrastructure needs district-wide. At the District level a unit plans exists, and the individual colleges have also developed IT unit plans. In reviewing the Self-Evaluation reports and through interviews with key leaders at the colleges and the District Office, the District Evaluation Team concluded that the LRCCD needs to collaboratively create a comprehensive District Information Technology Plan in order to more completely meet the Standard. Finally, the plan will need to be routinely assessed and updated to ensure currency.

### **District Recommendation 2:**

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

#### **Comments:**

In LRCCD Board Policies 4111 and 9142, the Board of Trustees is responsible for the recruitment, selection, and evaluation of the Chancellor. During the Evaluation Team visit, it was verified that the Board evaluation of the Chancellor takes place during a regular Board of Trustees business meeting held in closed session in the month of October.

LRCCD Board Policies 9141 and 9142 also identify the process and timing for evaluation of the college Presidents. While Board Policy 4111 identifies a specific process for hiring the Chancellor, it does not have a specific process for hiring the college Presidents. To fully comply with the Standard, the LRCCD needs to adopt such a process in policy. (Standard IV.B.1.j)

### **District Recommendation 3:**

In order to improve institutional effectiveness and align policy with practice, the Evaluation Team recommends that the District modify the existing Board Policy 4111 to more clearly

define that the Chancellor delegates full responsibility, authority, and accountability to the presidents for the operations of the colleges. (Standard IV.B.3.e)

The Evaluation Team further recommends that Section 1.2 of Board 2411, which establishes the role of the President as the chief college administrator, be added to the policy section 4000 Administration. (Standards IV.B.2, IV.B.3.e)

**Comments:**

The Evaluation Team noted that LRCCD Board Policy 4111 specifically delegates the administration of the district to the Chancellor. The policy also states:

*1.3 The Chancellor may delegate any powers and duties entrusted by the Board of Trustees, including the administration of the colleges, but the Chancellor shall be specifically responsible to the Board of Trustees for the execution of such delegated powers and duties.*

Although the president of the College has the primary responsibility for the quality of the institution including leading the planning, budgeting, personnel issues, and institutional effectiveness, Board Policy 4111 is not clear that the Chancellor delegates full responsibility and authority to the presidents. (Standard IV.B.3.j)

## **Eligibility Requirements**

### **1. Authority**

The evaluation team confirmed that Cosumnes River College is properly authorized to operate and award degrees based on its accredited status through the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and its approval under the regulations for the California State Departments of Education and the California Community Colleges.

### **2. Mission**

The evaluation team confirmed that Cosumnes River College's mission, vision and values are clearly defined, adopted by the governing board and widely published. The mission statement addresses learning at the global level. The combined mission, vision, and values strengthens the College's commitment to the achievement of student learning outcomes.

### **3. Governing Board**

The evaluation team confirmed that a publically elected Board of Trustees governs the College as one of four colleges in the Los Rios Community College District. The Board includes seven members and one non-voting student trustee. LRCCD Board members have no employment, family, or personal financial interest in the Institution.

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

The evaluation team confirmed that the Chief Executive Officer of Cosumnes River College by direction of the Chancellor and Board of Trustees of the Los Rios Community College District, is responsible for the selection process of all management personnel. The President may delegate responsibility for preliminary screening, but final authority for the selection and recommendation of an appointee to the Board shall remain with the Chancellor.

### **5. Administrative Capacity.**

The evaluation team confirmed that the College has sufficient faculty members and classified staff. The faculty, administrators, and classified staff are appropriately prepared and possess the experience to support the college's mission, vision and achieve stated goals for learning outcomes in all programs, courses, certificates and degrees.

### **6. Operational Status**

The evaluation team confirmed that Cosumnes River College has been in continuous operation since 1970 and currently serves approximately 15,000 students enrolled in 2,564 sections of courses in an array of disciplines. Degree and certificate seeking students comprise 24 percent of the student population, and 66 percent of students state transfer is their goal.

### **7. Degrees**

The evaluation team confirmed that a significant number of Cosumnes River College course, and program offerings lead to Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees.

## **8. Educational Programs:**

The evaluation team confirmed that Cosumnes River College degree programs are congruent with the College's mission. Course outlines meet appropriate levels of quality and rigor consistent with Title 5 Curriculum Requirements. The team also confirmed that course outlines and degree programs included identified student-learning outcomes that were approved by Cosumnes River College's local Curriculum Committee.

## **9. Academic Credit**

The evaluation team confirmed that Cosumnes River College awards academic credits based upon accepted practices of California community colleges governed by the California Code of Regulations and Title 5 Curriculum Requirements. Course outlines were found to have all of the appropriate information to define academic credits for all courses, and further, a review of the College catalog also confirmed standard practices for credits awarded for classes and credits needed for degree completion.

## **10. Student Learning and Achievement**

The evaluation team confirmed that Cosumnes River College defines and publishes learning outcomes for each of its programs. A review of the course outlines on SOCRATES and the courses/programs in the college catalog demonstrated achievement of completion of expected learning outcomes. A review of minutes of meetings of faculty engaged in teaching courses in the college's CTE programs as well as the results of student surveys, such as CCSSE, revealed that regular assessment of achieved learning takes place. Members of the team reviewed distance education courses and courses taught off-site at the Elk Grove Center, and found that learning outcomes and quality were consistent with offerings of regular on-campus classes

## **11. General Education**

The evaluation team confirmed that Cosumnes River College incorporates components of general education into all of its degree programs through the regular review of the college catalog, on-line resources found at the College's website, and through college research on the college and general education outcomes.

## **12. Academic Freedom**

The evaluation team confirmed that Cosumnes River College faculty and students are free to examine and test knowledge from their area of study. A review of the Los Rios Community College District Board-approved policies on academic freedom and academic honesty (such as the Honor Code) show that Academic freedom is supported within the teaching-learning process at the college. Further confirmation of this formal treatment of academic freedom and integrity was found in interviews with faculty and students during the time of the site visit.

## **13. Substantial Core of Qualified faculty with full-time responsibility.**

The evaluation team confirmed that Cosumnes River College has a core of full time faculty members with full-time duties including curriculum review, assessment of learning outcomes and other faculty responsibilities.

#### **14. Student Services**

The evaluation team confirmed that Cosumnes River College provides appropriate student learning support, and development within the context of the instructional mission for all students enrolled at the college. The College provides comprehensive student support services through its many student services programs. This includes Admissions and Records, Assessment and Testing, Athletic Academic Support, CalWORKs, Child Development Center, Counseling, Disability Support Programs & Services (DSP&S), Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOP&S)/Cooperative Agency Resources for Education (CARE), Financial Aid, Health, International Student Services, and Internship/Work.

#### **15. Admissions**

The evaluation team confirmed that Cosumnes River College has adopted and adheres to admission policies consistent with its mission that specify the qualifications of students appropriate for its programs. The College has an open admissions policy consistent with the mission of the College. Some degree programs have specific prerequisites that must be met before a student is accepted for candidacy. These prerequisites are clearly stated in the College's catalog.

#### **16. Information and Learning Resources**

The evaluation team confirmed that Cosumnes River College provides specific long-term access to sufficient print and electronic information and learning resources through its library and academic support services to meet the educational needs of students and programs, including those students enrolled in courses taught online.

#### **17. Financial Resources**

The evaluation team confirmed that Cosumnes River College and the Los Rios Community College District publicly documents its funding base, financial resources, and plans for financial development adequate to support its mission and educational programs. A majority of the financial resources of the College come from the state of California. Additional funding is obtained from federal, state and private sources. The college, through LRCCD Board oversight, maintains adequate reserve levels for contingencies and maintains financial management policies and practices that ensure ongoing fiscal stability. The team also confirmed that the College maintains an adequate funding base and financial reserves to support student learning programs and services.

#### **18. Financial Accountability**

The evaluation team confirmed that Cosumnes River College annually undergoes and makes publicly available an external financial audit by an external audit firm. The audit is conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards contained in publications from the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), including *Audits of State and Local Governments*, *Not-for-Profit Guide* (used for foundations), and *Government Auditing Standards*. In addition to these guides, the external auditor uses the *Contracted District Audit Manual* published by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. All audits are certified and any exceptions explained. Results of audit reports including institutional responses to external audit findings are made available to the college community via

the college's website and presented in open session to the LRCCD Board of Trustees. In addition, the college adheres to all federal, state and county financial standards and regulations.

### **19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation**

The evaluation team confirmed that the College evaluates and provides public notification of how well it is meeting its goals and that the methods employed to do such, including assessment of student learning outcomes and the establishment of college benchmarks. The team found evidence of the college's planning for improvement of institutional structures and processes, student achievement of educational goals, and student learning. Progress was assessed regarding the achievement of stated goals. Decisions are made through an ongoing cycle of systematic evaluation, dialog, planning, resource allocation implementation, and re-evaluation.

### **20. Integrity in Communication with the Public**

The evaluation team confirmed that Cosumnes River College publishes current information describing the official name, address, telephone number, web address and the mission statement in the college catalog, on the website, and in other appropriate places. The college also publishes information about its course, program, and degree offerings, the academic calendar, and a statement on academic freedom. Information about student and academic support services such as financial aid, learning resources, admissions requirements and procedures, rules and regulations that directly impact students, costs and refund policies, grievance procedures, academic credentials of faculty and administrators, as well as the names of members of the District governing board.

### **21. Integrity in Relations with the Accrediting Commission**

The evaluation team confirmed that the Los Rios Community College District Board of Trustees provides assurance that Cosumnes River College adheres to the eligibility requirements and accreditation standards and policies of the Commission. The College describes the college in identical terms to all its accrediting agencies, communicates any changes in its accredited status, and agrees to disclose information required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities.

## **Checklist for Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Related Commission Policies**

The evaluation items detailed in this Checklist are those which fall specifically under federal regulations and related Commission policies, beyond what is articulated in the Accreditation Standards; there may be other evaluation items under ACCJC standards which address the same or similar subject matter. The evaluation team evaluated Cosumnes River College's compliance with standards as well as the specific checklist elements from federal regulations and related Commission policies noted here.

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

#### **Evaluation Items:**

- ✓ The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comment in advance of a comprehensive evaluation visit.
- ✓ The institution cooperates with the evaluation team in any necessary follow-up related to the third party comment.
- ✓ The institution demonstrates compliance with the *Commission Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions* as to third party comment.

Regulation citation: 602.23(b)

#### **Conclusion**

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

### **Standards and Performance with Respect to Student Achievement**

#### **Evaluation Items:**

- ✓ The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance across the institution, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. Course completion is included as one of these elements of student achievement. Other elements of student achievement performance for measurement have been determined as appropriate to the College's mission.
- ✓ The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance within each instructional program, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. The defined elements include, but are not limited to, job placement rates for program completers, and for programs in fields where licensure is required, the licensure examination passage rates for program completers.



- ✓ The institution-set standards for programs and across the institution are relevant to guide self-evaluation and institutional improvement; the defined elements and expected performance levels are appropriate within higher education; the results are reported regularly across the campus; and the definition of elements and results are used in program-level and institution-wide planning to evaluate how well the institution fulfills its mission, to determine needed changes, to allocating resources, and to make improvements.
- ✓ The institution analyzes its performance as to the institution-set standards and as to student achievement, and takes appropriate measures in areas where its performance is not at the expected level.

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

### **Conclusion**

The team has reviewed evidence for this policy and found that Cosumnes River College meets the Commission's requirements.

### **Credits, Program Length, and Tuition**

#### **Evaluation Items:**

- ✓ Credit hour assignments and degree program lengths are within the range of good practice in higher education (in policy and procedure).
- ✓ The assignment of credit hours and degree program lengths is verified by the institution, and is reliable and accurate across classroom based courses, laboratory classes, distance education classes, and for courses that involve clinical practice (if applicable to the institution).
- ✓ Tuition is consistent across degree programs (or there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition).
- ✓ Any clock hour conversions to credit hours adhere to the Department of Education's conversion formula, both in policy and procedure, and in practice.
- ✓ The institution demonstrates compliance with the *Commission Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits*.

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

### **Conclusion**

The evaluation team reviewed evidence and found that Cosumnes River College complies with all elements of this policy.

## **Transfer Policies**

### **Evaluation Items:**

- ✓ Transfer policies are appropriately disclosed to students and to the public.
- ✓ Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to accept credits for transfer.
- ✓ The institution complies with the Commission *Policy on Transfer of Credit*.

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

### **Conclusion**

The evaluation team reviewed evidence related to this policy and found that Cosumnes River College complies with all elements of this policy.

## **Distance Education and Correspondence Education**

### **Evaluation Items:**

- ✓ The institution has policies and procedures for defining and classifying a course as offered by distance education or correspondence education, in alignment with USDE definitions.
- ✓ There is an accurate and consistent application of the policies and procedures to determine if a course is offered by distance education (with regular and substantive interaction with the instructor, initiated by the instructor, and online activities are included as part of a student's grade) or correspondence education (online activities are primarily "paperwork related," including reading posted materials, posting homework and completing examinations, and interaction with the instructor is initiated by the student as needed).
- ✓ The institution has appropriate means and consistently applies those means for verifying the identity of a student who participates in a distance education or correspondence education course or program, and for ensuring that student information is protected. The technology infrastructure is sufficient to maintain and sustain the distance education and correspondence education offerings.

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

### **Conclusion**

The evaluation team found evidence that Cosumnes River College meets the Commission's requirement for this policy.

## **Student Complaints**

### **Evaluation Items:**

- ✓ The institution has clear policies and procedures for handling student complaints, and the current policies and procedures are accessible to students in the college catalog and on-line.
- ✓ The student complaint files for the previous six years (since the last comprehensive evaluation) are available; the files demonstrate accurate implementation of the complaint policies and procedures.
- ✓ The team analysis of the student complaint files identifies any issues that may be indicative of the College's noncompliance with any Accreditation Standards.
- ✓ The institution posts on its website the names of associations, agencies and governmental bodies that accredit, approve, or license the institution and any of its programs, and provides contact information for filing complaints with such entities.
- ✓ The institution demonstrates compliance with the *Commission Policy on Representation of Accredited Status* and the *Policy on Student and Public Complaints against Institutions*.

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

### **Conclusion**

The team has reviewed the elements of this policy and has found the institution meets the Commission's requirements.

## **Institutional Disclosure and Advertising and Recruitment Materials**

### **Evaluation Items:**

- ✓ The institution provides accurate, timely (current), and appropriately detailed information to students and the public about its programs, locations, and policies.
- ✓ The institution complies with the *Commission Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status*.
- ✓ The institution provides required information concerning its accredited status as described above in the section on Student Complaints.

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

## **Conclusion**

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

## **Title IV Compliance**

### **Evaluation Items:**

- ✓ The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program, including findings from any audits and program or other review activities by the USDE.
- ✓ The institution has addressed any issues raised by the USDE as to financial responsibility requirements, program record-keeping, etc. If issues were not timely addressed, the institution demonstrates it has the fiscal and administrative capacity to timely address issues in the future and to retain compliance with Title IV program requirements.
- ✓ The College's student loan default rates are within the acceptable range defined by the USDE. Remedial efforts have been undertaken when default rates near or meet a level outside the acceptable range.
- ✓ Contractual relationships of the institution to offer or receive educational, library, and support services meet the Accreditation Standards and have been approved by the Commission through substantive change if required.
- ✓ The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations* and the *Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV*.

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

## **Conclusion**

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

**Standard I—Institutional Mission and Effectiveness**  
**Standard I.A—Mission**

**General Observations**

The team confirmed that Cosumnes River College has developed a mission statement that was developed through an all-inclusive process. The statement is comprehensive and summarizes the College's purpose and reason for existence and defines the vision of the College's educational purposes. The statement also addresses the college's commitment to student learning for its diverse student population, and summarizes the services and programs provided to the community. The College's last comprehensive review of the mission statement occurred in 2008; however during 2013-2014, the College reaffirmed its mission statement.

**Findings and Evidence**

The team confirmed through a review of the meeting minutes of the College Planning Committee that Cosumnes River College has revised and reaffirmed a mission statement that defines the College's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning. The Los Rios Community College District governing board on May 14, 2014 approved the revised mission statement. (Standards I.A, I.A.1)

Cosumnes River College's mission statement is widely published. The mission statement is included in publications such as the College Catalog, Class Schedule, The New Student Handbook, The SLO Handbook and the Strategic Plan. The team also observed the mission statement posted in various places around campus, including the Library, Student Services building and in on the college website. (Standard I.A.2)

According to information in the 2013 edition of the Cosumnes River College Planning Guide, the mission statement is reviewed and when appropriate updated on a six-year cycle as the first step in the College's Strategic Planning Process. According to the College's process, if there are significant changes in the internal or external environment, the College Planning Committee may decide the appropriateness of updating the mission statement, at the time of review. While the college intended to engage in the next iteration of its full mission and strategic plan development in 2014, the College Planning Committee extended the timeline for this cycle to improve alignment of the College's Strategic Planning Process with accreditation and the District's planning processes. (Standard I.A.3)

Reviewing the mission statement for Cosumnes River College is the first step in the College's Strategic Planning Process; thus, it lays the foundation for the College's operation. The team confirmed after review of several documents, the *Draft Values and Principles Cross-Referenced to the Mission, Capital Outlay Budget Process, Final Draft of Values and Principles* that the mission statement is prevalent in the College's decision-making processes. (Standard I.A.4)

**Conclusion**

The college meets all elements of Standard IA.

## Standard I.B – Improving Institutional Effectiveness

### General Observations

Cosumnes River College demonstrates a conscious effort to produce and support student learning, measure that learning, assess how well learning is occurring, and make changes to improve student learning. The College has identified benchmarks as submitted in their Annual Report, submitted to ACCJC, and in the publication of their *Achievement of Benchmarks* report. This report provides both quantitative and descriptive information about the degree to which the College achieves each of the benchmarks. However, the team did not find evidence to support the college's assertion that they consistently measure student-learning, use the results of the measurements to make changes to instruction or services, and then re-evaluate the implementation of any changes to determine their effectiveness. However, the team found that the College has taken steps toward conducting a consistent evaluation cycle, but in most areas the College does not complete or document the dialogue about the process.

The team also confirmed that the College did not provide sufficient evidence of achievement of assessment of all student-learning outcomes. The team found that the College had assessed approximately 50 percent of course level outcomes through the end of spring 2015. Although the College publishes the conclusions reached and changes to be made based on the most recent assessments, the Team could not confirm that the College published dialogue about these assessments. The Team found evidence that the College reported in the 2015 ACCJC Annual report that 98 percent of their courses had ongoing assessment of learning outcomes, but the team could not confirm this statement after a review of the document, *Courses Assessed through Spring 2015*. As of the Team's visit approximately 50 percent of the College's courses have not yet been assessed. However the remainder of courses are scheduled for assessment by spring 2019.

### Findings and Evidence

The team confirmed, during the visit, that the only evidence provided in the College's Self-Evaluation Report to support the college's claim that the college demonstrates a conscious effort to produce and support student learning, measure that learning, assess how well learning is occurring and makes changes to improve student learning is the college's revised Strategic Plan. The team concluded that while the Strategic Plan is a good start toward a college-wide development of integrated planning structures, the Strategic Plan document alone is not sufficient to demonstrate that the College meets this standard. The Self-Evaluation Report claims that the strategic planning process will lead to dialogue across instructional and service programs including participatory governance committees, College wide planning groups, professional development committees, and other College constituency groups. However, the team did not find sufficient evidence to support these claims. (Standard I.B)

The team confirmed that while the College's Self-Evaluation Report provided a long list of committees and plans, evidence of ongoing, collegial, and self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes was not provided in the report nor could the team verify it (*Academic Senate, Classified Senate, Student Equity*

*Plan, Health & Facilities, etc*). The Team confirmed through a review of documents that the College provides a list of committees and their members, and planning documents such as Academic Senate, Classified Senate, Student Equity Plan, and Health & Facilities Plan. However, the team could not confirm evidence of an ongoing, collegial, self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional effectiveness. (Standard I.B.1)

In an interview with the Learning Outcomes Dialogue Subcommittee the team learned that while dialogue is taking place in areas throughout the college, it is not yet pervasive, and documentation of this dialogue is not being conducted. The team also reviewed evidence that included several examples of dialogue and documents suggesting that dialogue was taking place (*Flex Day Brochures Fall 2015 and Spring 2015, Manager's Meeting Agenda October 1, 2014*), based on the discussion of student learning outcomes assessments, but the team agreed that this is not sufficient to demonstrate that the College meets the standard. The College needs to provide evidence of systematic dialogue – the participants, a summary of the dialog, and the changes that were made for all learning outcomes assessments. (Standard I.B.1)

While the College claims that its participatory governance structure is collegial and relies on dialog, the evidence does not support this. In 9 of 11 participatory governance committees, a faculty member is chair, and an administrator is the executive secretary (*College committee Webpages 10/6/2015*). This does not suggest a balance in decision-making as required through true participatory governance. For it to be true participatory governance, the decision-making and operational aspects should be balanced across constituent groups. (Standard I.B.1)

The College provided a number of items as evidence of dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional practices, but the Team found that in fact many of these are just websites for committees and do not refer specifically to any dialogue. (Standard I.B.1)

Dialogue about student performance data such as success and retention does take place in the context of the College's Program Overview and Forecasting (PrOF) process (*PrOF Manual, screenshots*), and in the development of plans such as SSSP and Student Equity. Further, the College's strategic planning processes incorporate a satisfactory level of dialogue, with extensive constituent participation. (Standard I.B.1)

The team requested evidence of the dialogue that is taking place in response specifically to student learning outcomes assessments, and while the college was able to provide several examples, the discussion with the Learning Outcomes Dialogue Subcommittee verified that this is not yet common practice at the college. (Standard I.B.1)

The team confirmed that the College's strategic planning process was developed to assess the College's progress towards achieving its stated goals and make decisions regarding the improvement of institutional effectiveness in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation. Long and short-

term goals are identified by a representative contingent of campus constituents with responsible parties tasked with guiding work toward completion/achievement. (*Strategic Plan, Diagrams of the Planning Processes, Desired Outcomes, Extract of Planning Agenda Items*), (Standard I.B.2)

Although this process is complicated, it is clear from the evidence (*Strategic Plan, Diagrams of Planning Processes, and the Desired Outcomes*) that the College has implemented this planning process with a reasonable amount of constituent participation. A broad range of constituent groups took part in the development of these plans and objectives and are involved in working toward their achievement, including many other planning teams on campus including SSSP, Basic Skills Initiative, Technology Committee, and the like. (Standard I.B.2)

In addition to the institutional plans and objectives outlined above, the College Planning Committee has identified a set of benchmark recommendations for the college. These are performance metrics and on each, both a baseline and an improvement benchmark have been identified. These benchmark recommendations have been vetted through the participatory governance process and were included in the 14-15 Desired Outcomes (*Desired Outcomes, Benchmark Recommendations*). (Standard I.B.2)

The College's Strategic Plan is updated regularly, recently every 3 years. Every year progress toward the Desired Outcomes is assessed and is included in the published Achievement Report to the community. In addition to measurement of progress toward goals included in the strategic plan, the Achievement Report also incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data such as student perception survey responses, environmental scan data, research briefs, and cohort studies (*2014 Strategic Planning Abstract, 2009-2015 Planning Guide, 2013-2014 Achievements Report, 2013-14 Year End Report From the College Planning Committee*). (Standard I.B.3)

A review of Cosumnes River College's 2014 Accreditation Survey results revealed that the College seeks to include members from all constituencies in its planning processes. Sign in sheets reveal that planning summits have attracted between 75 – 125 participants. Diverse participation from campus constituent groups is also ensured via the PrOF process, surveys, and participatory governance committees The College Planning Council includes members from all four constituent groups (<https://www.crc.losrios.edu/facstaff/sharedgov/cp/members>). (Standard I.B.4)

In combination, the Planning Summits, employee and student surveys, PrOF Processes, and other evaluative processes offer opportunities for input by all constituencies (*Agenda for the Planning Summit, Strategic Planning Summit Survey 2011, PrOF Manual*). (Standard I.B.4)

Also in the last year, through its resource allocation process, the College has been able to fund most of the high priority resource request items that emerged from PrOF (*Resource Allocation webpage, Resource and Allocation Form and Processes*). The Benchmarks and Annual and Achievements reports are intended to inform the campus community about ongoing improvements in institutional effectiveness. As these are new reports, there is not yet suffi-



cient evidence to determine whether the College's planning processes are leading to improvements in institutional effectiveness. (Standard I.B.4)

The team confirmed that Cosumnes River College publishes many useful reports that can be accessed by both internal and external constituents and used to assess the effectiveness of the institution. (*Annual Report, Achievement Reports, Our Students, Overview of the CCSSE Results*)

However, the team could not confirm that Cosumnes River College actually uses assessment data from these reports, on a consistent basis, to communicate matters of quality assurance to campus constituents who are impacted by these results. The team found that there is little evidence of consistent, systematic institutional dialogue about student learning or assessment of that learning. Although the College provided notes from fall 2015 and fall 2014 Convocations as evidence of student learning and activity outcomes assessment dialogue, these documents represent procedural instructions, not evidence of communication about assessment results. The College also provided examples of SLO dialogue taking place in department meetings (COMM 311 SLO Assessment, Guiding Principles for Early Childhood Department, Communications PSLO Assessment report Fall 2013) however; these examples are not sufficient to conclude that consistent, department and college-wide communication and discussion of assessment results is taking place. (Standard I.B.1, 1.B.5)

The team confirmed that Cosumnes River College conducts regular reviews of the resource allocation process, faculty and staff prioritization processes, surveys users about the strategic planning process, and the PrOF is assessed every two years by the College Planning Council. (Standard I.B.6)

The team confirmed that Cosumnes River College conducts assessments of its evaluation mechanisms through a systematic review of their effectiveness. For example, the team reviewed the *Strategic Plan; Desired Outcomes; Benchmarks;* and the *PrOF Unit Plans* and found that the College is tracking the number of course, program, general education, and college level assessments completed, but is not monitoring the quality of those assessments nor the efficacy of the outcomes assessment system at improving institutional effectiveness. The College measures the effectiveness of its student support services and library via service learning outcomes and a library survey. (Standard I.B.7)

## **Conclusion**

The college meets all elements of Standard I.B, except I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, and I.B.7

## **Recommendation**

While the team recognizes the progress made in the provision of disaggregated data for use in program review, institutional effectiveness, and integrated planning, in order to improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends the College complete a regular cycle of integrated planning and assessment and consistently document dialogue demonstrating the use

of the data for assessment results. Integrated planning includes strategic planning; management goals and objectives; shared governance plans; unit plans; educational master planning; distance education planning; technology planning; facilities master planning, and resource allocation alignment. (Standards I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.4, I.B.5)

### **Recommendation**

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the College consistently and systematically document the dialogue about institutional effectiveness, specifically learning outcomes assessment, as discussions occur throughout the shared governance process. The team further recommends that the College clearly delineate persons and programs responsible for implementing plans and that the results of the implementation be made public to all constituencies in support of continuous quality improvement. (Standards I.B.1)

### **Recommendation**

While the team recognizes the progress the College has made since 2009 in developing the tools to conduct outcomes assessment, program review, and integrated planning, in order to improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that the College establish, implement, and document a regular and systematic cycle of evaluation of the effectiveness of all processes including planning, training, decision-making, communication, resource allocation, and governance practices. (Standards I.B.6, I.B.7)

## **Standard II—Student Learning Programs and Services**

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

#### **General Observations**

The summary and self-evaluation demonstrate that the College has processes in place to ensure that all instructional programs, regardless of location or means of delivery, address and meet the mission of the institution and uphold its integrity. Classes are scheduled in both traditional and non-traditional time frames and formats and the College instructors are offered training in student needs as well as alternative teaching methods and delivery modalities. The supporting evidence shows that classes in all modalities meet the same standards. The College has a very clear process for curriculum development to ensure that interested parties have a chance to review and discuss the classes for distance learning, general education requirements, and multicultural requirements. Classes are also articulated at the District level. The newly opened Elk Grove center is rapidly expanding, but support services comparable to those on the main campus are available. There is a full-time faculty presence at the center. (Standards II.A.1, II.A.1.b, II.A.2, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.d)

The Team found evidence that Student Learning Outcomes are clearly defined at the course, program, and college level and the catalog states that upon completion of a given course or program, the student will be able to demonstrate the given outcomes. In addition the College has focused on the development and assessment of student learning outcomes since 2004 and course assessment was formally implemented in fall 2012. The college has developed a four-year program review cycle and a six-year outcomes assessment cycle. However, the team could not confirm the completion of an assessment cycle for learning outcomes at the course, program, and degree level. (Standards II.A.1.a, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.f, II.A.2.h)

The college planning committee coordinates the program review (PrOF) process, which occurs every four years in the fall. A smaller midterm report is due after two years. PrOF is the college's primary method of assessing changes to its programs, courses, and services and evaluating program currency, relevance, and effectiveness in order to plan for the future. The assessment process ensures that degrees and certificates are awarded based on achievement of SLOs. (Standards II.A.2.e, II.A.2.i)

The College has a clearly stated philosophy on general education. Checklists for each area are provided for faculty who wish to have a course included in the general education pattern. GE outcomes are clear, thorough, and readily available to students. Graduation requirements are clearly stated and courses that fulfill each requirement are listed in the catalog. The curriculum process is faculty driven and a GE subcommittee examines each course for inclusion in the GE pattern. (Standard II.A.3)

#### **Findings and Evidence**

The team found evidence that supports the College's assertions that processes are in place to ensure consistency of instruction across locations and modalities. Interviews with the Dean

of Technology and the Distance Learning Coordinator support the College's claim that the college does not differentiate between online and on ground courses in terms of goals, objectives, learning outcomes, or academic rigor. The College's Curriculum Committee, Distance Education Standards is a strong document that establishes best practices in distance education. Distance learning courses were audited in the 2014-2015 school year for regularity of contact, and instructors whose classes were at "medium" or "high" risk of not meeting the standards for regular contact worked with their Deans to develop improvement plans. (Standard II.A.2.d)

All new courses are approved by the CRC curriculum committee and then passed on to the District Curriculum Coordinating Committee for final approval. Proposed programs are subject to a similar process that passes through the District's Program Placement Council before going to the Board of Trustees for final approval. These processes ensure that all programs uniformly uphold the mission of the institution and uphold its integrity. The Elk Grove Center offers student services comparable to the main campus and has adequate staffing. The class schedule verifies that the center offers classes year round and throughout the day/evening. (Standard II.A.1)

The College has a diverse student population of 14,807. Nearly two-thirds of the student population comes from an ethnic minority group, two-thirds are low income or below the poverty line, and nearly half are first-generation students. A large majority of students are between 18-30 years old and over two-thirds attend part time. To meet these varied needs, the College offers classes throughout the day and evening and in a variety of modalities; for example, on ground, online, and hybrid, and formats (full-semester, short term, cohorts, intensive courses). This variety is also evident in the online schedule of classes. (Standards II.A.1.a, II.A.1.b)

The District conducts an external environmental scan every three to four years to assist in determining student needs; the CRC Research Office also conducts its own internal and external scans that link GIS mapping of enrollment patterns to student demography as well as its own studies. This data is made available to the college to use in a variety of ways, for example, the data reflects enrollment trends, persistence and success rates overall or by cohort, etc. The College faculty researcher and the coordinator of the *Center for the Advancement of Staff and Student Learning* (CASSL) also undertake studies to determine student needs. (Standard II.A.1.a)

Other processes help the College understand student needs on a more local level. For example, the faculty evaluation process includes a student survey that provides feedback instructors can use to adjust syllabi, course content, and delivery methods to serve the needs of students in a particular course. The Learning Outcomes Dialogue Subcommittee (LODS) developed assessment processes that demonstrate if students have met a stated learning outcome. There is limited evidence, however, that the college is "assessing progress toward achieving stated learning outcomes." The LODS committee has been on hiatus since 2014-2015, and since the self-evaluation was written, plans have been developed to move the functions of the committee back into the College Planning Committee (of which LODS was a subcommittee). (Standards II.A.1.a, II.A.1.c)

Other groups on campus, such as Outreach Services and the counselors also assist in describing student needs. The college provides a variety of courses to meet those varied needs (Study Skills, College Survival, and Freshman Seminar) and cohort-learning communities are also offered (Diop Scholars, Puente Project, MESA). A large number of programs offer specialized support to various student sub-populations (athletes, EOP&S, CalWORKS) or to students enrolled in particular courses (Reading, ESL, Math). The college also offers general tutoring for many courses. (Standard II.A.1.a)

Spring 2014 CCSSE findings indicate that most students feel the College provides the support they need to be successful and feel prepared for college level work. The survey also revealed some areas of concern; for example, part-time students are less likely to take remedial courses than their full-time peers. However, interviews with college personnel indicate that The “Steps to Success” program is anticipated to help in this area. The college is also working with regional partners to determine how to better meet the needs of adult ESL and basic skills students. (Evidence examined: Student Success Scorecard-CRC; Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac 2014-15; Research Briefs Spring 2007- Fall 2013; Class Schedule Los Rios Office of Institutional Research External Environmental Scan; CRC Research Office External and Internal Scans; Los Rios Institutional Research Office; CASSL Cohort Studies; CRC Faculty Research Office; CRC Research Office Reports; LRCFT Collective Bargaining Agreement, Learning Outcomes Dialogue Subcommittee; Steps to Success; interview with Institutional Researcher and former SLO coordinator) (Standard II.A.1.a)

Currently, 13 percent of FTES is generated from online enrollments, a significant increase in recent years. A variety of training opportunities are available to faculty teaching online, but training is not mandatory. The “CRC Curriculum Committee Distance Education Standards” clearly establish best practices for online instruction, including standards for regular and effective contact between instructors and students. Counselling and tutoring are available online and there are plans to expand to other student support services. The college’s DE master plan, updated every two years, is a very comprehensive document. The Distance Education and Information Technology Committee (DEIT) have recommended that the college join the Online Educational Initiative which it believes would improve the consistency of online instruction.

As described in the College’s Self-Evaluation-report research data suggests that there is a significant achievement gap between online and on ground classes, and the gap is more pronounced for African American students and first-time freshman. Information in the Self-Evaluation also indicates that “additional research should be conducted.” However, the team could not confirm that the College is developing a plan to address this issue. Once the data is collected and distributed to the various campus constituencies, there appears to be no consensus as to where the responsibility for acting on the data rests. (Evidence examined: SOCRA-TES; IIA-DE-Report-Spring-2014; 2015 Distance Education Master Plan; DEIT Annual Report, 2013-14; A study of 2012-13 success rates of DE courses; IIA-DE-Report-Spring-2014; Distance Education Student Satisfaction Survey; Distance Education and Information Technology meeting minutes, interview with Distance Education Coordinator and Dean of Learn-

ing Resources and College Technology; interview with college deans. (Standards II.A.1.b, II.A.2.f)

The College appears to have a robust process in place to assess and discuss SLOs. College wide, over 450 courses have been assessed, which is on track for the six-year cycle that started in 2013. Further, review of the college integrated planning system, CIPS, demonstrates curricular changes that have resulted from assessment. However, the College has not yet completed a full assessment cycle, which does not meet the rubric for “proficiency.” Additionally, while there is general agreement among those interviewed that dialog about outcomes is taking place, most of that dialog is not being captured in evidentiary form. Some department meeting agendas demonstrate that student learning outcome assessments are being discussed among faculty—the English department discussion about the common final is an excellent example. The LODS committee, charged with supporting and tracking assessment plans, was on hiatus for the 2014-15 year and as of the site visit, plans were being made to incorporate the subcommittee back into the College Planning Committee. If this occurs, it is not clear what group or committee would replace the leadership and support needed in “assisting faculty with PLSO and SLO assessment.” (Evidence examined: CRC Outcomes; CRC GE Outcomes Assessment Reporting System (ARS); Courses Assessed through spring 2015; Guide to Assessment at CRC; e-mail regarding English final from English chair) (Standards II.A.1.c, II.A.)

Faculty are either the drivers or are central to all of these processes. The survey done in preparation for accreditation indicates a large majority of respondents had participated in outcomes development. All courses must have student-learning outcomes in order to pass through the curriculum process, and those outcomes map to program outcomes as defined by discipline faculty. Methods of instruction, evaluation, and assessment must also be reported during the curriculum review process. During the four-year program review cycle, each program outcome must be assessed and a planning agenda developed to address the findings. (Evidence examined: Curriculum Handbook; Assessment Reporting Schedule; Program review (PrOF); Accreditation Survey; Curriculum Committee Year-End Report to the Academic Senate for 2013-14; SLO Assessment Summary) (Standard II.A.2.a)

Over the past two years, discipline faculty worked to identify outcomes at all levels. The integration of assessment reporting into the College Integrated Planning System has streamlined the process of entering information and made it less confusing and faster. The team found that all courses have been scheduled for evaluation during the 2013-2019 cycle. Approximately 450 courses have already been assessed at least once and of those, approximately 80 courses have been assessed more than once. All course outcome are assessed during that process. The results of these assessments are entered into CIPS (as of Spring 2015); however, only the department faculty can see all of the information entered. The public view of the outcomes shows only the narrative results, not any actual data set. Review of selected completed Program Assessment Reports provided to the team show that there is reflection on SLO assessment happening within departments, but the documentation is primarily at the level of the individual instructor. Potential changes are being planned, but there is little evidence that those changes are being implemented at this point. Faculty are instructed to keep the data but it is not necessarily entered into CIPS. The narrative results are downloaded and posted to the website as Assessment Summary Reports. (Standards II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b)

The College Integrated Planning System form has a field for listing changes made based on the assessment and another for assessing the impact of that change. In the program reviews sampled, no information is entered into those fields. The structure for accessing student progress towards achieving outcomes is there, but the evidence provided does not show that the cycle has been completed on a regular or systematic basis.

CRC's Career and Technical Education programs also use advisory committees to review program data and send feedback. Advisory meeting notes from various departments show that robust dialogue occurs at the meetings and that input from advisory committee members is used to make modification to course offerings, program requirements, and student learning outcomes. (Standard II.A.2.b)

The General Education Student Learning Outcomes and the College-Wide Student Learning Outcomes are clear and comprehensive. They are easily accessible to students on the website and in the catalog. In the spring 2014 CCSSE, students reported that the college supports their learning in many of the GESLO and CWSLO areas. The survey results indicate that a strong majority of students report engaging in learning activities and behaviors that require and develop skills aligned with the GESLOs and CWSLOs. (Evidence examined: Student Learning Outcomes; outcomes assessment cycle; Assessment Reporting System; assessment audit; General Education Learning Outcomes; College Wide Student Learning Outcomes; Research Office Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE); Assessment Reporting System; notes from ECE Advisory committee, 4/10/15; email from Instructional Researcher 10/7/15; examples of completed Program Assessment Reports provided to the team) (Standard II.A.2.b)

The College has processes in place to ensure that programs include high quality instruction with appropriate breadth, depth, rigor, sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning. Program review, unit review, curriculum reviews, the scheduling process, and the faculty evaluation process all contribute to ensuring high quality. Transfer-level courses and programs are articulated with nearby universities for ease of transfer. Graduation competency requirements in reading, written expression, and math have been validated by district-wide processes. Examples of course offering rotations demonstrate that careful planning at the department level enables students to complete degrees and certificates within two years. (Evidence used: PrOF; Curriculum Committee charge) (Standard II.A.2.c)

The College has a diverse student body and offers instruction in a variety of modalities, formats, and schedules. Classes are offered days and evenings and in full- and short-term formats. Online enrollments now make up 13 percent of FTE. The college has specific programs for underrepresented and at-risk students (Diop Scholars, Puente, MESA). Students also have access to a variety of student support programs (EOPS, DSPS, CalWORKS). The Center for the Advancement of Staff and Student Learning supports the faculty with resources to improve pedagogy and to support planning and outcomes assessment. (Evidence used: Cultural Competence statement; fall 2014 Census; class schedule) (Standard II.A.2.d)

All programs go through full program review every four years. Full program review includes

Updating of PSLOs, mapping of PSLOs to courses, and summarizing plans for outcomes assessment. Identification of planning and resource needs and maps them to strategic plan. Use of data supplied by Research to understand how well programs are serving students. The college has established definitions of PSLO and CLSO and a written policy explains how to create SLOs that have describe demonstrable skills and how to link those SLOs at the course and program level. A district committee determines where a new instructional program should be housed. The college has not yet completed a full cycle of course outcome assessment. The college has clear processes in place for ongoing cycles of assessment, but a sampling of available program reviews shows that the last step of evaluating the changes made as a result of assessment and dialogue is not widespread. (Standard II.A.2.e)

The team found that faculty are provided with an “SLO Assessment Tool Kit” to help them develop and apply assessments. This is an excellent resource that offers a variety of samples across types and disciplines. Information in the “Tool Kit” describe how in-depth assessment can be used to improve student learning. The college has scheduled all courses for assessment but only about half have been assessed one or more times. The Accreditation Survey indicated that a majority of respondents were aware of and had participated in the outcomes or planning process. The 2014 CCSSE indicates that a majority of students report engaging in critical thinking, reading, and writing in their classes. The college reports demographics, persistence, and program completion to the state. (Standard II.A.2.e)

There is some evidence that the institution systematically strives to improve those outcomes and makes the results available to appropriate constituencies. The assessment reporting forms include fields to note changes made as a result of assessment outcomes and then to comment on the impact of those changes, but the cycle has not been completed and so most programs do not appear to have “closed the loop” on assessment. The college disseminates the results of assessments to relevant faculty; an abbreviated summary of the results is published on the website each semester. (Evidence used: ProOF; CIPS; SLO Assessment Tool-Kit; 2014 Accreditation Survey; CCSSE; 2014 Student Success Scorecard, interview with Institutional Researcher and former SLO Coordinator; PPT on Student Participation presented to CCE committee; 2012-13 Assessment of Attitudinal and Behavioral College-wide and GE Student Learning Outcomes) (Standard II.A.2.f)

The college has a departmental exam in two English courses. The scoring guides are based on the UC AWPE and read according to standard group-grading processes (two unbiased reads; split goes to third reader). Instructors choose how to weight the final, typically between 10-25 percent of the final grade. Department faculty believe it provides good practice for the students and helps ensure the department’s outcomes are aligned with UC. High school faculty have recently joined the grading, which helps align high school and college expectations. The department also believes the exam provides a useful tool for measuring SLOs and making improvements. (Evidence used: writing prompt; Final Exam Scoring Guide; email regarding English final from English chair) (Standard II.A.2.g)

The course outlines include student learning outcomes as well as specific methodology for assessment. Course syllabi include course outcomes and are collected at the division level; if they do not include outcomes, the Deans work with individual faculty to correct the omission.



Achievement of SLOs is the criteria for awarding course credit. (Evidence used: Regulation 7000; College Catalog; student learning outcomes; curriculum committee process; 2014 Accreditation Survey) (Standard II.A.2.h)

Student responses to the spring 2014 CCSSE survey offer evidence that CRC offers high-quality instructional programs. Students were overwhelmingly positive about the responsiveness of faculty and staff, the growth of their knowledge and skills in key areas, and the support the college offered them to help them be successful. (Evidence used: Program Student Learning Outcomes; College Wide Student Learning Outcomes; General Education Student Learning Outcomes; Course-level Student Learning Outcomes; SOCRATES; College Catalog; CRC graduation requirements) (Standard II.A.2.i)

The General Education learning outcomes were developed by a subcommittee of the Curriculum committee. These learning outcomes address critical thinking, information acquisition and analysis, and ethical capacities. There are also discipline-specific GE requirements that address basic content and methodology in broad subject areas. Courses are carefully vetted through the curriculum process for inclusion in the GE pattern. Board policy ensures that Ed Code and Title 5 minimum requirements are met before students are certified as having completed their GE. The curriculum process is entirely faculty driven. (Evidence used: Graduation Requirements) (Standard II.A.3.a)

To graduate, students must complete graduation competency in reading, written expression, and mathematics and general education requirements in the area of Languages and Rationality and Living Skills. GESLO Area 1 includes knowledge acquisition. The curriculum committee vets all courses to ensure their outcomes are connected with the GESLOs and Title 5 regulation. (Evidence examined: Graduation Requirements, GE SLOs, and Section 55002 of California's Title 5) (Standard II.A.3.b)

The General Education Subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee vets each course included in the GE pattern to ensure that it meets the depth and rigor of a college-level course and fits the criteria for the chosen GE area. Outcomes for "Ethical Capabilities" area of the GESLOs require that students apply ethical reasoning skills within the various GE areas and work toward a personal resolution of ethical issues; show an appreciation of ethical principles as applied to personal and civic choices; realize and apply the responsibility to use knowledge wisely; and will assume civic, political, and social responsibilities locally, nationally and internationally. Students who complete the GE pattern will have successfully completed courses that meet these outcomes. (Evidence examined: GESLOs) (Standard II.A.3.c)

The college offers 104 different degrees (AA, AS, AS-T, AA-T). Each degree includes at least one area of focused study or established interdisciplinary core as well as GE courses as determined by program faculty. Total area units required for a degree range from 18 to 32 units. In addition, an examination of the Core Indicators and the certificate and degree patterns in the catalog demonstrate that CTE programs have competency-based curriculum with practicums and external accreditation as appropriate. These programs report student data as required. (Standard II.A.4)

The team accessed a link provided for the ECE advisory committee, but found a membership list only which did not support the claim that informal feedback from industry advisory committees indicates that the College's students are well prepared for the workforce or transfer. A request for additional support for the claims in the self-evaluation did not result in additional relevant evidence. However, overall the evidence provided demonstrates that the college meets the standard. (Evidence examined: (Core Indicators, Certificates, Degrees, ECE Advisory Committee) (Standard II.A.5)

The college catalog and class schedule offer clear information about courses, programs, and transfer policies. The class schedule is primarily online, with only a few copies printed. Of note in the class schedule is that textbook requirements are one click away from each specific course offering, making it very easy for students to use. The college requires that all syllabi include outcomes and syllabi are collected and reviewed for compliance. Other than in syllabi, course outcomes are only available to students in a single PDF extracted from SOCRA-TES that lists all outcomes. There are no links to outcomes in the class schedule. (Evidence examined: CRC College Catalog, Class Schedule, Cosumnes River College - 2015 Main Course SLOs) (Standard II.A.6)

Board policy and regulation govern transfer of credit and articulation between Los Rios colleges. The self-evaluation notes that while the processes for awarding transfer credit work well, there is insufficient administrative support to maintain the high school articulation agreements; the interview with the college articulation officer indicates that these job duties have now been permanently assigned. (Evidence examined: Los Rios Board Policy P-2216; Los Rios Board Regulation R-2216; CRC College Catalog Los Rios Board Regulation R-7135 (Articulation); High School Articulation Website; CRC Articulation Website) (Standard II.A.6.a)

No programs have been discontinued since 2004. Classes were offered to allow current students to complete the program, but the college stopped offering the introductory class at that time and then phased out the remaining classes as the last students moved through the program. (Evidence examined: Program Discontinuance; Los Rios Board Regulation R-7141; Cosumnes River College Catalog 2006-07, page 179) (Standard II.A.6.b)

The college has processes to ensure it represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently to students, the public, and college personnel. The office of the PIO updates publications and the website. (Evidence examined: *College Matters* Summer/Fall 2015; sampling of Inside CRC and sampling of CRC President's letter, Los Rios Instructional Research Office website; CRC Student Success Internal Reports) (Standard II.A.6.c)

Academic integrity is defined in the catalog and consequences for violation are clearly outlined. The self-study references Board policy and regulation 7000, but in addition to P-7142 and R-7142 on Controversial Issues, P-2441 and R-2441 on Standards of Conduct also directly apply. The college has an honor code which is available to students and faculty. (Evidence examined: Board Policies and Regulations P-7142, R-7142, P-2441, and R-2441; Student Rights and Responsibilities; Academic Integrity Statement; college catalog; Faculty and Staff Resource Guide; Honor Code) (Standard II.A.7)

The statements on professional ethics and the academic freedom policy are clear and easily available. Students have the opportunity to address fairness and objectivity in the classroom through the faculty evaluation process. (Evidence examined: CRC Faculty Statement on Professional Ethics, Academic Freedom Policy; student evaluation forms; Fall 15 flex brochure) (Standard II.A.7.a)

The Academic Integrity Statement and the Academic Honesty Process define plagiarism and cheating and their consequences. The Academic Integrity Committee disseminates information about these policies across the college and cultivates faculty and student support of the values they express. (Evidence examined: Academic Integrity Statement, Honor Code, Vision, Mission and Values Statement, Board Regulation 2441; 2014 end-of-semester report of the Academic Integrity Committee) (Standard II.A.7.b)

In addition to promoting values of academic integrity, the college has made a commitment to the concept of cultural competence. The college has a statement on cultural competence and an active committee that works to reinforce those values through campus activities and initiatives. Themes of cultural competence are woven into the Vision, Mission, and Values statement, and CC is incorporated into the ISLOs.(Evidence examined: Honor Code; definition of Cultural Competence; Cultural Competence and Equity Committee minutes; college wide SLOs) (Standard II.A.7.c)

The College does not offer curricula in foreign locations to students other than U.S. nationals. (Standard II.A.8)

### **Conclusion**

The College meets all elements of Standard II.A except II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.A.6.

### **Recommendation**

In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the College accelerate the completion of the assessment cycle of learning outcomes and achievement rates for all courses, programs, and degrees in all delivery modes and in all locations and that the College identify and communicate the ownership, analysis, use and responsibility to address all outcomes research. (Standards II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.A.6)

**Standard II.B—Student Support Services**  
**Standard II.B – Student Learning Programs and Services**

**General Observations**

Consumes River College serves a diverse population of students in age, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status at two locations. The College provides comprehensive student support services through student services programs at both locations. This includes Admissions and Records, Assessment and Testing, Athletic Academic Support, CalWORKs, Child Development Center, Counseling, Disability Support Programs & Services (DSP&S), Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOP&S)/Cooperative Agency Resources for Education (CARE), Financial Aid, Health, International Student Services, and Internship/Work.

The recently hired Vice President of Student Affairs leads the unit. In addition, the unit has two deans--one overseeing Enrollment Management and the other Counseling. The unit holds bi-monthly meetings of programs heads to keep all members of the unit informed about new initiatives. There are three student leadership groups on campus: the student government, Student Activities, and Student Ambassadors. In interviews with faculty and staff of the unit and with students in the leadership program, all shared their great affinity for Consumes River College and their strong belief that the college provides a supportive and student centered learning environment.

**Findings and Evidence**

The institution assures the quality of student support services and that these services are delivered regardless of location. The college provides comprehensive student support services as is evidenced by the list of support services found in the College catalog. These services are offered on the Elk Grove campus. A tour of the Student Affairs offices at each site was conducted and verified the existence of the support services noted in the College catalog. The campus support services are evaluated regularly to maintain alignment with the campus mission and student outcomes. This is evidenced via the program reviews for all the programs in the Student Services unit, conducted in 2013. In 2014 the campus administered the Community College Survey of Student Engagement to all its students. The results of the survey are used to inform practices and enhance student support services. The college provided a copy its student engagement survey results and in an interview explained how those results were used in program reviews. (Standard II.B.1)

The institution provides a catalog for its constituencies, with precise, accurate, and current information. The college prints a catalog every year. Both printed and electronic versions are available. Information required by this standard can be found in the college catalog. The College provided a copy of its catalog and a web-link to the online version of the catalog as evidence of meeting this standard. (Standard II.B.2.a-d)

The institution researches and identifies the learning support needs of its student population and provides appropriate services and programs to address those needs. The college administered the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, and uses this data to inform its

practices. The college also regularly reports on student success and publishes regular research briefs covering a wide variety of topics including those related to student success. Electronic versions of these reports were provided for review as evidence that the college meets this standard; the reports have been published every semester since spring 2007. (Standard II.B.3)

The institution assures equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students regardless of service location or delivery method. The college provides face-to-face instruction at two locations: the main campus and the Elk Grove campus. For students in online classes, online orientation, counseling via email, and comprehensive library services are offered. Curricular standards for distance education are the same as for face-to-face instruction. (Standards II.A.1, II.B.3)

The college provides a Steps to Success enrollment program for all new students. This linear process walks students through the application process, all the way to the registration process, and finally to payment. There is also an online orientation. Once a student is accepted the College sends out a Student Services Guide that lists the student support services available to all students and provides contact information for each program. The team reviewed a sample email and printed letter that were sent to students detailing the Steps to Success. The team interviewed two students who spoke about the effectiveness of the Steps to Success program and during the teams campus tour, the team observed that services were being offered and coordinated by the Student Access office. (Standard II.B.3.a)

The institution provides an environment that encourages personal and civic responsibility, as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development for all of its students. The college provided an extensive list of extracurricular activities offered on an off campus. In addition, in support of its efforts to meet this substandard, the college provided a sample of the CRC Green Scene newsletter that demonstrated via student written stories and pictures the College's efforts to provide an education that promotes civic and cultural engagement. In an interview conducted with the college's student government the group spoke about the events they had coordinated since the start of the school year. The interview, sample of the Green newsletter, and a listing of extracurricular activities demonstrate the college is meeting this standard. (Standard II.B.3.b)

The team confirmed that the College designs, maintains, and evaluates counseling and academic advising programs to support student development and success and prepares faculty and other personnel responsible for the advising function. The College maintains a robust counseling and academic advising program. The college has 14 counselors who all have advanced degrees. Each counselor serves as a liaison to a program, and counseling services are integrated across the campus. The College provided a document that listed the units to which each counselor was assigned. The College provides counseling staff with appropriate training and professional development to constantly improve the delivery of counseling services on campus. The College provided a list of professional development opportunities and an evaluation of one of the events as evidence. Counselors are peer reviewed. The college provided a sample of a Peer Review assessment that is conducted by two faculty peers and their respective Dean. In addition, the college provided an example of a compilation of student

evaluations of counseling services and then demonstrated how this information was embedded in the counseling program review; evidenced by the actual counseling PrOF. (Standard II.B.3.c)

The College designs and maintains appropriate programs, practices, and services that support and enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity. The college has established the Cultural Competence and Equity Committee that is tasked with development and implementation of practices to support cultural engagement. The college has staged many events to encourage greater understanding of diversity. In a student perception survey the respondents reported that the college contributed to their understanding to diversity and tolerance of differences. A copy of the perception survey was provided in the College's self-evaluation. Committee minutes from November 2014 to July 2015 document that it is meeting and effectively implementing equity programming at the college. The college meets this substandard. (Standard II.B.3.d)

The College regularly evaluates admissions and placement instruments and practices to validate their effectiveness while minimizing biases. CRC employs deliberate practices to maintain validation standards while reducing test bias. The Institutional Research Office conducts placement instrument validation studies every six years. The studies include content validity, consequential validity, and criterion validity, cut scores, bias and disproportionate impact. Select faculty with content expertise examines the respective assessment instruments at the midpoint of each validation cycle to identify bias or potential cultural misunderstanding issues. Biased questions are removed from the tests and reported to the publisher. The college provided a copy of the 2014 validation study for the Compass test. In addition, the college provided a document that detailed the timeline for the validation of the Compass test as it relates to English and math placement. (Standard II.B.3.e)

The College maintains student records permanently, securely, and confidentially, with provision for secure backup of all files, regardless of the form in which those files are maintained. The College publishes and follows established policies for release of student records. The college complies with the Los Rios Community College District's record retention and disposal policy, which conforms to federal guidelines. In addition the college uses electronic backup of records that are encrypted to protect from hackers. The college has a process in place to deal with suspected or actual data breaches. The college produced an internal audit report that demonstrates it is in compliance with district record policies regarding record retention and disposal. In addition the college provided a demonstration of the electronic record backup system, and lastly the college produced a checklist used to deal with suspected or actual data breaches. (Standard II.B.3.f)

The College evaluates student support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. Evaluation of these services provides evidence that they contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes. The College uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement. All student services programs complete a formal PrOF Evaluation that includes Service Learning Outcomes. These reviews serve to evaluate the current services and identify needs; each unit then develops a plan to prioritize needs that is forwarded for resource allocation consideration. The college provided significant evidence on

how they used student and faculty feedback to improve student support services at the college. The College provided a demonstration on how the PrOFs were compiled, and shared a recently completed PrOF (2015) and an old PrOF (2012) as evidence it is using data to improve success services to students. (Standard II.B.4)

**Conclusions**

The College meets all elements of Standard II.B.

## Standard II.C – Library and Learning Support Services

### General Observations

The team confirmed that librarians have primary responsibility for library collection development and selection and maintenance of library equipment. All faculty members are able to request library materials to be added to the collection. Librarians consult with discipline faculty to identify areas of high interest and demand. CRC librarians work with other Los Rios College District librarians in the development of a shared eBook collection and selection of electronic databases. Librarians analyze data from circulation, interlibrary loan requests, and “Age of Collection” reports in order to maintain a highly relevant collection.

The Library’s mission is focused on providing students with the skills and knowledge necessary for them to locate, evaluate and use information effectively. To this end, librarians have developed a 1-unit information competency course, discipline-specific library research guides, online tutorial videos and class-specific workshops. Except for the workshops, these resources are available onsite, online and in print. Librarians also provide one-on-one research consultations by appointment and point-of-need information competency instruction at the Library Reference Desk. Other learning support services consist mainly of tutoring for discipline-specific instructional support and indirectly provide support for the development of information literacy competencies.

### Findings and Evidence

The team reviewed the *Library Collection Development Policy* (CDP) and confirmed that it is a well-developed comprehensive collection development tool that specifies the criteria used to select and de-select items from the collection and the processes for various collection development tasks, such as weeding, evaluation of materials, etc. The CDP articulates the degree to which discipline faculty participate in collection development, such as by requesting needed titles, consulting with librarians, and recommending removal of obsolete items. The team reviewed the *LRCCD Libraries Electronic Collection Development Policy* which was drafted by District librarians and last revised in March 2015. This online resource is used by all the libraries in the District, and it covers all aspects of collection development pertaining to eBooks and non-monographic resources, including Internet documents, sites that supplement print sources, curated web sites, free searchable databases, subscription databases, and Internet periodicals. Selection of electronic resources, such as eBooks and electronic subscriptions databases, is primarily a collaborative activity as librarians from all four District colleges work together to create a shared collection of e-resources. (Standards II.C.1, II.C.1.a)

The team affirms that the College relies primarily on appropriate expertise of faculty, including librarians, discipline faculty members and other learning support services professionals, in the selection and maintenance of educational equipment and materials to support student learning and enhance the achievement of the mission of the College. (Standard II.C.1.a)



The team observed that the Library provides many opportunities for users of the library to develop skills in information competency. Data supplied in the *Tutorial Use Statistics* document indicate that approximately 1,450 online tutorials are completed each year. The *Library Instruction Statistics* document indicates that 3,578 students took part in class-specific research instruction sessions. The number of students who successfully completed LIBR 318 is not given nor is the number of instructional reference interactions shown. Although data collected in the *2014 Accreditation Survey Analysis, Faculty Feedback Regarding Library Instruction and 2010 Student Survey* indicate a high degree of satisfaction with library instruction, data on the efficacy of the instruction has not been collected yet. The Library collects assessment data for online tutorials to measure the degree to which students have mastered a particular element of information literacy. This data is used for planning purposes and for the SLO assessment cycle. (Standard II.C.1.b)

The Library has a physical and an online presence which serves all CRC students and faculty. Tutoring services are distributed around the campus and individual tutoring centers are managed by different Deans. A team member found that in some cases the standards of service are not uniform at the various tutoring locations on campus and the allocation of fiscal resources for the Centers is not equitable. One team member also found that students appear to be confused by the names of the various learning support services and this confusion sometimes creates problems for students; for example, a student who goes to the Tutoring Center for math support, but is then directed to the Math Tutoring Center. In this case the Math Tutoring Center provides students with the necessary tutoring so the student can earn class credit for their attendance. (Standard II.C.1.c)

During fall and spring semesters, the library is open 64.5 hours per week. Each tutoring lab has different operating hours that meet the needs of students using that center. Information about open hours, location, and available resources and services is easily found in the College Catalog and on the College website. The new Elk Grove Center is served by both library staff (inter-library loan and reference) and tutorial staff (tutoring by appointment and drop-in hours). In addition, students and faculty have access to online library resources and Tutor.com from computers available for this purpose. The team found that College instituted a subscription to Tutor.com during the 2013-2014 year. This resource was made available primarily to provide access to tutoring services for distance education students. (Standard II.C.1.c)

While the Library's physical and electronic resources are adequate, the human resources are not. During the financial recession (2008-2012), the Library lost two full-time librarian positions; one position was replaced in 2013, but the other is still vacant. Team members interviewed several librarians who indicated that with the anticipated growth of the Elk Grove Center and Distance Education and the still vacant librarian position, the need for at least one additional librarian is becoming critical. The cadre of four full-time librarians have taken on additional duties while student and faculty demand for services continues to grow. (Standard II.C.1.a)

Maintenance for the Library and the learning support centers is a shared responsibility between the District and the College. The District Facilities Management Department is re-

sponsible for building maintenance, including the environmental control system; College Custodial Services perform daily cleaning and maintenance. District IT staff maintain all computer lab hardware, software, network resources, printers, and network security; College IT staff address unexpected computer hardware, software, network, or printer issues. Routine cleaning of computer and multimedia equipment is performed by library student workers. The District supports the hardware and network support for the library management system which is shared by all colleges in the District; Library staff and College IT provide support and maintenance for local issues and problems. (Standard II.C.1.d)

Facility security is provided by campus police officers, who patrol the Library on a regular basis and respond to calls for assistance. In addition, the Library has an upgraded video surveillance system and a 3M theft detection gate to reduce theft, vandalism, and violence in the Library. (Standard II.C.1.d)

Evaluation team interviews with the faculty coordinator of the Tutoring Center revealed that tutoring support services are adequate, but the distributed nature of the services, lack of unified leadership, disparate funding, and overlapping discipline support sometimes results in confusion and frustration for many students. (Standard II.C.1.a-c)

The team reviewed the Library web pages and confirms that the College adequately supports distance education students with online access to electronic eBooks and periodicals; with email and telephone reference support; and with online information literacy tutorial videos. (Standard II.C.1.)

The team toured the Elk Grove Center and confirmed that adequate library and learning support services are available to students and faculty. The current space available for these services was designed to accommodate growth as the student body expands. Discussions with the Learning Resources and Educational Technology Dean confirmed that librarians and tutors are coming from the main campus on a regular basis and their absence puts a strain on services at the main campus. The Library, in particular, would benefit greatly with the addition of a full-time librarian. The team suggests, based on evidence and interviews with college personnel, that the college consider adding a full-time Librarian to lessen the strain on the main campus when the current Librarian's time is split between the Elk Grove Center and the main campus. (Standard II.C.1.c)

Development of library and other learning support services is informed by data collected from discipline-faculty, student surveys, and government, and other external mandates. This Effectiveness of the services is also gleaned from student surveys and faculty input about learning support resources and services that are selected and maintained by faculty coordinators and student services personnel. With the purchase of the new tutoring software, the College is in the process of compiling and evaluating usage statistics and user satisfaction data. At the time of the team's visit this data had not been compiled for evaluation. However, the team recognized that the College was taking action to compile the data it is collecting. (Standards II.C.1.a, II.C.1.c)

The team confirmed that the College evaluates library and other learning support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified needs. For example, a review of the results from the *2014 Accreditation Survey* for the library determined that 69 percent of faculty members are satisfied with the degree to which faculty participate in library collection development. Nevertheless, since faculty input is essential to maintaining a collection that supports student achievement of learning outcomes, development of a means to regularly and systematically gather input from all faculty members should be explored. The team could not confirm that services are evaluated on a regular basis. The team found that the College has strong relationships with other college libraries, especially the colleges in the Los Rios Community College District. Formal agreements exist and the resources and services are adequate for the College's intended purposes. The team confirmed that the College Librarians initiated a comprehensive evaluation of the current library system which has resulted in their recommending changes to the LRCCD Library Information system. (Standards II.C.1.b, II.C.2, II.C.1.e)

During a tour of the Library and tutoring centers, the team observed that building maintenance and security for the library and other learning support services were in place. The team confirmed during an interview with the Dean of Learning Resources and Technology that the installation of new surveillance cameras has improved security in the newly installed study rooms and the Library in general. The 2014 Accreditation Survey results indicate that students and faculty are satisfied with the level of maintenance and security in the Library. (Standard II.C.1.d).

The College meets all elements of Standard II.C except II.C.2.

**Standard III—Resources**  
**Standard III. A. Human Resources**

**General Observations**

The team confirmed that the Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD) has Board Policies, and procedures in place, and one can find those policies on the LRCCD website. The College adheres to these policies and procedures. As an example, there are procedures in place for hiring personnel, and job announcements are available in the Human Resources website. The team confirmed that personnel employed at the College have the proper credentials for their positions. The College has performance evaluation procedures in place. For faculty evaluations the performance evaluation includes a statement of participation in student learning outcomes. Board policies are revised and updated regularly. (Standards III.A.1.a, III.A.1.b, III.A.1.c)

The College has a robust professional development program to help employees maintain the currency and quality of their assignments. Professional development activities include but are not limited to workshops, colloquia, seminars, and institutes. The Academic Senate and Classified Senate participate in the planning and in the execution of professional development opportunities offered at the college. Professional development activities are assessed and the results from these assessments are used to improve future professional development offerings. (Standards III.A.2, III.a.5, III.A.5.a, III.A.5.b)

Team members confirmed that the vehicle for the integration of human resources planning an institutional planning is the Program Review (PrOF). For example, the leadership of the Academic Senate confirmed that for faculty selection, the process involves discussions starting at the department level with input from department chairs as the final selection of positions to be filled are made. (Standard III.A.6)

**Findings and Evidence**

The team found that the 2014-2015 College catalog, lists faculty members with their credentials and includes College administrators and all administrative staff. The team reviewed a sample of job announcements posted on the District Human Resources website and found that job postings comply with Title 5 best practices, and application are submitted online. Selection/hiring committees include majority faculty or majority administrators according to the appropriate position. The team was able to review and confirm that the Equity Handbook gives very detailed information about hiring regulations and procedures, including compositions of committees, and interview guidelines. Hiring criteria are developed by discipline experts and include evidence of knowledge in the subject matter or area of service, training and experience in modes of teaching delivery, effective teaching, and potential to contribute to the mission of the College. A review of a sampling of interview questions for a full-time biology and a full-time Math position, and conversations with the Academic Senate president, the academic senate vice president, and the Dean of Equity and Research confirms statements in the College's self-evaluation. Members of hiring committees are required to undergo diversity training before serving in a committee.

Team members were able to review records of the most recent Equity training program. The Dean of Equity and Research indicated that staff in her area also conducts climate surveys on different topics. Some recent surveys address issues related to age perception and perceptions on veterans on campus, and other climate surveys are in the planning stages. Equity training may be done for a group of faculty, administration, and classified, or sometimes with only classified personnel depending on time when the training takes place. Classified personnel and academic faculty leadership confirmed that they work very closely in cultivating close relationships and team building as they participate in professional development activities. The team confirmed that recruitment for classified positions is done in the geographical area served by the College, and according to the Equity Handbook. The College President and Vice President develop the description of classified positions. The team reviewed listings for faculty, classified, and administrative jobs advertised on the LRCCD Human Resources website. Staffing for the Elk Grove Center follows the same guidelines as staffing for main campus. The team learned, during an interview with the Dean of the Elk Grove Center, that many full-and part-time faculty teach a split load between the Elk Grove Center and the main campus. The team found that the College has a core of full time faculty members with full-time duties including curriculum review, assessment of learning outcomes and other faculty responsibilities. (Standards III.A.1.a, III.A.2, III.A.3)

The team found that formal evaluation procedures for all personnel are in place. After the evaluation is complete, if improvements are needed, there is a process to establish specific improvement goals for the evaluatee. During interviews with the Classified Senate President, Vice President, and Secretary they expressed satisfaction with the current evaluation process. One of the classified staff indicated that whenever there have been issues the situation was solved by discussion and clarification of the particular issue. The Classified Senate contract and the faculty contract contain policies and processes for performance evaluations. After a review of the appropriate faculty and classified contracts the team confirmed that administrators and peer evaluators are responsible for the completion of faculty performance evaluations. The specific steps of the performance evaluation process are described in Appendix E of the faculty contract. Their immediate supervisors evaluate classified personnel and LRCCD Board Policy 9141 describes the management evaluation process. Human Resources distribute a list of personnel scheduled for evaluations each year. The team reviewed documents to confirm the schedule of evaluations for College personnel. (Standards III.A.1.b, III.A.3.a, III.A.4.b)

Team interviews with faculty confirmed that the performance evaluation process is similar for faculty teaching Distance and regular classes. Assessment of learning outcomes is integrated in the performance evaluation process as part of the faculty members "Professional Responsibilities." Team members reviewed a sample of recent faculty evaluations and the above assertion is confirmed. Faculty members (academic senate leaders, ESL faculty, theater faculty, and Geography faculty) confirmed they have also included a statement of participation in student learning outcomes in their respective self-evaluation. (Standard III.A.1.c)

The team reviewed LRCCD Board Policies 3100, and 7100 to determine that the District has an established code of ethics policy.

The Academic Senate leadership confirmed that needed faculty positions are identified in department's Program Review (PRoF). Identified positions are discussed at the division level, with input from department chairs, and administrators, before positions to be filled are sent to the District level. The academic senate leadership felt the process of faculty selection was open and transparent. The department chairs add information the senate leadership may not know, and that is needed to improve faculty needs and prioritization. (Standard III.A.6)

The District has in place mechanisms to revise and update personnel policies and procedures. Revisions or updates may be started by any constituent group or due to legislative changes. Minutes from recent LRCCD Board meetings, and a review of a few existing board policies and procedures confirmed recent policy discussions that have taken place during Board meetings. Additionally, the Vice President stated that procedures are sometimes used to revise and align policies, when the College practice is different than the stated policy. In these instances, the revised policy is reviewed by District counsel and discussed at the District level. The team also reviewed the following documents; Policy adoption, 1978, revisions 79, 81, 82, 90, 92, 94, 98, 03, 12. Policy 9300, Employer Management/Confidential Employee Relations. Admin Regulation Adopted 78. Revised in 81, 82, and 98. Access to Student Records, confidentiality, FERPA, revisions 80, 82, and 96 District policy 9100, and Employment Procedures. The policies and procedures are clearly worded. (Standard III.A.3)

A review of the Los Rios Community College District Equal Employment Opportunity Plan, approved by the Los Rios Community College District Board of Trustees in June 2013, confirmed that the District and Cosumnes River College have a diverse workforce. Conversations with the vice president of the Academic Senate confirmed that the College and District recruitment and hiring policies emphasize equity and diversity. The College has a schedule of equity and diversity trainings, and employees are reminded of upcoming trainings. The team interviewed representatives from the Professional Development and CASSL committees, and confirmed that collaboration exists in the planning of professional development activities that support equity and diversity on campus. A program of workshops and other activities is published under the title "Connecting our Community." Workshop activities include CMS Boot camp, Student Success workshops, Teaching and Learning Effectiveness, Cultural Competence, as well as issues related to Distance Education, and health related issues. Additional evidence reviewed included a letter dated February 10, 2015 from the Director of Human Resources and Employee Relations. The letter stated that "following title 5 Regulations, the LRCCD EEO Plan requires "all employees who participate on screening or selection committees or who are involved in recruitment efforts receive appropriate training." Los Rios Community College District Equal Employment Opportunity Plan, approved by LRCCD Board of Trustees in June 2013. (Standards III.A.4, III.A.4.a)

The team confirmed, through a review of Faculty and Staff Demographic Reports, that the College strives to foster diversity in hiring all employees. Administrators, faculty senate leaders, and classified staff interviewed agree that diversity and equity are priorities of the college. (Standard III.A.4.b)

The College provides all personnel with appropriate opportunities for continued professional development, consistent with the institutional mission and based on identified teaching and learning needs. The College offers ongoing opportunities for professional development, which are planned by the Professional Development Committee (PDC) and the Center for the Advancement of Staff and Student Learning (CASSL). The College has a three-year Professional development strategic plan and professional development activities include workshops on a variety of topics, seminars, institutes, colloquia, technology training, and others listed in Connections. CRC has a robust program of professional development opportunities for its employees. (Standards III.A.5, III.A.5.a)

Human resource planning is integrated with institutional planning. The team confirmed that the vehicle for the integration of human resources planning an institutional planning is the Program Review (PrOF). The Academic Senate president, vice president, and the Dean of Kinesiology, confirmed that PrOF is used to identify human resource' needs. (Standard III.A.6)

### **Conclusions**

The team met with the Dean of Research and Equity the Classified and Academic Senate leadership, the VP of Student Services, representatives from the CASSL and Professional Development committees, the LODS and SLO committees, and other staff members of the College. In addition, team members reviewed the college catalog, pages of documentation provided by representatives from several college constituencies, and contracts for classified staff and faculty, in addition to appropriate district policies and procedures.

The College meets all elements of Standard III.A.

## **Standard III.B—Physical Resources**

### **General Observations:**

Cosumnes River College was established in 1970. The college is an open admission comprehensive community college located in South Sacramento, California on 159-acre site. In addition to its main campus, the college opened a permanent educational center on 13 acres in Elk Grove, California in the fall of 2013. The Team found that CRC provides a safe, secure physical plant, at both the main campus and the Elk Grove Center to support student learning

The College's Facilities Master Plan was adopted in 2004 and updated in 2010. The Plan runs through 2015. The Master Plan has been funded through two separate Bond Measures. Measure A, approved on March 5, 2002 in the amount of \$265 million and Measure M, approved on November 4, 2008 in the amount of \$475 million. As a result of the voter approved bond measures, the college has constructed several new campus facilities, modernized existing facilities and added the Elk Grove Educational Center. At time of the visit, the college had completed a majority of the construction projects and renovations identified in the facilities Master Plan.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The team found that the College's Self-Evaluation Report and supporting evidence reveal links to facilities planning, the educational master plan and the total costs necessary for the operation, maintenance, and equipment of its new facilities. College building designs are reviewed and approved by the Department of State Architecture to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, seismic standards, and fire safety for every building. Evidence was found that indicates the College has planned for the total ownership for its new facilities. The District has a base allocation model to support existing and new facilities. The team found that the District works closely with College staff on a funding formula for physical resources and they periodically review staffing levels. (Standards III.B.1.a-b, II.B.2.a)

The District submits and annual Five Year Capital Improvement Plan, which includes capacity load ratios to determine sufficiency of instructional and support space. Facility elements include classrooms, skills labs, computer labs, a library resource center, student support services, and clerical and administrative offices. These elements align with instructional and program needs and services. The team met with members of the college's Health and Facilities Committee, Union Leadership, Vice President of Administrative Services and the Director of Administrative Services to confirm that the College has designed a facilities program to insure trainings for staff on health and safety issues that comply with all local, State and Federal guidelines. (Standard III.B.1.b)

The team confirmed that the main campus and the Elk Grove Center have onsite law enforcement and security services which are provided by the Los Rios Police Department. The LRPD is staffed with POST-certified college police officers, campus patrols, dis-



patchers, clerks, and student assistants under the direction of a Police Chief. On campus (Standard III.B.2.a)

**Conclusion:**

The team observed that College facilities and equipment adequately support the College's learning programs and services. This was verified after team meetings with the President and the President's Cabinet, Campus Union Leadership, and conversations with students, staff and faculty. The campus and its equipment provide students with access especially when reasonable accommodations for physical disability is required. The campus is safe and secure. The team found evidence that clearly links facilities planning to institutional planning. The additional new facilities and modernizations of the campus has clearly enhanced the quality and quantity of College physical resources and allowed various programs to enhance offerings and provide students with additional education opportunities.

The College meets all elements of Standard III.B.

## **Standard III.C—Resources**

### **Standard III.C: Technology Resources**

#### **General Observations**

The College adequately provides technology support to allow it to fulfill its mission: learning resources, teaching, communications, operations, and research. The College provides quality training to all constituencies: faculty staff, and students. The College has a systematic plan for acquiring, maintaining, upgrading, and replacing technology. The distribution and utilization of the College's resources support the development, maintenance and enhancements of its programs and services. The College systematically assesses the effective use of technology resources and uses the assessment as a basis for improvement.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

The College's needs are identified through the Program Review and the Strategic Planning process. The District Office Information Technology Department provides approximately 400 servers for support of the network infrastructure. The College provides over 1,200 computers for student learning; approximately 30 percent are set up and available for student use in various buildings and centers on the main campus, and at the Elk Grove Center. Technology supports Distance Education, Administrative and Student services, DSP&S, and all other learning programs. According to the recent *CRC Accreditation Survey*, 81.7 percent of the respondents agreed that their present computer was sufficient a 10.7 percent increase over 2008. Although the College acknowledges room for improvement, the team could not validate evidence of documented discussion of plans to further improve. (Standard III.C.1.a)

The College switched from Blackboard to Desire to Learn (D2L) as its Learning Management System (LMS). The change received favorable reviews from students (*Distance Education Student Satisfaction Survey*) and faculty and data reviewed by the team appears to have raised overall averages for the students. The State Online Initiative has adopted Canvas as the statewide LMS. During interviews with the Dean of Learning Resources and Technology, and the DE Coordinator they indicated that are recommending that the College adopt Canvas as their LMS. (Standard III.C.1.a)

The team confirmed that training needs for technology are identified after reviewing input to the District Help Desk, District student and staff surveys, participatory governance committee minutes, personnel requests, workshop evaluation forms, advisory committee input, program reviews, and professional development requests. In addition, the Library provides tutorial videos and there is one-on-one instruction in the various Instructional Labs. DSP&S maintains the High Tech Center where students are instructed on the use of adaptive technology and computer-related assignments. Employees are trained on whatever technology they are required to use. A primary methodology of training for employees is train-the-trainer. There are also flexible calendar workshops. (*CRC Website: Library; High Tech Center*) According to the DE Coordinator, the College does not require faculty who teach online to complete any training prior to their teaching an online class. However, training is suggested. The team suggests that without the requirement for mandatory training prior to an instructor teaching an online class; the quality of education might suffer. As a check, the College might

consider an assessment of outcomes for those instructors who received training and those who did not. (*Interview with DE Coordinator, October 6, 2015*) (Standard III.C.1.b)

As part of the College's planning process, the College coordinates with the District to determine the allocation of technology resources. The College has a PC Renewal Plan that covers the two-year planning cycle. However, the College does not maintain current status, nor does the College document when actions are taken with regard to the Plan. Based on information gleaned from the PC Renewal Plan, the College should seriously consider making the Technology Planning a priority; commencing with the Strategic Planning Process. (Standard III.C.1.c)

The College's programs and services are developed, maintained, through a distribution and utilization of technology. The College uses the program review process as well as unit planning processes to evaluate and prioritize technology needs. The CRC IT program review and unit plan encompass College wide resources such as the campus network. Decisions regarding the use and distribution of technology resources are made in the DEIT Committee and through the Technology and Multimedia Budget (ITMB) and Capital Outlay Budget (COB) budget processes. The College's technology decisions are based on needs identified through department program review and division unit planning processes. After assessment and prioritization by the participatory governance constituencies, they are matched with program review. The results of the CRC 2014 Accreditation Survey show that from 2008 to 2014, there was more than a 10 percent increase in the number of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed that "the computer in my office is sufficient" and "the computer systems that support classroom instruction are sufficient." (Standards III.C.1.d, III.C.2)

### **Conclusions**

The College meets all elements of Standard III.C except III.C.2.

### **Recommendation**

While the team recognizes the progress the College has made since 2009 in developing the tools to conduct outcomes assessment, program review, and integrated planning, in order to improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that the College establish, implement, and document a regular and systematic cycle of evaluation of the effectiveness of all processes including planning, training, decision-making, communication, resource allocation, and governance practices. (Standard III.C.2)

**Standard III.D - Resources**  
**Standard III.D – Financial Resources**

**General Observations**

Cosumnes River College has a well-established history of effective financial planning, resulting in long-term fiscal stability. The College's clean 2014 audit is testament to this fact. The College budget for fiscal year 2015 is nearly \$43 million, which included sufficient resources to meet both the fundamental requirements of programs and services as well as support for strategic improvement initiatives. For decades, the District has allocated resources received from the state to meet the salary and benefit costs and District and College operational costs based on formulas approved by collective bargaining units as specified in the Collective Bargaining Agreements and the District's Budget Committee, a participatory governance group. The formulas provide an efficient way to equitably distribute resources in a large District, resulting in long-term fiscal stability and effective resource management.

To develop the budget, the College uses an integrated planning and resource allocation system based upon Program Overview and Forecast (PrOF). The steps in this system serve to identify needs, prioritize solutions, and allocate resources to maximize institutional improvement. The College's budget process is shepherded by the campus Budget committee a participatory governance group. The group is comprised of administrators, faculty, classified staff, and students.

**Findings and Evidence**

The College's mission and goals are the foundation for financial planning and financial planning is integrated with and supports all institutional planning. The college has developed a budgeting process that has evolved over time that provides for long-term planning that ensures availability of resources to meet the College's educational objectives. The college aligns its financial planning with the district and campus mission and goals. The College's resource allocation is directly linked to its institutional planning process. Financial resources are allocated based on department program reviews and division unit plans. The College provided Budget committee minutes from 2007 to 2015 that document how the college's budget was aligned to the College's mission and that the budget supports institutional planning. (Standards III.D.1, III.D.1.a)

Institutional planning reflects a realistic assessment of financial resources availability, development of financial resources, partnerships, and expenditure requirements. The District and College allocation formulas allow conservative and flexibility in planning for the future and ensure that expenditures are not made before actual revenues have been received. The College's conservative fiscal practices have proven to be flexible and adaptable enough to meet operational requirements during times of economic volatility. To address this volatility the college utilized \$26 million of reserves to make up for the funding cuts. The College provided a copy of their 2014 Annual budget report that detailed the process the district and College uses to assess its financial resources to plan the College budget. (Standard III.D.1.b)

When making short-range financial plans, the College considers its long-range financial priorities to assure financial stability. The College clearly identifies, plans, and allocates resources for payment of liabilities and future obligations. The LRCCD Adopted Budget and Annual Financial statements demonstrate that the District annually allocates resources to fund long-term financial obligations. In addition the College sets aside funds for increasing costs in retiree benefits and other ongoing costs. The College provided a copy of the last 3 Annual Financial statements as evidence it is meeting this standard. (Standard III.D.1.c)

The College clearly defines and follows its guidelines and processes for financial planning and budget development, with all constituencies having appropriate opportunities to participate in the development of institutional plans and budget. The College publishes its Adopted Budget annually, included with this publication is a comprehensive overview of the College's budget. The College provided a copy of their 2014 Annual Budget publication. The Association of School Business Officials recognized the College's budget process as exemplary in 2008. Four participatory governance committees have a direct role in the College resource allocation process. The groups are comprised of membership from all constituency groups. The College's Budget Committee meets every month to review budget allocations and makes recommendations to the President for implementation. A copy of the Budget Committee minutes for 2014 was provided as evidence to document this process. The existence of the participatory governance groups was verified via interviews of faculty, classified staff, and student government. Interviewees felt that the participatory process allowed their voices and the voices of their constituencies to be heard. (Standard III.D.1.d)

To assure the financial integrity of the College and responsible use of financial resources, the financial management system has appropriate control mechanisms and widely disseminates dependable and timely information for sound financial decision-making. Financial documents, including the budget and independent audit have a high degree of credibility and accuracy and reflect appropriate allocation and use of financial resources to support student learning programs and services. The Independent Auditor's Report for the year ended 2014 did not identify any findings. This fact demonstrates the college's budget has a high degree of credibility. The fact that the budget is aligned to campus program review demonstrates it supports student learning and student support services. The College provided audit documents for review for the last two years. (Standards III.D.2, III.D.2.a)

Institutional responses to external audit findings are comprehensive, timely, and communicated appropriately. The College did not have any audit findings for the 2014 audit and the college implemented its strategy to address the finding from the previous audit report. The clean audit and its timely response to the one recommendation from the previous year demonstrate the College's ability to respond to audit findings in a timely manner. A copy of the 2014 audit report was used as evidence to demonstrate the College's compliance to this substandard. (Standard III.D.2.b)

Appropriate financial information is provided throughout the College in a timely manner. The College utilizes PeopleSoft to provide access and accurate information about the campus budget. The Business office has the ability to query the system to get up to the minute information regarding payments. This information is provided to campus users via an external

web version that allows users to view timely budget and expenditure information on its accounts, purchase orders, and payments. The VP for Administrative Affairs provides regular workshops to train staff on the use of PeopleSoft. A flyer for a budget workshop was submitted as evidence to demonstrate professional development is being conducted at the College. In addition the VP has created a standard operating procedure for common business offices processes. The VP provided a copy of the SOP for common business office processes. The College provided a demonstration of the PeopleSoft software that demonstrated its ability to help provide information about the budget process throughout the college. (Standard III.D.2.c)

All financial resources, including short- and long-term debt instruments (such as bonds and Certificates of Participation), auxiliary activities, fundraising efforts, and grants, are used with integrity in a manner consistent with the intended purpose of the funding source. Historically, annual independent audit reports reveal minimal findings that are corrected in a timely manner. A review of the College's last three Audit reports is evidence of this fact. Similarly, the General Obligation audit revealed the District expended all bond funds in accordance with State regulations. The College provided a copy of its recent General Obligation audit findings as evidence that it meets this requirement. (Standard III.D.2.d)

The College's internal control systems are evaluated and assessed for validity and effectiveness and the results of this assessment are used for improvement. A historical review of the College's audit findings demonstrates that the college has maintained a good system of internal controls over its financial resources. A copy of the College's 2014 Audit report is evidence of its strong budget internal control systems. (Standard III.D.2.e)

The institution has policies and procedures to ensure sound financial practices and financial stability. The institution has sufficient cash flow and reserves to maintain stability, strategies for appropriate risk management, and develops contingency plans to meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences. The College maintains sufficient cash flow and reserves, maintains a self-insurance fund to meet all current and anticipated obligations. The College provided a copy of their self-insurance policy issued by the District office and a sample of 3 cash flow reports from 2015 demonstrating their strong financial position. (Standards III.D.3, III. D.3.a)

The institution practices effective oversight of finances, including management of financial aid, grants, externally funded programs, contractual relationships, auxiliary organizations or foundations, and institutional investments and assets. The College's clean financial audit demonstrates its compliance with State and Federal financial policies. In addition the college follows a rigorous protocol to review and monitor special programs and contracts. Investments are monitored for compliance by experienced management investment consultants that are monitored regularly by the Board of Trustees. The College provided a copy of a RFQ it used to solicit managers for their investments. The high standards of the RFQ make it likely that the College selects a highly qualified consultant for their investment funds. A copy of the College's last three Audit reports (2012, 2013, and 2014) also demonstrate their effective management of the College's budget. (Standard III.D.3.b)

The institution plans for and allocates appropriate resources for the payment of liabilities and future obligations, including Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB), compensated absences, and other employee related obligations. The College's 2014 audit report demonstrates they are currently overfunded for its OPEB and is fully funded for compensated absences. A copy of the College's 2014 audit was reviewed to verify the College is in compliance with this standard. (Standard III.D.3.c)

The actuarial plan to determine Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) is prepared, as required by appropriate accounting standards. The College's Actuarial plan is provided in the College's recently completed audit. The report demonstrates the College is in a strong position to meet its financial obligations in the future. A copy of the College's 2014 Audit report demonstrates the College meets this substandard. (Standard III.D.3.d)

On an annual basis, the College assesses and allocates resources for the repayment of any locally incurred debt instruments that can affect the financial condition of the institution. The team reviewed a copy of the 2013-14 Los Rios Community College District's Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee Report which revealed that the college is well below its overall bonding capacity. (Standard III.D.3.e)

The team determined that the College monitors and manages student loan default rates, revenue streams, and assets to ensure compliance with federal requirements. The College's financial aid default rate is within federal guidelines. In addition the college has developed prevention measures to assure that these default rates remain below the 30 percent threshold. The College provided a copy of their financial aid default rates from the USDOE for the last 3 years. Interviews with the financial aid staff provided evidence that their office is implementing intervention strategies to curb financial aid loan default. (Standard III.D.3.f)

Contractual agreements with external entities are consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, governed by the institutional policies, and contain appropriate provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution. External contractual agreements go through a thorough review process prior to approval to be sure that it is aligned with campus goals. The College provided a copy of a successful grant application. The cover sheet is evidence that the agreement was vetted by staff, the respective Dean and VP, financially reviewed, and lastly approved by the President. (Standard III.D.3.g)

The College regularly evaluates its financial management practices and the results of the evaluation are used to improve internal control structures. The College regularly evaluates its financial management practices and the results of the evaluation are used to improve internal controls. The College provided a copy of their clean audit as demonstration of their use of evaluation to improve internal controls. In addition copies of the College's past 3 audits have demonstrated their ability to quickly respond to audit findings by adjusting their processes in a timely manner. (Standard III.D.3.h)

Financial resource planning is integrated with institutional planning. The College systematically assesses the effective use of financial resources and uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement of the College. The College's participatory governance struc-

tures provide for systematic assessment of the College's financial resources. The PrOF structure demonstrates the College's success in using data to develop its financial planning. Interviews with the Participatory groups that help to shape the College's budget provided proof of the College's budget planning process that incorporates the principal of shared governance. (Standard III.D.4)

The College meets all elements of Standard III.D.



**Standard IV—Leadership and Governance**  
**Standard IV.A—Decision-Making Roles and Processes**

**General Observations**

This college has developed a culture and the structure that encourages participation of all constituencies. There are active faculty, classified, and student senates, each in turn represented on an Executive Council, along with a management council representative. Professional Development allocates funds for faculty innovation, and mini-grants are available for faculty-initiated projects to enhance student success. The college has a well-delineated participatory governance structure. Recommendations about student learning programs and services come from administration, faculty, staff, and students. The Participatory Governance Handbook, available online, gives staff and students access to written policies on governance procedures, and specify the academic roles of faculty in areas of student educational programs and services planning. There is an active Classified Senate. The structures are present for effective collaboration. The College Planning Committee reviews the College's Vision, Mission, and Values statement periodically in order to keep it aligned with that of the district. The college has strengthened its organization with regard to planning processes and to clarifying the participatory governance process, both of which were formal recommendations from the previous team.

**Findings and Evidence**

There are a number of innovation success stories listed, with evidence provided in the form of a participatory governance website with links to the constituent committees, committee minutes, and lists of sabbaticals and mini-grants granted since 2012. (Standard IV.A.1)

Board Policy 3411 defines participatory governance for the LRCCD and sets the expectation for the process to be “collaborative goal-setting and problems solving.....” with the various constituencies represented and engaged in the decision-making processes, Board Policy 3412 specifies the role of the Academic Senates relative to academic and professional matters. This policy empowers the college Academic Senate as well as the Districtwide Academic Senate (DAS). The college has a web page dedicated to information on participatory governance. From there one can access a detailed and up-to-date participatory governance handbook, as well as committee information. The participatory governance handbook, which was implemented in April 2015, delineates substantial roles for faculty, administrators, students, and staff. As evidenced by the college web site and committee minutes, in addition to the Curriculum Committee, the institution relies on faculty and academic administrators engaged in the committee structure to oversee programs and services. For example, the Student Success and Support Committee oversees student support programs, and the Cultural Competence and Equity Committee oversees the Student Equity Plan. (Standards IV.A.2.a, IV.A.2.b)

The team found that the institution meets its obligations with regard to ACCJC and to the public. The college's Accreditation website makes available the current and previous self-studies and relevant communications from ACCJC. In addition, comprehensive information about the college, its offerings, and its accreditation status are available to the public in a

printed and online catalog. The recency of an update of the *Participatory Governance at Cosumnes River College* handbook indicates that a review was conducted; however the review cycle is unclear. (Standards IV.A.4, IV.A.5)

**Conclusion:**

The college has the structure and culture that encourages and supports the participation of all constituencies. Governance committees and processes are defined in an up to date handbook *Participatory Governance at Cosumnes River College*. The college should consider including in the document information on the evaluation and review process and timeline for the governance processes.

The college meets all elements of Standard IV.A except IV.A.5.

**Recommendation**

While the team recognizes the progress the College has made since 2009 in developing the tools to conduct outcomes assessment, program review, and integrated planning, in order to improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that the College establish, implement, and document a regular and systematic cycle of evaluation of the effectiveness of all processes including planning, training, decision-making, communication, resource allocation, and governance practices. (Standard IV.A.5)

**Standard IV—Leadership and Governance**  
**Standard IV.B—Board and Administrative Organization**

**General Observations**

The Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD) has a seven-member Governing Board whose stated primary goal is to set policy for the District. Members are elected by geographic areas and serve staggered four-year terms. There has been little turnover in board membership over time, with the majority having served for more than two terms. Four members have terms expiring next year (2016) and the others have three more years to serve. A Student Trustee, who is elected by the students throughout the District, serves a one-year term in a non-voting capacity. (Standard IV.B.1)

The leadership of Cosumnes River College has been in transition over the past year, due to the December 2014 retirement of the previous President. The current President has been on board only since July 1, 2015, and appears to be developing a clear understanding of the District and college structures and operations. A new Chief Student Services Officer (VP of Student Services and Enrollment Management) was hired at that same time.

**Findings and Evidence**

Evidence shows that the Board takes seriously its responsibility to act as a whole (BP 3113), and meeting minutes verify that most votes taken by the Board are unanimous. Board policies, meeting agendas and minutes reflect the Board members' understanding that they are ultimately responsible for educational quality, legal matters and financial integrity of the colleges. The Board's Code of Ethics (BP 3114) defines the principles under which the Board operates and clearly states that the Board represents all residents of the District, acts in the interest of the students, and supports the mission of the colleges. This policy includes a process for addressing violations of the Codes of Ethics and Conflict of Interest. There is no evidence that breaches of these codes have occurred in recent years. (Standards IV.B.1.a, IV.B.1.c, IV.B.1.h)

Board Policy 3112 outlines the responsibility of the Board as the final authority for adopting new policy or revisions to existing policies. All policies are published in detail on the District website, along with the associated Administrative Regulations, and are organized into nine sections: Community; Student; Board of Trustees; Administration; Certificated Personnel; Classified Personnel; Instruction; Business; and Management & Confidential Personnel. District policies and regulations are updated periodically (timeline undefined) and the vetting process is described in a narrative and a flowchart on the LRCCD website. There is an ongoing policy review process, guided by the General Counsel and quarterly reports are made to the Board regarding policies and administrative regulations that are under review. Proposed policy changes are placed on the monthly Board agenda for a First Reading before subsequent actions are taken. For example, at its regular on March 11, 2015, the Board was presented a first reading of proposed changes to several policies resulting from changes in Title IX legislation. There is no evidence to controvert that the Board operates within and accord-

ing to the established policies. (Standards IV.B.1.b, IV.B.1.d, IV.B.1.e, IV.B.1.f, IV.B.1.g, IV.B.1.h, IV.B.1.i, IV.B.1.j)

Interviews with Board members confirmed that opportunities are presented for Board development and new member orientation within the district and through statewide professional organizations, such as the California Community College Trustees (CCCT) and the Community College League of California (CCLC). Additionally, the Chancellor conducts an in-house orientation and a manual (binder) with extensive orientation materials was developed for new trustees in January 2015. Board meeting minutes indicate conference attendance by Board members. (Standard IV.B.1.f)

The Board follows a process for self-evaluation comprised of three components: a review of outcomes and achievements based on established annual goals, which occur at mid-year and year-end; twice-yearly retreats, during which the Board discusses Future Directions; and a self-evaluation survey instrument completed by each of the members, the results of which are discussed at the retreat in March. The Board is following this process, as evidenced by meeting agendas and minutes. (Standard IV.B.1.g)

A review of Board Policy 4111 indicates that the Board is responsible for the recruitment, employment and evaluation of the Chancellor and describes general detail of the process. Minutes from a Special Board Meeting held March 29, 2012, and a districtwide memo from the Board President dated August 9, 2012, show that the policy was adhered to during the 2012 search process which led to the hire of the current Chancellor in February, 2013. There is no specific process defined for the selection of the College President, rather it appears they are lumped in with “District Officers” as described in P-4111 and thus are included in the recruitment and selection process as defined in Regulations 9121 and 9122. (Standard IV.B.1.j)

There is evidence that the Board has expectations for student learning and educational quality and the Board regularly receives reports and reviews policies related to student success and achievement. For example, the Board meeting agenda on June 10, 2105 included a review of policies impacted by the Student Success and Support Program – Services (2811), Exemption Criteria (2821), Pre-requisites (2831), and Students’ Rights & Responsibilities (2841). On that same agenda, the Board adopted the Institutional Effectiveness goals for each college. Additionally, at its regular meeting on November 12, 2014, the Board reviewed and approved the Student Equity Plans for each college, including the funding allocations for implementing the plans. (Standard IV.B.1.b, IV.B.1.c.)

The Board is informed on matters related to accreditation for each of the colleges, as a component of reports presented on the progress toward achieving Strategic Plan goals. This usually occurs during the semi-annual Board Retreat in March and October each year. Also, on November 19, 2014, a Special Board Workshop was conducted specifically for discussion in preparation for the Evaluation Team site visits to all LRCCD colleges scheduled for fall 2015. Workshop topics included: Self-Evaluation Timelines from the colleges, the District Functional Map, the Site Visits, and Standard IV – Governance and the Board’s role in the site visit. In addition, meeting minutes confirm that the Board reviews and approves documents prior

to submittal to ACCJC, e.g. Substantive Change Requests, Midterm Reports, and Self Evaluation Reports. (Standard IV.B.1.i)

There are clearly defined policies that delegate authority to the Chancellor to carry out the administrative responsibilities and functions in accordance with Board policies (for example P-3112). However, delegation of authority to the College President is less clear. There is no policy that specifically delineates the role and authority of the President; rather there is sub-part 1.2 of Board Policy 2411 (in the Student policy section) which notes in the Basic Principles that the president serves as the chief administrator of the college. There are defined processes for the evaluation of the Chancellor and President. Both processes are defined in Board Policy 9142, which clearly states that performance evaluation is based on achievement of established annual goals and specifies that constituents have the opportunity to provide input. A memo from the Board President, dated September 18, 2014, explained the evaluation process and timeline and solicited input from governance leaders (from each senate), union leadership (from all bargaining units), and the Chancellor's Executive Staff. (Standard IV.B.1.j)

Cosumnes River College has been in a transition of leadership for the past year. The former president retired in December 2014 and the vice-president for Instruction served as interim until the current president joined the District in July, 2015. The President directly supervises the Vice President, Administrative Services; Vice President, Instruction & Student Learning; Vice President Student Services & Enrollment Management; Dean, Planning & Research; Director of Advancement; and the Public Information Officer. The remaining administrative structure includes an associate vice-president; ten deans (one of whom supervises the Elk Grove Center), one associate dean, and one director. The College's organizational charts show a clearly defined reporting structure and the president delegates responsibility and authority accordingly. The College follows a model of participatory governance that encourages engagement and input from all constituency groups. The related committee structure is clearly explained in the Participatory Governance Handbook, which was developed through a collaborative process and implemented in April 29, 2015. The president receives recommendations from the various committees but retains final decision-making authority at the College level. (Standards IV.B.2a, IV.B.2.b)

The president guides institutional improvement through the implementation of a well-defined integrated planning model that links institutional planning and priorities to the District Strategic Plan. The Planning Guide, 2009-2015, clearly shows that data from programs reviews, student learning outcomes and unit plans are central to the process and drive resource planning. The Self Evaluation Report indicates there is ongoing assessment of planning and implementation that allows for periodic adjustments indicated by research and changing external environment. The team found that while these processes are occurring, the results are not widely disseminated and there is a lack of broad dialogue about the results. (Standards IV.B.2a, IV.B.2.b.1, IV.B.2.b.2, IV.B.2.b.3, IV.B.2.b.4)

The president attends the Chancellor's Cabinet, meets regularly with other executive staff, and attends monthly Board meetings where statutes, regulations and governing board policies are reviewed and discussed. The president meets weekly with CRC administrators to keep

them informed of changes and the General Counsel provides reference materials to facilitate compliance. (Standards IV.B.2.c.)

The president is responsible for the college's budget and follows the procedures and structures, as delineated in the Planning Guide, to allocate resources and control expenditures. This was confirmed in meetings with the president and with members of the Budget Committee (Standard IV.B.2.d)

Although he has been in the area for a short while, the president is engaged in the local community and in statewide organizations. The president confirmed that local leaders have welcomed him into community groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce, and that he uses these venues to share information and promote college achievements and initiatives. The college publishes an Annual Report to inform the public about the progress of the college. (Standard IV.B.2.e)

The distribution of operational functions, roles and responsibilities between the District and colleges is defined in *Los Rios Community College District 2014 Function Map*, which was developed in 2009 and updated in 2014. The function map clearly delineates the specific roles and responsibilities of the colleges and the District. In addition, evidence shows that there is a clearly defined governance structure in place to coordinate communication and decision-making district wide. During the visit, the team consistently heard that constituents at the college and district level feel the established structures are effective. (Standard IV.B.3.a)

The District supports the College through a variety of services related to instructional and student services support, policy development, institutional research, human resources services, business services, fiscal services, legal services, public relations, facilities planning and maintenance, and information technology. The district assesses the effectiveness of these services through program review and planning, using data to measure against defined performance indicators. (Standard IV.B.3.b)

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

The team confirmed, through interviews, that the Chancellor delegates responsibility for the successful operation of the college to the president. The Chancellor meets regularly with the president, individually and in Executive Staff meetings and retreats. He holds the president accountable for college operations through formal evaluation of performance related to stated

annual Desired Outcomes (goals) that are aligned with the District Strategic Plan. (Standard IV.B.3.e)

The Chancellor regularly communicates via email to all employees, providing Chancellor's Updates and information about important issues or changes. Additionally, he communicates in person, formally and informally, at college convocations and "brown bag" visits. Other districtwide communication occurs through interactions in the committees and meetings of the Executive Staff. (Standard IV.B.3.f)

District governance structures and decision-making processes are evaluated through surveys, and reflective dialogue. The results from the Employee Satisfaction Survey are disaggregated by location and posted on the District and college Institutional Research websites (Standard IV.B.3.g)

### **Conclusions**

Overall, the College meets this standard. However, the recommendations below addresses the District role in governance and the District Team determined that there should be a more systematic approach to evaluating processes that includes a robust analysis and dialogue about the results.

### **Comments:**

In LRCCD Board Policies 4111 and 9142, the Board of Trustees is responsible for the recruitment, selection, and evaluation of the Chancellor. During the Evaluation Team visit, it was verified that the Board evaluation of the Chancellor takes place during a regular Board of Trustees business meeting held in closed session in the month of October.

LRCCD Board Policies 9141 and 9142 also identify the process and timing for evaluation of the college Presidents. While Board Policy 4111 identifies a specific process for hiring the Chancellor, it does not have a specific process for hiring the college Presidents. To fully comply with the Standard, the LRCCD needs to adopt such a process in policy. (Standard IV.B.1.j)

### **District Recommendation**

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

### **Comments:**

The Evaluation Team noted that LRCCD Board Policy 4111 specifically delegates the administration of the district to the Chancellor. The policy also states:

1.3 The Chancellor may delegate any powers and duties entrusted by the Board of Trustees, including the administration of the colleges, but the Chancellor shall be specifically responsible to the Board of Trustees for the execution of such delegated powers and duties.

Although the president of the College has the primary responsibility for the quality of the institution and leading the planning, budgeting, personnel issues, and institutional effectiveness, Board Policy 4111 is not clear that the Chancellor delegates full responsibility and authority to the presidents. (Standard IV.B.3.j)

### **District Recommendation**

In order to improve institutional effectiveness and align policy with practice, the Evaluation Team recommends that the District modify the existing Board Policy 4111 to more clearly define that the Chancellor delegates full responsibility, authority, and accountability to the presidents for the operations of the colleges. (Standard IV.B.3.e.)

The Evaluation Team further recommends that Section 1.2 of Board 2411, which establishes the role of the President as the chief college administrator, be added to the policy section 4000 –Administration. (Standards IV.B.2, IV.B.3.e)