



**ACCREDITING  
COMMISSION  
for COMMUNITY and  
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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January 29, 2010

Dr. Deborah Travis  
President  
Cosumnes River College  
8401 Center Parkway  
Sacramento, CA 95823

Dear President Travis:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting January 6-8, 2010, reviewed the institutional Self Study Report and the report of the evaluation team which visited Cosumnes River College Monday, October 12-Thursday, October 15, 2009. The Commission took action to reaffirm accreditation.

The college is commended for its commitment to developing and assessing Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs); expanding the college's research capabilities; and significant improvements to the campus facilities.

All colleges are required to submit a Midterm Report in the third year after each comprehensive evaluation. Cosumnes River College should submit the Midterm Report by **October 15, 2012**. The Midterm Report describes resolution of any team recommendations made for improvement, includes a summary of progress on college-identified plans for improvement as expressed in the Self Study Report, and forecasts where the college expects to be by the time of the next comprehensive evaluation.

The college conducted a comprehensive self study as part of its evaluation. The Commission suggests that the plans for improvement of the institution included in its self study efforts be used to support the continuing improvement of Cosumnes River College. The next comprehensive evaluation of the college will occur during **Fall 2015**.

The recommendations contained in the Evaluation Team Report represent the observations of the evaluation team at the time of the visit. The Commission reminds you that while an institution may concur or disagree with any part of the report, the college is expected to use the Evaluation Team Report to improve the educational programs and services of the institution.

Dr. Deborah Travis  
Cosumnes River College  
January 29, 2010  
Page Two

**A final copy of the Evaluation Team Report is attached.** Please discard any previous version you may have received. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires you to give the team report and this letter dissemination to your college staff and to those who were signatories of your college Self Study Report. This group should include the Chancellor, campus leadership, and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that the Evaluation Team Report and the Self Study Report be made available to students and the public. Placing copies in the college library can accomplish this. Should you want an electronic copy of the team report, please contact Commission staff.

On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express continuing interest in the institution's educational quality and students' success. Professional self-regulation is the most effective means of assuring integrity, effectiveness, and quality.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.  
President

BAB/tl

cc: Dr. Brice Harris, Chancellor, Los Rios Community College District  
Mr. Whitney Yamamura, Accreditation Liaison Officer  
Board President, Los Rios Community College District  
Dr. Kathleen O'Connell Hodge, Team Chair

Enclosure

**Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges**

***PREPARATION OF A MIDTERM REPORT***

A **Midterm Report** is due in the third year following the evaluation team visit. An institution is expected to address and resolve all recommendations provided by a comprehensive evaluation team within six years or by the time of the next comprehensive visit. An institution is also expected to follow up on all of its own plans for improvement as identified in the Self Study Report within the same six-year period. In the Midterm Report, the institution is required to inform the Commission of its progress toward resolution of these matters. The institution is expected to provide narrative information and analysis regarding:

- ◆ each of the recommendations of the evaluation team
- ◆ the areas identified in the planning agenda of its self study
- ◆ updates on substantive change approvals or pending proposals

The report will be reviewed by the Commission at its next regularly scheduled meeting, and the institution will be notified as to what action, if any, it must take next.

**Midterm Report Format**

The following format for the report should be used:

1. **Cover Sheet**  
Include the date of submission, the name and address of the institution, and a notation that this is a Midterm Report.
2. **Table of Contents**
3. **Statement on Report Preparation**  
The statement, signed by the Chief Executive Officer of the institution, describes the process of report preparation and identifies those who were involved in its preparation, review, and approval.
4. **Response to Team Recommendations and the Commission Action Letter**  
The report should describe the progress made on each recommendation, analyze the results achieved to date, provide evidence of the results, and indicate what additional plans the institution has developed.
5. **Response to Self-identified Issues**  
In the Planning Agenda section of the self study, the institution reported on areas needing improvement. The institution should provide a brief description of the progress made on these self-identified issues specifying timelines to completion and responsible parties.
6. **Update on Substantive Change Proposals in progress, pending, or planned**
7. **The Midterm Report must be reviewed by the Governing Board prior to its submission**

**Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges**

The institution is required to send **two copies** of its report to the Commission **plus an electronic version**. The hard copies of the report should be sent to the Commission's mailing address at 10 Commercial Boulevard, Suite 204, Novato, CA 94949. The electronic version of the report should be transmitted to [accjc@accjc.org](mailto:accjc@accjc.org).

# EVALUATION REPORT

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

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

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited  
Cosumnes River College from October 12 to 15, 2009

Dr. Kathleen O'Connell Hodge, Chair

## Visiting team roster

Dr. Kathleen O'Connell Hodge (Chair)  
Vice Chancellor, Instruction  
North Orange County Community College District  
1830 W. Romneya Drive  
Anaheim, CA 92801-1819

Dr. Robert Adams (Standard IV)  
President  
Merritt College  
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Ms. Kathleen Brindell (Standard I)  
Professor, History  
Chaffey College  
5885 Haven Avenue  
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Mr. Henry Gee (Standard II – Lead)  
Vice President, Student Services  
Rio Hondo College  
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Dr. Toni DuBois (Team Assistant)  
Vice President, Student Services  
Fullerton College  
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Vice President, Business & Admin.  
Santa Monica College  
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Santa Monica, CA 90405

Dr. Edward Karpp (Standard II)  
Associate Dean of Institutional Research  
Glendale Community College  
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Glendale, CA 91208

Ms. Meridith Randall (Standard III, IV)  
Vice President, Education & Student  
Services  
Mendocino College  
1000 Hensley Creek Road  
Ukiah, CA 95482

## SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

**INSTITUTION:** Cosumnes River College  
Los Rios Community College District

**DATES OF VISIT:** October 12 to 15, 2009

**TEAM CHAIR:** Dr. Kathleen O'Connell Hodge  
Vice Chancellor of Instruction, NOCCCD

An eight-member accreditation team visited Cosumnes River College (CRC) from October 12 to 15, 2009 for the purpose of evaluating how well the institution is achieving its stated purposes, analyzing how well the college is meeting the Commission standards, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement, and submitting recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) regarding the status of the college.

Cosumnes River College has been in continual operation since 1970 and has provided quality educational programs and services to a growing and increasingly diverse community. The college is an open-admissions, comprehensive community college located in Sacramento, the capital city of California. The college is the third of the four colleges established by the Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD). CRC opened on September 14, 1970 on a 159 acre site in south Sacramento and currently serves over 15,000 students.

The college's fall 2003 self-study included information on the status of two centers, Folsom Lake and El Dorado, as of fall 2004 these centers are no longer part of CRC. The centers were united into one service area that was awarded accreditation beginning fall 2004 as Folsom Lake College. At the time of the team visit, CRC did not have an active center. A small number of classes are taught at a site in Amador County; however, no complete programs are offered at that location nor is 50% of any program offered there. The development of an Elk Grove Center is planned for fall 2013.

Since the last self-study, in spring 2005, the college was approved for two substantive change proposals for a fully on-line Dietetic Technician Program and the Health Information Technology Program. The team reviewed these programs and found them to be compliant. Since the last site visit, supported by a facility bond, the college has completed major facility improvement projects with new construction, facility refurbishments, and upgraded infrastructure projects. CRC welcomed a new President on July 1, 2009.

In preparation for the visit, seven team members attended an all-day training session on September 3, 2009, conducted by the ACCJC and studied Commission materials prepared for visiting teams. The eighth member of the team was trained by Commission staff. Team members carefully read the college's self study report, including the recommendations from the fall 2003 visiting team, and assessed the evidence provided by the college.

Prior to the visit team members completed written evaluations of the self study report and began identifying areas for further investigation. In the morning before the formal beginning of the visit, the team members spent time discussing their views of the written materials provided by the college, reviewing evidence provided by the college as well as the Midterm Report completed by the college on October 15, 2006. The team also reviewed materials submitted to the commission since their last CRC comprehensive visit.

During the visit, cumulatively, the team met with 53 faculty members, 24 classified staff members, 70 CRC administrators, 10 district administrators, 30 students and 5 members of the Board of Trustees. The team chair met with members of the Board of Trustees and with the president of the college. The team also held two open meetings to listen to comments from any member of the campus or local community. The chair was a member of a district wide team of chairs that met to coordinate the review of functions and practices of the district offices of the LRCCD.

The team felt that the self study report was well prepared with extensive opportunity for input from all constituent groups on campus and the report accurately represented Cosumnes River College. College staff members were very accommodating to team members and available for interviews and follow-up conversations. The college was well prepared and organized for the team's visit.

Overall, the team perceives the College and its community of faculty, staff, and students to be proud of their College. Faculty and staff are dedicated to serving students, and focused on student learning. The campus can take pride in the collegial atmosphere of the deliberations that take place through the decision making process. Team members were specifically impressed with:

The new outdoor gathering spaces for students,

The collegial atmosphere of the campus,

The thoughtful approach to learning outcomes and the assessment process,

District resource planning models,

District mapping of responsibilities,

The well-kept grounds,

The commitment to cultural competencies

The commitment to interest-based bargaining,

The storage of data off site, and

The support of the Diop Scholarships, the Puente Program and Safe Spaces.



# ACCREDITATION EVALUATION REPORT FOR

## COSUMNES RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

October 12-15, 2009

### **Introduction**

Since 1970, Cosumnes River College (CRC) has provided quality educational programs and services to a growing and increasingly diverse community. In the past 39 years, the college has evolved from a small rural institution ringed with pastures and dairies to an urban/suburban college. In spring 2009, the enrollment at CRC exceeded 15,000 students, most of whom live in the south Sacramento region.

The College is an open-admission, comprehensive community college located in Sacramento, the capital city of California. The college is the third of the four colleges established by the Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD). CRC opened on September 14, 1970 on a 159-acre site in south Sacramento. The service area of the College embraces parts of both the poorest and the more affluent neighborhoods in the four-county Sacramento region. Although 30% of the college's students are considered middle income, more than 50% live in poverty or are classified as low-income. The communities lying within the service area include farming communities now experiencing very rapid growth and urbanization, and older suburban communities developed in the 1950s and 1960s that are now experiencing somewhat limited development.

### **Recent Accreditation History for Cosumnes River College**

The last Self Study began in fall 2002 with the accreditation site visit occurring in fall 2003. The college accreditation was reaffirmed without conditions. Substantive change proposals for the fully on-line Dietetic Technician Program and the Health Information Technology Program were submitted and approved in spring 2005. The Midterm Report was sent to the Commission in fall 2006 and the four recommendations from the Commission were deemed to have been met. The self-identified issues from the last Self Study have been addressed or are part of a continuous improvement plan, such as the goal of improving and enhancing web-related information processes. The substantive change report for programs that provide students the opportunity to complete 50% or more of their courses through distance education was approved by the Commission in fall 2008.

Prior to January 2004, Cosumnes River College had two centers, Folsom Lake and El Dorado. In fall 2003, Folsom Lake Center wrote a separate self study seeking college status. They were granted initial accreditation as a college beginning in fall 2004. El Dorado Center was included as part of Folsom Lake College. Some of the information provided for CRC's 2003 Self Study included data from the centers, which at that time were part of the College. The college's historical data provided in this report excludes data for the Folsom Lake and El Dorado Centers, unless noted otherwise. Some data comparisons use 2004 as the base year since it is the first year the centers separated from the college. At this time CRC teaches only a few classes at Amador County which equals approximately 1 total FTE.

There has been a substantial increase in the number of students attending the college. The unduplicated student head count for fall 2003 was 11,267. In fall 2008 the college's unduplicated student head count reached 14,518, an increase of over 28% in five years. Preliminary enrollment numbers for spring 2009 indicate that the college topped 15,000 students, a growth rate in excess of 33% (from fall 2003 to spring 2009).

The number of faculty members and staff has grown as well. Between fall 2003 and fall 2008 the college increased full-time faculty head count from 158 to 187, an increase of over 18%. This does not include the new faculty positions hired for the 2009-10 academic year. Between fall 2004 and fall 2008, the number of classified positions grew from 145 to 162, an increase of 12% in four years.

With the selection of a new college president in 2003, the management team has been expanded to meet the growing needs of the college. The Dean of College Planning and Research and the Dean of Student Services and Enrollment Management positions were created and filled in 2006 and 2007, respectively in response to the college's commitment to developing and assessing Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), to expand the college's research capabilities, and to provide more direct support to student government and student activities. Over a six-year term, the college President hired 15 out of 18 managers, including the three Vice Presidents. The changes were due to retirements, requests to return to teaching, and promotional opportunities. In March 2009, after serving six years, the college President left to become President/Superintendent of a single college district in southern California. The Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment Management was appointed Interim College President through June 30, 2009. The Los Rios Community College District Board of Trustees selected a new College President who began July 1, 2009.

There has been significant construction of new buildings, facility expansions, and remodeling since the last site visit. The additions to the physical plant total over 60,000 square feet, and future construction projects are planned over the next 10 years. The science building remodel and expansion, scheduled for completion in the fall 2010, will add 15,800 square feet of lecture, lab, and office space (an 83% increase over the old building) to the campus footprint. Currently, Science classes are held in portables designed specifically for science labs. In addition to the new buildings, expansions, and remodeling, an outdoor gathering space was redesigned. This area, which includes a reflecting pool and fountain, is the geographic focus of the campus and has become a primary staging ground for student activities.

In sum, Cosumnes River College has expanded to meet the diverse needs of the rapidly growing community it serves. The college believes it meets the accreditation standards and embraces and practices the goals of the Commission: to engage in ongoing dialogue, reflection, assessment and improvement to better serve students and the community in a sustainable way.

### **The Cosumnes River College Self Study**

The self study document prepared for the fall 2009 accreditation visit is well written, complete, and organized in a professional manner. The college is to be commended on the final document, as it represents the college in a professional way, highlighting the work of

the college and the diversity of the students in the selected photographs. The document addresses each issue with a clearly defined narrative and supporting graphs and charts as appropriate. The college carefully self assessed both success and areas for continued review, and clearly articulated CRC planning agendas to address areas of concern. The self study includes sections on the history, demographics, status of prior recommendations, and reports on each accreditation standard. The information is comprehensive and clear. Supporting documents were distributed to the visiting team on a thumb drive, which was useful to the pre visit work. The college posted a link to the complete self study on the front page of the college web site, giving access to the self study to the college and the community.

### **Commendations for Cosumnes River College**

Overall, the team perceives the college and its community of faculty, staff, and students to be successful, considerate, imaginative, and optimistic. Specifically, team members were impressed with:

- Its dedication to cultural competence as evidenced in their value statement and participation in such initiatives as the Diop Scholars Program, a learning community designed for African American students, and Puente.
- The creation and maintenance of a positive and collegial campus climate for students, employees, and community members. Students, faculty, administration, and staff are complimentary of each other, complimentary of their beautiful, well-kept campus, and well aware of the service the college provides to the community's students and businesses. We found the faculty and staff on this campus to be spirited and willing to engage tough issues.
- Its dedication to the philosophy and use of interest-based bargaining for resolution of campus issues as evidenced by the completion of interest-based training of the current faculty, staff, administration, and all members of the Board of Trustees.
- The notable physical attractiveness of the college grounds as well as the overall maintenance and cleanliness of the campus and on its recent creation of outdoor spaces on campus for student activities and events.
- The college faculty and staff for being actively involved in the planning processes of the college and leading efforts for educational initiatives to strengthen the student experience.
- The dedication to comprehensive research, as evidenced by the assignment of faculty, staff, and management to research efforts.

### **Cosumnes River College recommendations**

After carefully reviewing the self study report, examining evidence, interviewing college personnel and students, and discussing the findings taking into account the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges 2002 Accreditation Standards, the team offers the following recommendations to Cosumnes River College.

#### **Cosumnes River College 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 assessments for improvement at the course level. (Standard I.B.2 and Standard II.A)

#### **Cosumnes River College 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 in 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 institutional effectiveness. This integration should include publication of the criteria on which the final prioritization in the resource allocation process is based. (Standard I.B.2)

#### **Cosumnes River College 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. (Standard IV.A.5)

Responses to  
Recommendations of the Previous Team  
2003

The college has addressed all of the recommendations of the 2003 visiting team. The visiting team determined the college responses to the previous teams recommendations met or exceeded the intent of each recommendation.

**Team Recommendation 1: *Develop and publish learning outcomes for all degree and certificate programs, identifying the expected skills and/or knowledge that would be acquired by completing the program.***

The college has responded to this recommendation by defining Student Learning Outcomes for nearly all programs and beginning an assessment project to assess student achievement of learning outcomes. The college has also developed institutional and general education SLOs.

Publication of learning outcomes for all degree and certificate programs can be found in the college catalog and on the college web site.

This recommendation has been addressed

**Team Recommendation 2: *Evaluate current processes related to distance education and complete the distance learning master plan, ensuring that student support and infrastructure issues are effectively addressed.***

CRC's response to this recommendation is reflected in Standard IB.1 and 2 of the 2009 Self Study. The college has increased its distance education offerings from 37 classes in fall 2003 to 234 classes in spring 2009. Evidence was found to indicate that regular campus dialogues about distance education have a strong influence on planning processes including the Distance Education master Plan (DEMP). DEMP reflects the requirements outlined in Standard IB.2 that call for measurable goal setting to improve effectiveness along with clearly articulated goals and collaboration.

Standard IB.4 also reflects the college's use of a shared governance committee process in creating the Master Plan. Through this process, three goals were established: 1) to ensure quality, comparable instruction, and student services; 2) to ensure that learning outcomes would be the same as for traditional offerings; and 3) that the quality of offerings would be expanded through a variety of technological and service oriented factors. Affirming the success of the goal setting process at CRC, 75% of respondents to the 2008 Accreditation Survey, which included all college employee constituents, strongly agreed that the goal setting processes are effective.

The college completed and approved a distance education plan in 2005, which was reviewed and revised in spring 2009. Distance education has become an important part of the college's curriculum and degree/certificate offerings.

This recommendation has been addressed.

**Team Recommendation 3: The Los Rios Community College District has developed a strategic plan to serve the people within the District through the creation of four colleges and a series of educational centers affiliated with each of those colleges. It is recommended that in order to increase effectiveness, this plan should include appropriate provision for delivery of necessary instructional and student support services at all of the existing centers and at those that may be created in the future.**

As one college in a four-college district, Cosumnes River College is developing its educational center at Elk Grove following district guidelines and principles for developing centers. A guiding principle is that each center is tied to one of the district's colleges. CRC has developed a model of course offerings based on recommendations of division deans. Conditional approval for center status was given in November 2008 with course offerings to begin in fall 2010 and construction completed for the center by 2013. Considerable demographic data has been analyzed to support the college planning process to achieve this goal.

This recommendation has been addressed.

**Team Recommendation 4: Develop a new framework for student events on campus detailing the steps and timelines that students must follow, the discretion that they have structuring and offering these activities and clarifying the financial resources they have.**

CRC hired a Dean of Student Services and Enrollment Management whose responsibilities include the oversight of student life and student leadership. This manager is positioned to guide students in scheduling, organizing, and funding student events. Additionally, the college created a new space on campus for student activities and the authority of the Associated Student Government was redefined.

The specific response to this recommendation was detailed and complete. There was a reorganization of Student Life that promoted leadership and provided additional resources to enhance student participation.

This recommendation has been addressed.

## **Eligibility Requirements**

The team verified that Cosumnes River College is in compliance with the eligibility requirements for reaffirmation of accreditation.

### **1. Authority:**

Cosumnes River College is authorized to operate as an educational institution and award degrees by the (1) Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, (2) the California State Chancellor's Office, and (3) the locally elected Board of Trustees of the Los Rios Community College District

Cosumnes River College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and is approved under regulations of the California State Department of Education and the California Community Colleges.

### **2. Mission:**

Cosumnes River College's educational mission as a community college is clearly defined and published in the College Catalog. The educational mission is aligned with the Los Rios Community College District's educational mission statement. The current CRC Mission Statement was developed by the College Planning Committee and approved through the college's shared governance processes. It was approved by the Los Rios Community College Board of Trustees on July 16, 2008. (Standard IA.2). The mission statement is communicated to the public in both print and online.

### **3. Governing Board:**

The Los Rios Community College district Board of Trustees is a seven member body elected by registered voters within their service area of the District. Board members are elected to four-year staggered terms. One non-voting student trustee is annually elected by the students of the LRCCD. The team confirmed that this board makes policy for the district and exercises oversight of its operations. Board members are precluded by public law from participating in any action involving a possible conflict of interest or from realizing a financial gain from their positions as board member. (Standard IV.B.1)

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

The President of Cosumnes River College, appointed by the board of trustees in July 2009, has full-time responsibility for guiding the college. As the chief executive officer, the president administers board policies, manages resources, and ensures compliance with all statutes and regulations. The president of Cosumnes River College reports to the chancellor, who holds a full-time position as the chief executive officer of the Los Rios Community College District. Neither the president nor the chancellor serves on the Board of Trustees.

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

Current administrators possess the skills and abilities required to perform their duties at a high level. Administrative staff is sufficient in size to address the needs of the growing student population, and to provide leadership for the college.

**6. Operational Status:**

The team certifies with no reservation that Cosumnes River College is fully operational with 15,000 students enrolled. Most are actively pursuing vocational certificates, associate degrees, and/or transfer to four-year institutions.

**7. Degrees:**

Cosumnes River College offers the Associate of Arts and Associate of Science Degrees. It has 73 degree programs. A majority of students are enrolled in courses that are required for a certificate or degree program, and/or required for transfer to four-year institutions. (College Catalog)

**8. Educational Programs:**

The team certifies that Cosumnes River College's degree programs are congruent with its mission and are based on recognized higher education fields of study. The Curriculum Committee, a committee of the Academic Senate, ensures the programs are of appropriate content and length, and are conducted at levels of quality and rigor appropriate to the 73 degrees offered. The degree programs meet California Code of Regulations, Title 5 curriculum requirements, and when combined with the general education component, represent two years of full-time academic work. In addition to its 73 degree programs, the College also offers 101 certificate programs. (College Catalog)

**9. Academic Credit:**

Cosumnes River College awards academic credits based on accepted practices of California community colleges under California Code of Regulations, Title 5. Detailed information about academic credits is published in the College Catalog and Class Schedules.

**10. Student Learning Achievement**

Most course outlines for degree credit include student learning outcomes and plans for completion of student learning outcomes and the assessment of these student learning outcomes is scheduled for completion by 2012. Development of institutional and program learning outcomes for students is commendable and completed at the 85% level.

Student learning outcomes for each Cosumnes River College degree program are published in the College Catalog. Student learning outcomes for courses are presented in the course outlines filed in the instruction office and available online through SOCRATES, the district-wide on-line curriculum database.

**11. General Education:**

The team certifies that Cosumnes River College includes general education requirements in its degree programs and that writing and computational skills are reflected in these requirements. Students must complete a minimum of 21 semester units of general education courses and demonstrate competency in reading, written expression, and mathematics to receive an Associate Degree. The general education units include an introduction to major areas of knowledge as well as an ethnic/multicultural studies requirement that can be



satisfied within the general education requirements. General education outcomes are available online and appear in the 2009-10 College Catalog.

**12. Academic Freedom:** Cosumnes River College embraces academic freedom and defends the principle as fundamental to an educational institution that cherishes freedom of inquiry, exposition, and discussion. (Standard IIA.7)

**13. Faculty:**

Cosumnes River College employs 187 full-time and approximately 264 part-time faculty members. All of these meet or exceed state minimum qualifications. The faculty is sufficient in size and experience to support the college's instructional programs. Responsibilities for faculty are defined in the collective bargaining agreement and include the development and review of curriculum and assessment of learning.

**14. Student Services:**

The team reviewed the size and scope of student services provided by Cosumnes River College and found them to be consistent with the basic needs of the student body and the college's mission statement.

**15. Admissions:**

The team verified that Cosumnes River College adheres to admission policies consistent with its mission as a public California community college and in compliance with California Code of Regulations, Title 5.

**16. Information and Learning Resources:**

The team found the current library and learning resources to be adequate in size and scope to support the college's institutional programs. Plans are in progress to extend the size of the library to meet anticipated future demands resulting from institutional growth.

**17. Financial Resources:**

Cosumnes River College, through the Los Rios Community College District, publicly documents a funding base, financial resources, and plans for financial development adequate to support its mission and educational programs and to assure financial stability.

**18. Financial Accountability:**

The team verified that the Los Rios Community College District regularly undergoes and makes available an annual external financial audit for the District and its colleges by a certified public accountant. The audit is conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. The LRCCD annual audit encompasses all operating units of the District and colleges. (Annual Audit Report)

**19. Institutional Planning:**

Cosumnes River College has an established institutional planning process and works with the Los Rios Community College District to plan for the development of the College, including integrating resource allocations for academic personnel and other staff, learning resources,

facilities, and financial development. The college's planning process also includes procedures for program review and institutional improvement.

**20. Public Information:**

The Cosumnes River College catalog contains all of the requisite information and is available to the public in print and online.

**21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission:**

The self study assures that the college adheres to the Accrediting Commission's eligibility requirements, standards, and policies. 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. Cosumnes River College affirms that it continues to meet each of the eligibility requirements set by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

# Evaluation of Cosumnes River College Using ACCJC 2007 Standards

This report pertains to a request for reaffirmation of accreditation for Cosumnes River College. The college followed the ACCJC 2002 Standards in preparing the self study pursuant to this reaffirmation request.

## STANDARD I Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

### *Standard IA. Mission*

#### **General Comments**

The current Cosumnes River College mission statement is:

*Cosumnes River College is an open access, student-centered, comprehensive community college that prepares students to realize their educational and career aspirations through exemplary transfer, general, and career education in an academically rigorous and inclusive environment. CRC also offers exceptional instruction in basic skills and English for non-native speakers, as well as a broad array of life-long learning, community service, and workforce development programs.*

The college engaged in a collaborative process over a three-year period to examine its mission which now appears in the form of three statements incorporating mission, vision and values statements. The mission statement is published in the printed catalog and online.

The mission statement for CRC which was approved by the Board of Trustees on July 16, 2008 parallels the Los Rios Community College District Mission statement

### *Standard IA. Mission*

#### **Findings and Evidence**

Cosumnes River College, by numerous measures, meets the prescribed requirements for Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness. The institution is committed to its mission that is communicated internally and externally with a systematic cycle of review to assure that, over time, the mission is accomplished. The institution establishes student learning programs and services aligned with its purposes, its character, and its student population. The Standard is achieved since the Mission Statement review process began by examining college-wide Student Learning Outcomes. Other planning processes, including the Strategic Plan, follow this model of linking the college wide SLOs to goals thereby ensuring adherence to the college's mission. (Standard I.A.1)

### ***Standard IA. Mission***

#### **Conclusions**

The mission statement is approved by the governing board and published. There is ample evidence that the mission statement is regularly reviewed and revised, and is central to institutional planning and decision-making as discussed above.

### ***Standard IB. Improving Institutional Effectiveness***

#### **General Comments**

CRC, like many community colleges throughout California, has dealt with significant growth issues since the last Accreditation visit with preliminary enrollment numbers for spring 2009 reflecting a 33 % increase in enrollment since fall 2003. Additionally, there has been a number of organizational shifts with one former CRC center, Folsom Lake, achieving college status. Elk Grove is now the college's identified center slated for opening in fall 2013. The college president was appointed by the Board of Trustees July, 2009. The college recently moved to a compressed calendar and has been fortunate to be able to add full-time faculty and staff. However, new staff and faculty members need to be mentored to ensure continuity in processes, which can be demanding of time of senior, tenured faculty members.

While new construction is a positive factor, the addition of over 60,000 square feet with future projects pending can also be disruptive amidst other institution wide initiatives such as Student Learning Outcomes and Program Review. Under Standard I.B. 4, there is reference to expressed fatigue and "workload creep" by some faculty caused by the extensive planning, implementation, and accountability processes that are part of the college's agenda. The statement, "The sheer amount of change that has occurred at the institution over the past six years may add to fatigue," is substantiated by the Self-Study.

Given all these dynamic forces it is commendable that, by a variety of indicators, the morale of CRC faculty and staff is high and generally reflects positive attitudes about the work environment and the college's role in fulfilling its mission. The 2008 Accreditation Survey provides much of this information. Eighty-four percent of respondents indicated awareness of the process used to generate the Mission statement and agreed it was effective. In the same survey, 75 % of respondents agree that the college's goal-setting processes are effective, and the same percentage agrees that the college's implementation of its goals and objectives is satisfactory. Also worth noting are the results from the Noel-Levitz student survey which reflect overall improvement of student satisfaction when compared to the 2004 survey. The spring 2008 Employee Satisfaction Survey reinforces this general evidence of good employee morale and high employee satisfaction with their jobs and a positive view of the college workplace. Overall, for all constituents, CRC gets a positive review. The team was impressed by the collegial spirit of the campus community (Standard I.B.1).

### ***Standard IB. Institutional Effectiveness***

#### **Findings and Evidence**

Evidence provided in the Self-Study also supports the fact that the College is meeting Standard IB which addresses improvement to institutional effectiveness. A variety of campus constituents engage in activities to achieve this goal. Major campus committees engaged in

shared governance activities to ensure continuous improvement of student learning, and institutional processes are listed in this section with documentation indicating their involvement in meeting the Standard. Key constituents include: The Budget Committee, the Cultural Competence and Equity Committee as well as the Basic Skills and Education Initiatives. Of particular importance in the institution's progress in developing Student Learning Outcomes, measuring them, and using the results of measurement to plan and implement institutional improvements, is the Curriculum Committee which has revised many processes and forms to reflect the inclusion of Student Learning Outcomes in curriculum creation and review. The Professional Development Committee and the Center for the Advancement of Staff and Learning (CASSL) have provided numerous opportunities for dialogue regarding SLOs. The CASSL page of the college's website has many links to SLO activities and assessment reports (Standard I.B. 2 and I.B. 3 and I.B. 4)

The Outcomes Assessment Task Force established by the Academic Senate in fall 2007 has had a significant role in establishing procedures for student learning outcome measures including documentation of assessment. The Task Force addressed college wide and General Education Student Learning Outcomes assessment processes and established a four-year cycle for accomplishing this. The Task Force also set out a process beginning fall 2008 where, at fall convocation, instructional programs identified an important issue affecting student success in their program. The identified issue became the focus for improving student learning and outcomes for the academic year. Spring convocation was designated as the point at which the program faculty would meet to discuss the success of meeting their goal and ways to improve student outcomes by revising curriculum, course sequencing or other instructional techniques. (Standard I.B.5)

At CRC the process of Program (and Service) Review (PrOF) is a significant component in the cycle of measurement and assessment of student learning outcomes. Through this process, goals at the program level are established and much dialogue occurs. Assessment of student learning outcomes, other student success measures, and input from external entities converge at this point. The findings of these various measures are used to engage in unit planning and prioritization of resource requests. The forms for PrOF have been recently revised to require programs to assess their accomplishments over the previous program review period (Standard I.B.2).

There is ample evidence that a significant degree of institutional dialogue about student learning and achievement exists at CRC which reflects a culture and practice that supports continuous improvement. An excellent example of this is the development of a new program at CRC called the Freshman Seminar. This was one of three Educational Initiatives piloted at CRC. It sought to more closely link academics with student services which resulted in better grades and retention rates for these students and resulted in the program being institutionalized (Standard I.B.6).

There is a rich institutional culture of dialogue and demonstrated commitment to working collegially to develop and assess student learning outcomes at CRC. According to documentation in 85 % of programs have developed Program level SLOs. However, the process for developing course level SLO's and assessment tools has been slower. It is also

clear that the process for developing these SLOs and assessment tools is deeply rooted in a methodical process of review and deliberation that is consistent with the CRC culture. In discussion with various college staff there has been a conscious effort to proceed from the macro level institutional SLOs and cascade through program level to the course level. While this configuration for meeting the goal of course level assessment is consistent within the college's own planning environment, we caution the college to carefully monitor this timeline to ensure adherence to the Commission's 2012 deadline. Since the completion of assessment of learning outcomes is a critical part of PrOF and the planning cycle, it is critical that course level student outcomes and assessment processes are completed for all programs and services at CRC.

The team examined ample evidence found in the college's planning documents and Strategic Plan that indicate that the college meets the Standard. The Self Study Report indicates broad participation in the planning process; however, the college identified a need to further ensure that these planning processes represent the relationship between the various components of the Planning Process from the district's broad Strategic Plan to the individual unit plans. The College reports that by spring 2011 all goals will be supported by measurable objectives. The Research Office provides a Research Brief each semester that is disseminated to the college community. The brief reflects current analysis of longitudinal enrollment patterns and student success information (Standard I.B. 3, 4, and 5).

There are numerous other research initiatives that the Research Office supports which may be reviewed in the Summary of Outcomes from the 2004 Strategic Plan. Elements of the planning cycle are linked to resource allocation for capital outlay, as well as faculty and staff position prioritization. The first step in this process is the program review process, PrOF which requires programs to assess their accomplishments over the previous program review period. (Standard IB. 2) These program reviews are then integrated into larger unit plans where prioritization of resources continues. Student Services programs are also part of this review and prioritization process. The college has revised a number of procedures in the PrOF Process as it continues to improve the process. Such changes will help remedy the less than enthusiastic approval rating of 37 % noted in the survey for the PrOf Process (Standard I.B.5 and .6)

In addition to the Education Initiative, Freshman Seminar cited earlier, this sub-section of the Self Study listed numerous other new programs as evidence that the college uses planning and research to modify and improve services. These programs include but are not limited to: Diop Scholars, Puente Project, CASSL, and others. (Standard I.B.5)

The institution uses documented assessment results to communicate matters of quality assurance to appropriate constituencies. This is supported by references made in Standard IB.3 when describing research activities and involvement in the college's planning and assessment processes. The Self-Study directs the reader to the Research Office Website which provides a valuable communication tool for internal and external constituents. College outcomes data is also reported here, in keeping with the institution's commitment to developing student learning outcomes and encouraging an institutional dialogue. It is an anomaly perhaps that in the 2008 Accreditation Survey, 25 % of respondents were not aware

of how the college communicates its performance externally. As part of the college's identified Planning Agenda, additional resources will be acquired to support institutional assessment, planning and research by spring 2010.

Sufficient evidence was available to demonstrate the institution's effectiveness at reviewing planning and resource allocation cycle processes, as well as evaluating mechanisms in improving instructional programs, student support services, and library and learning support services. The review process for planning and allocation is reflected in dialogues among various college constituencies and is sufficient to meet the Standard. One example is the Academic Senate's participation in the discussion of the faculty prioritization process which has resulted in modifications. The PrOF information packets were also changed in response to this type of assessment. Programs and services are measured by a variety of mechanisms. Data is extracted from PeopleSoft with regard to student indicators of persistence and success. CRC also completes special studies to achieve this goal, such as the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey as well as surveys conducted by the Cultural Competence and Equity Committees (Standard I.B. 6).

The Planning Agenda identified in the Self-Study will assess and enhance evaluation mechanisms in student support services programs and library and learning support services as noted in Standard II.B and II.C.

### ***Standard IB. Institutional Effectiveness***

#### **Conclusions**

Cosumnes River College meets the requirements of Standard IB. In some areas, based on very positive survey results of employee groups for example, the college exceeds the requirements of the Standard. There is also a mature research and planning agenda that is well documented with a goal of student success. Information is disseminated in a variety of ways and is also available on the college's website. This provides many entry points for garnering valuable information about the college's research and planning efforts.

The role of student learning outcomes at CRC is critical. In fact, with regard to the PrOF Process, it is learning outcome assessments that drive a major portion of that activity. It is also critical for all programs of the college to be prepared to participate in the highly refined processes of evaluation and planning at CRC. The college should take steps to identify necessary resources and staff to bring all programs and courses into compliance with the development of student learning outcomes and the plans for their assessment by 2012.

### ***Standard I. Institutional Mission and Effectiveness***

#### **Recommendations**

##### **Cosumnes River College 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 assessments for improvement at the course level. (Standard I.B.2 and Standard II.A)

Cosumnes River College 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 in 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 institutional effectiveness. This integration should include publication of the criteria on which the final prioritization in the resource allocation process is based. (Standard I.B.2)



## **STANDARD II**

### **Student Learning Programs and Service**

#### ***Standard IIA. Instructional Programs***

##### **General Comments**

Cosumnes River College offers a variety of instructional programs to meet the needs of its students. It awards a diverse set of associate degrees and certificates. The college has recently expanded its distance education program and revised its Distance Education Master Plan. It is developing a plan to open an off-campus center in Elk Grove. Student services and learning support services meet the needs of a growing student population.

The college has focused on developing program-level student learning outcomes, and it has begun assessing these outcomes. College wide and general education outcomes have also been defined and assessment is in the early stages. Work has been done to define course-level outcomes for 66% of the college's courses and 90% of the programs have conducted assessments. However, there is little documentation of a cycle of assessment for course-level outcomes or of using assessment results for improvement.

#### ***Standard IIA. Instructional Programs***

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

Instructional programs must meet a series of criteria established by the district for approval. Classes taught through distance education and classes taught off-campus meet the same requirements as classes taught on the Cosumnes River campus. Although the program review and program approval processes do not explicitly refer to the college mission statement, the team found that the college's courses and programs address the mission and uphold the integrity of the institution (Standard II.A.1).

The college and the district identify the educational needs of students through research, including demographic research, student perception surveys, and Noel-Levitz student satisfaction surveys. Using research and analysis to help understand and meet student needs, the college is assessing progress toward achieving student learning outcomes (Standard II.A.1.a).

Cosumnes River College uses a variety of delivery systems, including traditional, online, hybrid, and interactive TV courses. Enrollments in distance education have increased substantially in the past seven years, and the college has developed a Distance Education Master Plan, which was most recently revised in spring 2009. The plan includes a commitment to provide online instruction and services of comparable quality to instruction and services delivered by traditional methods. The college has also developed two online-only programs, including a Dietetic Technician associate degree program which is being phased out due to employability concerns. It appears that CRC's nontraditional delivery systems are appropriate in meeting student needs (Standard II.A.1.b).

Program-level student learning outcomes have been identified for nearly all instructional programs. The development process for program-level SLOs is part of the recently

streamlined program review process. More than 90% of programs conducted assessments in fall 2008 as part of flex activities. The college intends to continue to track program-level SLO assessment through program review.

The college estimates that 66% of courses have identified learning outcomes. The college's Outcomes Assessment Task Force, a temporary group charged with creating an assessment process for learning outcomes at the program and course levels, was replaced by the Learning Outcomes Dialogue Subcommittee, a subcommittee of the College Planning Committee. There is some evidence that course-level outcomes are being assessed in some areas, and that course-level measures are being used to assess program-level outcomes, but the college cannot provide a comprehensive estimate of how much assessment activity is occurring (Standard II.A.1.c).

The college has a well developed and understood procedure for designing and approving new courses, which includes a requirement for identifying student learning outcomes. Faculty members have a central role in the development and improvement of instructional courses and programs (Standard II.A.2.a).

Faculty members identify student learning outcomes for programs and courses. Advisory committees work with faculty in CTE areas to establish competency levels. CRC is assessing progress toward achieving learning outcomes. The method is not as systematic as it could be. Assessment occurs at the program level on a regular cycle and there are plans for implementation at the course level to assure compliance by 2012. Institutional assessment is not collegewide; instructional areas choose which elements of the institutional SLOs to assess. This is a new process that the team recommends be monitored for the implementation stages (Standard II.A.2.b).

The college addresses instructional quality, breadth, depth, and rigor through articulation agreements, and the establishment of course requisites. Quality, breadth, depth, rigor, and sequencing are indirectly assessed through program review and curriculum review. Time to completion does not appear to be addressed in a systematic manner (Standard II.A.2.c).

Cosumnes River College uses a variety of delivery modes and teaching methodologies. The primary nontraditional delivery mode is distance education, which grew approximately 89 % from 2004 to 2007. The college has also developed several learning communities, including the Diop Scholars program, which focuses on African American issues, the Puente Project, the MESA program, and a freshman seminar program. The college's curriculum management software requires instructors to identify appropriate teaching methodologies for courses that are linked to SLOs (Standard II.A.2.d).

The program review process is conducted by each program every four years. All programs are undergoing program review in 2009-2010, with a smaller midterm update scheduled for 2011-2012. Evaluation of both programs and courses is included in the program review process. The college's curriculum management software is used to manage course review. Programs' future needs and plans are included in program review. The achievement of learning outcomes at the program level is also included as an important component of

program review. Reporting achievement of learning outcomes at the course level does not appear to be a part of program review. The program review document contains a table for listing course-level SLOs; however, there is no reporting on the assessment cycle for the course-level SLO's. The team commends the CRC Program Review Process and encourages timely implementation of the reporting of student achievement of course-level SLOs into program review (Standard II.A.2.e).

Program evaluation and resource allocation are integrated. The program review process requires completion of detailed program plans including identification of resource requirements. The planning agendas are forwarded to the unit/division planning process for prioritization, and then to the resource allocation process. Completed program reviews are evaluated by members of the College Planning Committee, allowing for validation of the program reviews and program plans (Standard II.A.2.f)

Measuring the achievement of student learning outcomes involves a set of newly created processes. At the level of program SLOs, faculty members within the program are instructed to choose an important issue that affects student success and create an assessment related to that issue. Student services personnel and administrative program staff members participate in the same process. The assessment process is designed to occur on an annual basis, with programs identifying issues and assessing outcomes tied to the issue in the fall semester, then discussing what was learned during the spring semester.

At the collegewide and general education level, the Outcomes Assessment Task Force has devised a four-year cycle, with a different focus in each of the years. During the annual program assessment process, programs which address the collegewide/general education focus are encouraged to assess the collegewide outcome during that year. Additionally, a student self-assessment survey is used as an indirect measure of the achievement of learning outcomes.

Some common course essay examinations are used in English and ESL. A content review of the examinations, conducted by faculty members minimizes any bias in the testing instrument. Instructional departments are responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of common examinations (Standard II.A.2.g).

The award of course credit is based on student achievement of stated outcomes and appears to be consistent with accepted institutional policies. (Standard IIA.2.h) Degrees and certificates are awarded based on college requirements, not necessarily achievement of student learning outcomes, but the college is working to increase the assessment of program SLOs (Standard II.A.2.i).

General education requirements include humanities and fine arts, natural sciences, and social sciences; life-long learning, communication, information competency, computer literacy, scientific and quantitative reasoning, and critical analysis; ethics and citizenship. (Standard IIA.3) Degree programs also included areas of inquiry or an established interdisciplinary core (Standard II.A.4).

Most vocational certificates and degrees use competency-based curricula. The college collects information about external licensure rates as well as other completion data about students in vocational programs (Standard II.A.5).

Policies addressing transfer of credit are clearly stated in the college catalog. The college regularly develops articulation agreements with four-year institutions. Counselors and faculty members evaluate courses from other institutions (Standard II.A.6.a).

According to the self study, program elimination is initiated by the academic department or division housing the program. The program discontinuance policy indicates that the initiation of a discontinuance request may come from a faculty member or administrator. In 2003, one program was eliminated and arrangements were made to continue offering required courses until all students could complete their coursework. This procedure follows the program discontinuance policy, which says "Any students who are pursuing a degree in the affected program must be given a reasonable opportunity to complete the required course work before a discontinuance is completed" (Standard II.A.6.b).

Based on the college website and catalog, the institution represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently. The self study indicates that publications such as the catalog and class schedule are reviewed on an ongoing basis (Standard IIA.6.c).

The college has established policies on academic freedom, academic responsibility, and student academic integrity and honesty. According to policy, faculty members encourage the free pursuit of learning and the faculty evaluation process includes elements of fairness and lack of bias. (Standard II A.7.a) In addition to the policy on student academic integrity, the college developed an academic integrity statement and an honor code (Standard II.A.7.b).

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

### ***Standard IIA. Instructional Programs***

#### **Conclusions**

Cosumnes River College has made progress in defining student learning outcomes at the college wide, general education, and program levels. Assessment is beginning at these levels. The definition and assessment of student learning outcomes at the course level is less developed, and a well-crafted plan for completion by 2012 is in place.

CRC meets the requirements of Standard II.A. After completion of a full implementation cycle, when college personnel have had the opportunity to fully integrate program review, unit plans and resource allocation with the strategic plan and the educational master plan, their planning procedures should become evident.

### ***Standard IIA. Instructional Programs***

#### **Recommendations**

See Cosumnes River College Recommendation 1

***Standard IIB: Student Support Services***  
**General Observations**

Cosumnes River College provides a variety of student support services to enhance student learning. Many services are available online to support distance education students and the small number of students taking classes at off-campus locations. (Approximately 1 FTEs) The college has supported many activities and programs designed to enhance student understanding of diversity.

***Standard IIB: Student Support Services***  
**Findings and Evidence**

The college offers a selection of support services for the general student population and for specific populations. Due to the recent increase in students served by distance education, the college is working to evaluate services available to these students and ensure that it meets their learning needs. It is unclear from the self study whether students enrolled at Amador County or students in the study abroad program receive equivalent support services as students enrolled on campus. (Standard II.B.1, II.B.3.a)

The college catalog contains accurate and current information about degree and certificate requirements, policies affecting students, and locations where other policies may be found. There is some concern among team members that the student code of conduct is not made widely available to students although it can be found in the faculty guide and in various locations on the web site. (Standard II.B.2)

CRC offers many opportunities for students to develop personal and civic responsibility, including student observation of and participation in state and federal government activities. The college also offers opportunities for intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development, including clubs and activities. (Standard II.B.3.b)

Comprehensive counseling services are provided, including counseling via email and Saturday counseling. Faculty and other personnel who work in counseling areas are provided with appropriate levels of training. The counseling program is evaluated as part of program review. Additionally, counseling has been evaluated through the Noel-Levitz survey, which showed a slight improvement in student perceptions of counselor preparation between 2004 and 2008. (Standard II.B.3.c)

The college demonstrates its commitment to support student appreciation of diversity. Several student services and learning community programs are aimed at diverse student groups. Activities and events on campus promote the understanding and appreciation of diversity, including recognition of African American and Latino students' achievement. (Standard II.B.3.d)

The college follows the placement validation requirements of the California community college system, which require regular evaluation and validation of instruments used for course placement. These requirements also include efforts to identify and minimize biases. The college reviews the instruments it uses and changes them, including those from third-party publishers, if bias is identified. (Standard II.B.3.e)

The self study describes the institution's procedures for storing and backing up student records. Policies regarding access to student records are published in the catalog. (II.B.3.f)

Student support services are evaluated through the college's program review process, which was revised in 2008 and 2009. The college presents several examples of program review leading to successful resource requests for service improvements. (Standard II.B.4)

***Standard IIB: Student Support Services***  
**Conclusions**

By creating and revising a Distance Education Master Plan and by increasing the availability of online student support services, the college has addressed the growth of distance education enrollments. As it moves forward in planning for the Elk Grove Campus, the college should ensure that services at that campus are comparable in quality and availability to services offered at the main campus.

CRC lists student rights and responsibilities on the web page, in the catalog, and in the class schedule. Expectations of student behavior are listed in the catalog. It would be informative and beneficial to students if standards of conduct (R-2441) were also printed in the catalog and in the class schedule. Additionally, although student satisfaction with counseling did show a slight improvement (0.18) on the Noel-Levitz survey, the team encourages the college to assess training possibilities to enhance counseling services to students.

The college provides clubs and activities for students and is committed to support student appreciation and knowledge of diversity. The college student population growth has far exceeded the space capacity available for student use regarding programs and activities. The team encourages the college to maintain their commitment for proposed expansion, specifically tied to student development, student government, and student club space. The team concludes that CRC meets Standard II.B.

***Standard IIB: Student Support Services***  
**Recommendations**

None

***Standard IIC: Library and Learning Support Services***  
**General Observations**

The college library and other learning support services enhance student learning. Information competency is included in college wide and general education student learning outcomes. The library's services and instructional offerings undergo regular evaluation through program review.

***Standard IIC: Library and Learning Support Services***  
**Findings and Evidence**

Educational materials and equipment are selected by librarians with the advice of faculty and staff. In recent years, library funding has not kept pace with requests for additions to the collection. The college plans to address funding by looking at districtwide library funding. Staff members assigned to the libraries at the four colleges in the district have begun to investigate alternative library funding models (Standard II.C.1.a).

The college provides various types of instruction for library users, including a course covering library research and information literacy, online research tutorials, and research workshops by faculty request. One collegewide student learning outcome involves using information resources to gather discipline-specific information. General education SLOs also include information competency, and there has been discussion of creating an information competency graduation requirement (Standard II.C.1.b).

Students and staff are provided adequate access to the on-campus library. Additionally, students have access to the library's online research databases from campus and from off-campus locations. Online access serves on-campus students, distance education students, and students taking courses at other locations such as Amador County, approximately 50 miles from Cosumnes River College. The self study indicates that study space in the library may soon become inadequate. Access to library services is provided to students regardless of location or means of delivery (Standard II.C.1.c).

The college and the district provide for maintenance and security of the library. There is some concern that the inventory security control gate is failing and the video security system is out-of-date. The college plans to address these concerns. Maintenance and security for other learning support services such as computer labs are not discussed in the self study (Standard II.C.1.d).

The college has formal agreements with outside agencies for some services, as well as maintenance agreements for equipment and most of these agreements are regularly evaluated (Standard II.C.1.e).

The library undergoes program review for its instructional course as well as for its services. Program reviews feed into unit plans, indicating that evaluations are used as the basis for improvement; however, details about how program review has led to program improvement is not evident. Student learning outcomes have been identified both for the course and for the services. Library services have also been evaluated through surveys, including a Noel-Levitz student survey and a faculty/staff survey preparing for the self study. Computer labs are evaluated through the program reviews of the individual departments in charge of the labs. The team is somewhat concerned about the relatively small number of computers available to students in open labs, although college staff and students consider the availability sufficient (Standard II.C.2).

***Standard IIC: Library and Learning Support Services***  
**Conclusions**

The college offers library and learning support services to support instructional programs. CRC has addressed services provided through the library; however, there is little description or analysis of other learning support services. The team concludes that CRC meets Standard II.C.

***Standard IIC: Library and Learning Support Services***  
**Recommendations**

None



## **STANDARD III Resources**

### ***Standard IIIA Human Resources***

#### **General Comments**

The staff at Cosumnes River College (CRC) is well qualified to perform their duties and to provide an educational environment focused on excellence in teaching, learning, and support services. The college has developed, through shared governance, a systematic, transparent, fair and equitable process for hiring personnel. There are clearly established evaluation procedures. CRC provides a comprehensive array of professional development and training activities for all employees. The college has a collection of practices, programs, and initiatives that foster cultural competence and the understanding of equity and diversity issues on campus, in the classroom and community. CRC has a well-established and effective planning process utilizing program review and unit plans to determine and to rank human resources needs.

### ***Standard IIIA Human Resources***

#### **Findings and Evidence**

Qualifications for the faculty and administration follow the Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators list. Academic departments may establish additional criteria to be required of the applicants. All faculty members possess degrees from educational institution recognized by United States accrediting associations. The qualifications for staff positions are determined by criteria developed by the Human Resources Department and the respective collective bargaining unit, and with input from employees and supervisors familiar with the classification process for changes and requests for new classified positions are described in Article 15 of the classified bargaining agreement (Standard III.A.1.a).

The Human Resources Department (HR) maintains all files in the electronic system, called On Base. Board policies delineate the employees' rights and procedures regarding file access, confidentiality and content (5170, 6150, 9510) (Standard III.A.3.b).

The Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD) hiring manual for full-time faculty was revised in March 2009. Following the procedures in this well organized and useful document ensures a consistent recruitment, screening, interviewing, rating and checking of references for faculty hires. Classified hiring complies with LRCCD regulations, CRC standard operating procedures, and applicable bargaining agreements (Standard IIIA.7). The College President and Vice Presidents are responsible for conducting the hiring for administrative and confidential positions as described in the 9000 series of Board Policies 7 Regulations. (Standard III.A.3.a and 3.b).

All positions are advertized on the LRCCD website (Standard IIIA.3), local, state, and national media outlets. In 2007 – 08, the District implemented the PeopleAdmin Software package. All job postings comply with the Title 5 equality principles, and best practices. In the CRC 2008 employee survey, over 75% of the respondents indicated that the hiring

processes resulted in the hiring of personnel who would advance the mission of CRC (Standard III.A.4.a, 4.b, and 4.c).

The college evaluates the effectiveness of the number of personnel through program review, unit planning, and program Student Learning Outcomes. The CRC 2008 Employee Survey reflected that 70% of the employees believe the departments were adequately staffed. The LRCCD uses the ratio of 900 to 1 (900 students to 1 FTE counselor) to maintain adequate counseling services. The LRCCD has to meet its full time faculty (FTF) obligation by planning to hire faculty above the obligation number (Standard III.A.2).

Performance review, formats, and criteria, are negotiated with all bargaining units. The evaluations for faculty, classified, confidential, and administrative staff are conducted on a regular basis in compliance with Board Policy section 5140, 6140, 9140. The Chancellor evaluates the President on an annual basis. The CRC 2008 Employee Survey indicated that 80% of those surveyed felt that their performance evaluations followed the correct procedures and that their Performance Evaluations accurately assessed their effectiveness. (Standard III.A.1.b). The faculty evaluation form has been modified to include a component for Student Learning Outcomes (Standard III.A.1.c).

CRC has adopted a faculty statement of professional ethics. In addition Board Policy 3114 addresses ethical behavior for employees and board members. Article 11 of the faculty contract addresses faculty responsibility for maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning and to free expression of ideas and opinions. (LRCFT Faculty Contract) The institution's core values also promote ethical behavior for all its employees (Standard III.A.3).

Fostering cultural competence is a core value of CRC. The college includes a definition of cultural competence in its mission statement, and each job applicant receives a copy of the definition. The college's Cultural Competence and Equity Committee (CC&E) develops and implements the college's Cultural Competence Strategic Plan. The Professional Development Committee (PDC) conducts cultural awareness training and provides opportunities for CRC employees to have cultural experiences. Committee membership for both the CC&E and the PDC are representative of the major campus constituencies (Standard II.A.4).

The college has instituted a "Safe Spaces" program. "Safe Spaces" are offices on campus, designated by decal, where anyone who feels threatened or unsafe can seek assistance and support regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, religious affiliation, or political views. The program is an additional resource to counseling and police services for individuals to discuss, and act upon, situations of intolerance and bias (Standard III.A.4.c).

The 2008 campus survey indicated that well over 90% of CRC respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the campus acknowledges diversity and that the campus is welcoming and positive. Eighty-six percent of the CRC employees surveyed agreed that the campus demonstrates a commitment to equity and diversity. CRC demonstrates an outstanding commitment to cultural competence (Standard III.A.4.a).

In addition to the PDC, another source of professional development is the Center for the Advancement of Staff and Student Learning (CASSL). The CASSL and PDC provide the employees at CRC with a comprehensive menu of activities and workshops to improve teaching, learning effectiveness, and student services. The PDC has a systematic process for assessing the professional development needs of employees and develops the Professional Development Plan based on these needs. Approximately 75% of the respondents to the 2008 employee survey indicated that CRC provides sufficient support for professional development.

CRC places a high value on having a diverse faculty and staff. The campus equity officer meets regularly with the LRCCD Human Resources Office for training and to review hiring processes and recent legal decisions. The campus equity officer prepares training for hiring committee members based on the Equity Handbook. Sexual harassment training is provided to managers every two years. Annually, employees receive a rights and responsibility memorandum as a reminder of state and federal mandates and district policies such as sexual harassment, non-discrimination, computer use, and the Clery Act (Standard III.A.4.b).

Twice a year, the executive staff and Board of Trustees review the employee data on race/ethnicity and sex. In 2008 CRC was comparable to the state averages for community college districts for all categories. CRC has made a concerted effort to increase the diversity of its employees through specialized recruitment and advertisement. The college's 2005 Student Equity Plan is not current due to the large growth in enrollment in recent years. Some of the data in the plan refer as far back as 1993. The most recent data listed in the plan is based on 2003 demographics (Standard III.A.4.b).

The College Planning Committee (CPC) has designed a program review process called the Program Overview and Forecast (ProF). It is the essential component of institutional planning and development. ProF allows faculty and staff to examine their programs in relation to Student Learning Outcomes and Program Student Learning Outcomes and includes an analysis of personnel needs and requests. The requests are ranked by the divisions and move forward through the position prioritization process. Ultimately, the College President submits a final listing of positions to the District prioritization process. The District determines, as prescribed by law, and, as agreed in collective bargaining, the number of positions each campus receives (Standard III.A.6).

### ***Standard IIIA Human Resources***

#### **Conclusion**

The college employs qualified personnel who are hired and evaluated by well established Board policies and effective district procedures. There is a significant commitment to cultural competence as defined in the college's statement of values, and CRC provides numerous opportunities for professional development to all employees. Planning for Human Resources is fully integrated into the institution's planning process.

The college meets this standard.

***Standard IIIA Human Resources***  
**Recommendations**

None

***Standard IIIB Physical Resources***  
**General Observations**

The physical resources at Cosumnes River College (CRC) are planned to enhance the learning environment of the campus. The Facilities Master Plan (FMP) was established in 2004 in response to the passage by the electorate of a \$265 million general obligation bond (Measure A) for the Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD). Measure A provided \$79 million dollars for construction projects at CRC. The college has recently initiated the process of creating a new FMP, which is necessary because CRC has revised its mission statement (Standard IA.1), developed a new strategic plan, and will receive \$159 million from a second general obligation bond (Measure M). Measure M was approved by the voters in November 2008 and will provide \$475 million for LRCCD to meet the facilities needs of its four colleges until 2019. The District has developed a long range capital plan for CRC

CRC has established processes and systems for the allocation of all physical resources including buildings, classrooms, offices, computers, and other equipment. The Budget committee has continuously refined its equipment purchasing processes. The college offers classes at an offsite location in Amador County (approximately 1 FTE). CRC is planning to open its first permanent outreach center in the city of Elk Grove in 2013.

***Standard IIIB Physical Resources***  
**Findings and Evidence**

CRC opened in fall 1970 and is located on 159 acres in the southern portion of the city of Sacramento. The main campus is well-planned and well-designed, and is intentionally situated on a crest to give the college a prominent physical presence. The campus has a park-like environment with over 800 hundred trees. CRC also has excellent athletic facilities, including a 25 meter swimming pool, 8 tennis courts, a stadium, softball and baseball fields, five multi-use fields, and a gym. The grounds of the campus are clean and well-manicured. In the 2008 Survey, nearly 82 % of the employees agreed or strongly agreed that the college facilities are adequately maintained (Standard III.B).

There are currently 338,921 assignable square feet of instructional and support space for over 16,000 students. CRC has grown from 5 buildings to 17 buildings. At the completion of the bond programs in 2019, the college will have renovated and expanded an additional 155,411 square feet of instructional and office space. Also completed will be a 2000 car parking structure and the new educational center at Elk Grove. The primary data used to evaluate the sufficiency of classrooms, laboratories, and other facilities are the capacity-to-load ratios and instructional space utilization reports.

Facilities planning, design, construction and maintenance are the primary responsibility of the Los Rios Facility Management (LRFM) Department. CRC employees collaborate with the District staff in designing the functional elements of buildings to ensure that the buildings support the student learning and overall institutional effectiveness. Faculty and staff have been active participants in the planning and designing of the new facilities financed by general obligation bonds. In compliance with Proposition 39, the college has established a citizens' bond oversight committee to ensure that all resources are appropriated according to the provisions of the ballot measures (Standard III.B).

All building projects, whether new or renovation, are designed, constructed and maintained in compliance with access, fire and life safety, structural, and other building code requirements. CRC and the LRFM have effective procedures to regularly evaluate the safety of physical resources against multiple criteria, including building codes, OSHA requirements, and risk management best practices. The CRC Operations Department works with the LRFM to develop action plans to correct unsafe conditions. All off-site facilities are also reviewed to ensure access, safety, security, and a healthy learning and working environment prior to and while the facility is being used for college programs and/or services (Standard III.B.1.a).

Overall, there is a strong agreement that all college facilities are safe and secure. In the 2008 CRC employee survey, over 75% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that CRC provides a safe and healthy learning and working environment. The same percentage felt that access to Campus Police is adequate, and that CRC sufficiently addresses security issues. In addition, 86.9% of CRC employees felt safe from accidents and 79.9% felt personally safe at work.

While buildings are constructed to meet current ADA standards, the ADA transition plan identified many architectural barriers in older buildings. Funding limitations have prevented the removal of all access barriers, and there are definite challenges and inconveniences experienced by the disabled. However, the college provides alternative accommodations and services to ensure all students have access to campus programs and services. The college has recently begun the process for updating its current ADA transition plan (Standard III.B.1.b).

Long-range capital plans are developed jointly between the LRFM and CRC personnel. The primary document in the long-range capital plan is the 2004 Facilities Master Plan. (FMP) The FMP is scheduled to be updated in 2009-10. The FMP is a collaborative effort and is based on the LRCCD strategic plan, as well as, the CRC Mission statement and education master plan. The unit plans done in the program review process serve as the foundation of the FMP. In recent years, the LRFM and CRC have developed standardized criteria for design, construction, and equipment to lower the total cost of ownership (TCO) over the long term. TCO is also used in the context of energy efficiency. LRCCD and CRC are committed to reducing energy consumption by using more efficient conventional mechanical and electrical systems and by exploring alternative energy sources. The FMP and the Five Year Capital Construction Plan allow for informed decisions to support the institutional improvement goals of the college (Standard III.B.2.a).

In June 2007, the LRCCD adopted the District's "Center Development Guidelines." The document was revised in September 2008. The document states the planning assumptions and service levels for any new center depending on its development stage. This document also delineates the responsibilities of the district and college for educational center development and for providing specific services. The planning assumptions provide clear standards and definitions so there will be a consistency of institutional support at existing and new centers. CRC is planning to open the college's first permanent outreach center in the city of Elk Grove in 2013. Classes will be taught at a temporary site beginning with the fall 2010 semester.

The college planning process includes input from all campus constituency groups. The Health Facilities Committee (HFC) is a shared governance committee and is responsible for making facilities recommendations. Facility projects, resource needs, and equipment needs are prioritized in division unit plans. The unit plans are reviewed by the HFC and based on campus wide space and resource issues a recommendation is made. This integrated planning approach ensures that facilities decisions originate from the institutional needs at the department level (Standard III.B.2.b).

The 2008 Employee Survey showed that 26.3% of the CRC employees disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "there is adequate coordination across divisions, departments, and the district." In response to this item, CRC, as a planning agenda, will implement an integrated, online facilities request program by spring 2011. This is expected to improve communication between the programs, college and district, and streamline the facilities work request system.

### ***Standard IIIB Physical Resources***

#### **Conclusion**

Cosumnes River College is a well maintained and safe campus. The campus has been carefully planned within the instruction and service framework of the college and district. A new facilities master plan will be developed in 2010. The college integrates departmental program planning with facilities planning.

The college meets this standard.

### ***Standard IIIB Physical Resources***

#### **Recommendations**

None

### ***Standard IIIC. Technology Resources***

#### **General Comments**

Review of the self-study along with interviews with key personal provided a clear description of the decision making in regards to technology on campus, as well as a full description of the services available at CRC. Staff members are satisfied with the support provided by the

IT department and with the replacement schedule for technology. One recent change was the migration to the Desire2Learn course management system for its online classes, which has been accomplished with minimal disruption to students and has improved online course delivery. PeopleSoft is considered sufficient for the college's needs and is fully integrated across campus and with the district. Technology planning takes place with the input of unit plans, which prioritize based on college wide strategic goals. However, decisions about technology purchases should be based on clear criteria or a decision-making rubric so that the college community understands and supports choices.

### ***Standard III.C. Technology Resources*** **Findings and Evidence**

CRC has a Dean of Learning Resources and College Technology, a Distance Education Coordinator (faculty position), a Distance Education and Media Department, and an Information Technology Department. The college has parallel processes for requesting technology: ITMB, for classroom needs, and COB, for non-classroom needs. Requests are gathered through the program review and unit plan process (on a three-year cycle), then endorsed by the Distance Education and Information Technology (DEIT) committee and the Budget Committee. These recommendations are then forwarded to the President for final approval. Some recent actions to strengthen support were the switch to Desire2Learn (a district decision with substantial input from the colleges) and the upgrade to PeopleSoft version nine. As stated in the self-study, “[f]aculty and staff have the primary role to assess and identify technology needs to meet department goals” (page 213). It is not clear whether faculty and staff are directed to assess based on overall educational goals of the college, although there is a Distance Education Master Plan and the DEIT provides some measure of guidance (Standard III.C.1).

CRC provides a variety of comprehensive services as well as equipment. The DEIT, a shared governance committee, meets monthly to review requests, monitor needs, and implement the Distance Education Master Plan. The district supports the online CMS, currently Desire2Learn, and CRC provides more than 300 computers for student use in a variety of labs, some that are open nights and weekends. Students interviewed expressed satisfaction with the number of labs and hours of operation (Standard III.C.1.a.).

After an inclusive and faculty-driven review process, the LRCCD moved its online classes to Desire2Learn. Students interviewed find the new system more user-friendly and reliable than BlackBoard. Approximately 50% of all sections offered in fall 2009 use Desire2Learn components. Faculty can receive ongoing training or use training guides to assist in the development of online courses or the use of campus technology such as PeopleSoft. Training is generally provided through other employees, flex workshops or outside vendors. For students, the library provides training in online database use and LRCCD has a 24-hour help desk for online class issues. The CIS department recently hired an Instruction Assistant to assist online students in CIS and Business classes. However, the college believes more support after hours is needed to help students access online services; fewer than half of the employees surveyed believe the college has sufficient staff to support student technology needs (Standard III.C.1.b.).

CRC has a robust technology infrastructure that is maintained via a PC Renewal Plan (updated every three years). Departments also request equipment through the program review/unit plan process every two years. The IT department reviews all purchases to ensure compatibility. The college has internal backup plans and off-site storage that have grown in volume over the last few years. Because the college budgets conservatively, it has been able to maintain equipment even during lean fiscal years (Standard III.C.1.c.).

CRC ensures that technology resource distribution supports programs and services through the parallel ITMB and COB processes, through which units request instructional and non-instructional technology resources respectively. After the DEIT and Budget Committees review and prioritize requests, recommendations are made to the President for final approval. Departments also have small contingency funds for any urgent needs. The majority of employees recently surveyed find equipment sufficient to support college needs; CRC has acted recently to address the dissatisfaction with lack of wireless access by expanding it to the entire campus in summer 2009 (Standard III.C.1.d.).

CRC's primary means of technology planning comes from the individual program reviews and unit plans prepared by staff. Requests are then reviewed by the DEIT and Budget Committee. While CRC has a Distance Education Master Plan, it lacks a comprehensive Technology Plan that is integrated with an educational master plan and strategic plan. In order to meet planning standards promulgated by WASC, CRC should develop a technology plan that aligns with the educational master plan and strategic plan. A comprehensive technology plan for the college will give staff more guidance in the development of individual plans and requests (Standard III.C.2.).

### ***Standard IIIC. Technology Resources*** **Conclusions**

Overall, technology needs are met and staff members are sufficient to support college goals. CRC is to be commended for its off-site storage plan and other backup systems. Technology planning should be more strongly integrated with overall institutional planning. The college has a variety of committees and processes in place that are clear and seemingly effective.

The college partially meets this standard.

### ***Standard IIIC. Technology Resources*** **Recommendations**

See Recommendation 2

### ***Standard IIID. Financial Resources*** **General Observations**

Cosumnes River College (CRC) and the Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD) have a reputation for fiscal prudence and for the efficient use of financial resources. Financial



resources are allocated by proven formulas which are based on a variety of measures, such as FTES, cap load, assignable square footage, number of educational centers, etc. The formula driven allocation model minimizes conflict among the LRCCD's colleges as funds are allocated in proportion to college size and needs. In recognition of the budgeting process, the LRCCD was awarded the Meritorious Budget Award (MBA) by the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO). It was the first community college district in California to receive this prestigious award.

The LRCCD reported an unrestricted reserve of 9.5% for 2008. The district has had minimal findings in its' annual audits. Of special note, is the fact that the LRCCD has fully funded the liabilities for accrued vacation and faculty leave banking, as well as, having set aside 92% of the Actuarial Accrued Liability (AAL) for the district's other post retirement benefits (OPEB) as required by GASB 45.

Although the primary responsibility for fiscal services and management remains with the Business Administration Department, General Services Department and the district budget committee, the college plays the important role of ensuring that resource allocation is directly linked to the institutional planning process and that the financial resources are spent on agreed priorities. The college is also tasked with monitoring expenditures.

#### ***Standard III.D. Financial Resources Findings and Evidence***

The annual budget reflects the goals and objectives adopted in the district's Strategic Plan, as well as those prioritized by district leadership. The strategic plan is developed with input from all constituent groups. A district wide budget committee meets monthly during the academic year to review and provide recommendations on the district's budget. CRC uses its mission and goals as a platform for financial planning in the budget committee. Through the program review process, the college budget committee prioritizes allocations for equipment, supplies, and classified staff (Standard III.D.1.a).

The college's institutional planning reflects a realistic assessment of available financial resources. The various formulas for allocating financial resources and conservative fiscal practices allow the district and college the flexibility in planning for the future, and ensure that expenditures are not made before actual revenues are received. In addition, the district matches revenues and expenditures with respect to the duration of the funding stream, and only uses continuous revenue sources to fund ongoing expenditures (Standard III.D.1.b).

The district and college consider long-range financial priorities when developing the annual budget. The district has adopted a minimum uncommitted fund balance of 3% to allow for contingencies or unforeseen circumstances, and to ensure long term financial stability. In 2008, the uncommitted fund balance was 3.4%. The LRCCD also seeks to fully fund all current and long-term financial obligations. In addition to maintaining and funding a self-insurance fund, the district began funding its' other post retirement benefits (OPEB), required by GASB 45, over 20 years ago. As of July 1, 2007, \$53.9 million, or 92% of the liability was funded. The LRCCD has fully funded the liabilities for accrued vacation and faculty

leave banking, and has designated funds to pay the principle and interest for the Certificates of Participation (COP) for the construction of a district parking garage. The District also allocates financial resources each year to address the maintenance of aging facilities (Standard III.D.1.c).

For decades the LRCCD has used a sophisticated method of allocation of its financial resources to meet the programmatic and operational requirements of the district. Allocations undergo a shared governance process that originates at the college and is processed through the LRCCD administration, district-wide budget committee, and the Board of Trustees. Each college receives a college development fund (CDF) allocation based on a formula which includes a base amount plus allocations for WSCH, building square footage, and faculty FTE (Standard III.D.1.d).

The LRCCD uses the PeopleSoft integrated software application to manage its financial resources. The system allows for online budget inquiry as well as the creation of specialized reports. Funds cannot be encumbered until funds are appropriated through the budget process. PeopleSoft also has a position control module which allows for a close monitoring of human resource transactions. The district and the college review budgets on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis. The LRCCD reports its revenue and expenditures to the state on a quarterly basis (Standard III.D.2).

All long-term financial and contractual commitments must be reviewed and authorized by the district administration. Investment policies provide direction and authorization for the investment of all district and foundation funds. Only vice chancellors, the deputy chancellor, and Chancellor are authorized to sign contractual agreements with external agencies. The district has policies and procedures that ensure contractual agreements with external agencies are consistent with the mission statement, and maintain the integrity of the institution (Standard III.D.2).

The district and college have effective financial management system with appropriate control mechanisms to assure the integrity of the institution. The district undergoes an external audit annually. There have been minimal findings and all findings were corrected prior to the next fiscal year (Standard III.D.2.a).

Accurate and timely data about the district and college budget and financial information is readily available to all employees via the district financial information website, and through regular communication at the district and college budget committee meetings. The PeopleSoft system has allowed for enhanced monitoring of college and program budgets, as well as the district finances (Standard III.D.2.b).

The district had a general fund balance reserve of 9.5%. The cash balance was sufficient to support district operations and any unexpected fiscal emergencies, such as the schedule apportionment deferrals. Tax Revenue Anticipation Notes are issued when necessary and are coordinated by the District Finance and Administration Departments. In fiscal year 2008, the District Budget Committee recommended setting aside an additional reserve of \$2,875,000 in

continuing and one-time funds as a contingency for future funding due to the State's current fiscal situation (Standard III.D.2.c).

The LRCCD utilizes self-insured liability programs. All risk management services are coordinated by the General Services Department. Reserves are maintained based on actuarial formulas that account for current and potential claims (Standard III.D.2.d).

The Cosumnes River College Foundation is a community and campus based organization serving the college within the legal structure of the Los Rios Foundation, a non-profit, 501(3)(c) organization. The foundation works to promote the excellence of the college as an educational facility and community center, to raise and receive donations and in-kind gifts, and to administer the fund through established student scholarships, grants, and loans. The foundation is audited yearly by an independent auditor (Standard III.D.2.e-f).

The district and college regularly evaluates financial management processes and makes improvements as needed. A group titled the "Financial Users Group" meets regularly to discuss issues associated with the fiscal management processes. The Vice Presidents of Administration meet monthly with the Deputy Chancellor and other district fiscal service staff to discuss issues and suggest improvements. The recommendations of the annual audits are also utilized to make improvements to internal controls and correct accounting errors (Standard III.D.2.g).

The district and college regularly and systematically assess the effective and efficient use of financial resources by using internal and external audits, program reviews, unit plans, productivity reports, staffing analysis, budget committee evaluations, utility usage reports and other data. In addition, the college planning process provides a means for the systematic assessment of programs and services and effective use of financial resources. Because the single largest component of the budget is the instructional salaries and benefits, there is significant review of the class offerings and course efficiency rates when faculty positions are requested (Standard III.D.3).

### ***Standard IIID. Financial Resources***

#### **Conclusion**

Financial resources at Cosumnes River College are sufficient to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness. The institution does an exemplary job in planning and managing its financial resources for both the short and long term. The institution has demonstrated fiscal stability, and with its budget allocation model, the fiscal stability should continue. Financial planning is integrated with institutional planning. The college meets this standard.

### ***Standard IIID. Financial Resources***

#### **Recommendations**

None

## **STANDARD IV**

### **Leadership and Governance**

#### ***Standard IVA Decision-Making Roles and Processes***

##### **General Comments**

CRC's leadership, throughout the organization, is dedicated to improving institutional effectiveness and supporting extensive dialogue about college issues. With a variety of shared governance committees and opportunities for faculty, staff and students to participate, CRC strives to empower all college constituents and support best practices. Decision-making processes are understood by college employees, students, and faculty members. The decision-making at CRC will be enhanced when the institution fully integrates planning and develops better defined criteria for decisions.

#### ***Standard IVA Decision-Making Roles and Processes***

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

CRC has a variety of shared governance committees with regular meetings and defined roles, such as the College Planning Committee and the Budget Committee, that allows members of all constituencies to participate in decision-making and empowers them to be innovative. One example of a group taking the initiative to improve the college was the creation of the Campus Sustainability Committee by the Academic Senate. Constituencies have their own governance groups and participate in periodic Leadership Summits. A commitment to continuous improvement is also evidenced by the Center for the Advancement of Staff and Student Learning. (CASSL) Some concerns exist about the college's support for release time for leadership roles as well as consistent funding for initiatives such as CASSL. The college may benefit from a published process for the allocation of reassigned time and/or stipends for leadership roles for faculty, such as department chairs. Committees are characterized by collegiality and agendas reveal the common goal of working toward institutional improvement (Standard IV.A.1).

CRC has well-established shared governance committees and processes that support a participatory decision-making structure. Full-time faculty members are required by contract to participate in college service, although the compressed calendar may have created some difficulties in scheduling for some faculty. Student representation on shared governance committees is improving in recent semesters, partially due to the fact that paid student ambassadors are required to serve on committees and report on their activities (Standard IV.A.2). While committees allocate resources and make other decisions based on unit plans that are informed by strategic goals, it would be advisable for committees to develop decision-making criteria or rubrics to guide and support decisions.

CRC's Academic Senate is a strong body with a substantial voice in decision-making on campus. It meets with the faculty union through the Senate Union Joint Issues Committee to join forces on common interests. Both students and classified staff also have well-established governance groups. Classified staff members are working on developing a

mentoring program to assist staff in understanding and participating in college service. Faculty members plan to revise their existing mentoring programs (Standard IV.A.2.a.). Faculty members have appropriate oversight of student learning programs and services through the Academic Senate, the Curriculum Committee, the Matriculation Committee and the districtwide Program Placement Council. Faculty members have leadership roles on all these committees. Faculty members use a campus-developed software system, SOCRATES, for curriculum development and indicate that it has improved efficiency in course development and approval (Standard IV.A.2.b.).

CRC has an established governance structure, including an Executive Council, Academic Senate and Associated Student Government, to facilitate discussion of ideas and communication. The college has guidelines for shared governance committees, all of which are advisory to the president. Research results are used in committee decisions and often disseminated through shared governance committees. A "committee map" would help clarify the roles of each committee and how they interact. In addition to regular meetings, other events such as faculty forums and employee retreats occur throughout any given year (Standard IV.A.3.).

Several programs at CRC receive outside accreditation from agencies such as the American Veterinary Medical Association and the National Automotive Technician Education Foundation; the college's relationship with these outside agencies shows integrity and professionalism. CRC has complied with WASC requirements and has responded appropriately to accreditation recommendations (Standard IV.A.4.).

Standing shared governance committees at CRC provide reports to the Academic Senate at the end of each school year. These committees review and update their charters on a regular basis. Faculty members have held meetings such as the Faculty Forum in 2007 to review decision-making structures and processes. The Academic Senate is leading a process to delineate the purposes and goals of each shared governance committee to create a matrix for the college community (Standard IV.A.5.).

#### ***Standard IVA Decision-Making Roles and Processes*** **Conclusions**

CRC has a well-established governance structure with many committees with opportunities for participation by all college constituencies. Innovative ideas are supported and encouraged. The project spearheaded by Academic Senate to create a matrix of committees and their missions will help clarify decision-making processes. The college president appears to be continuing a tradition of open communication and respect for ideas from all parts of the institution. CRC should publish the results of the Academic Senate committee matrix project for the entire college community.

The institution meets this standard

#### ***Standard IVA Decision-Making Roles and Processes*** **Recommendations**

### Cosumnes River College 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. (Standard IV.A.5)

### ***Standard IVB. Board and Administrative Organization*** **General Observations**

The LRCCD has well-established policies governing their own operation and the delegation of duties to the CRC president. It follows written procedures for evaluating the Chancellor and the college presidents as well as itself. The CRC President provides effective leadership by continuing the collegial dialogue about issues such as SLO assessment, maintaining an open and accessible presence, and prioritizing planning. The President has appropriate authority to approve final resource allocations within the college. The District has worked over the last several years to clearly delineate district and college responsibilities and to set the standards in prudent fiscal management and fair distribution of resources to the colleges in the district.

### ***Standard IVB. Board and Administrative Organization*** **Findings and Evidence**

The LRCCD Board has policies that define its size, duties, responsibilities and procedures. These policies ensure that the Board has ultimate responsibility for the quality and integrity of the district. All policies are reviewed on a three-year rotating schedule. The Board conducts orientations for new members and participates in orientations provided by California Community College Trustees (CCCT) organization. It has a policy outlining the expectations for Board member conduct and a policy that staggers terms of office (Standard IV.B.1.a-f). Policy 3112 defines the Board's self-evaluation process, although it does not define consequences should the policy be violated as the Standard requires (Standard IV.B.1.g.h).

The Board has received regular updates about the accreditation process and participated in drafting the responses to Standard IV in the most recent self-study (Standard IV.B.1.i). The LRCCD Board is responsible for selecting the Chancellor as well as the college presidents (upon recommendation of the Chancellor). The Board evaluates the Chancellor in a three-component process each year, including a formal evaluation each October in closed session. The formal evaluation uses results from an evaluation instrument completed by constituent groups and community leaders. The CRC president is evaluated twice yearly by the Chancellor using faculty input; according to the self-study, the college is exploring allowing management and classified input as well (Standard IV.B.1.j).

CRC hired a new president in July 2009 and the self-study could not comment on her qualities and qualifications. However, by policy the president has primary responsibility for the operation of the college. Staff interviewed by the team expressed satisfaction with the new president who oversees an extensive management structure that recently added the

positions of Dean of Student Services and Enrollment Management, and Dean of Research and College Planning. Managers are evaluated regularly and receive annual progress reports as well; constituent groups participate in manager evaluations through written input (Standard IV.B.2.a).

The college president emphasizes data-based decision-making and the use of research in institutional improvement as evidenced by the creation of the Dean of Research and College Planning position, which reports directly to the president. The president leads the SLO effort and supports professional development efforts (Standard IV.B.2.b). She reviews regulations and policies, and meets regularly with managers to monitor implementation. Students are included on the President's Council (Standard IV.B.2.c).

LRCCD allocates funds to CRC with a formula-driven process. The college then distributes funds to programs and units following the Budget Committee Handbook and well-established timelines. The president makes all final budget decisions after input from shared governance bodies. Resource allocations are generally made by consensus of the appropriate committees, using information from unit plans. It would be an improvement to develop criteria or rubrics to guide these decisions, especially if resources become scarce in future years. In addition, a map or flowchart of shared governance committees and processes would be helpful to the college community (Standard IV.B.2.d).

In March of 2008, after feedback from various groups, the District Function Mapping Document was created and continues to be reviewed (Standard IV.B.3.a). The district provides services to support CRC such as funding the online learning management system and student information system. There is continual dialogue about district and college responsibilities in an effort to adapt to new situations and needs (Standard IV.B.3.b).

LRCCD allocates funds to CRC based on a formula that ensures fairness to all four colleges. District Policy 8122 delineates the budget guidelines and calendar. Budget allocations are predictable and shared governance groups have opportunities for input into the process. Most CRC employees interviewed expressed satisfaction with the resource allocation process used by the district and praised the district's fiscal conservatism (Standard IV.B.3.c).

The Chancellor gives appropriate authority to the CRC president to implement policies and holds her accountable for meeting college and district goals. The Chancellor holds regular meetings with the presidents for discussion and review of progress in meeting goals (Standard IV.B.3.d).

The district uses various forms of communication, such as newsletters, and a variety of committees to facilitate communication with and among the colleges. (Standard IV.B.3.f) District and college responsibilities have been reviewed for effectiveness as have the district shared governance committees (Standard IV.B.3.g).

### ***Standard IVB. Board and Administrative Organization*** **Conclusions**

The LRCCD governing board has appropriate policies to guide its operations and evaluate itself, the Chancellor and the college presidents. The new CRC president has appropriate authority and has taken steps to preserve the open and collegial culture at the college.

The college meets this standard.

***Standard IV.B Board and Administrative Organization***  
**Recommendations**

None