PALO VERDE COLLEGE

REPORT OF THE INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY FOR REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION

Submitted by:

PALO VERDE COLLEGE
One College Drive
Blythe, CA 92225

Submitted to:

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

March 2008

CERTIFICATION OF THE INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY REPORT

December 11, 2007

TO: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges,
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

FROM: Palo Verde College
One College Drive
Blythe, CA 92225

This Institutional Self Study Report is submitted for the purpose of assisting in the determination of the institution's accreditation status.

We certify that there was broad participation by the campus community, and we believe the Self-Study Report accurately reflects the nature and substance of this institution.

_____
Dr. James Hottois, Superintendent/President

_____
Mr. Lincoln Edmond, President, Board of Trustees

_____
Mr. Peter Martinez, President, Academic Senate

_____
Dr. Robert Robertson, President, Faculty Association (CTA)

_____
Mr. Rich Soto, President, Classified Association (CSEA)

_____
Ms. Claudia Sandoval, President, Associated Student Body

_____
Mr. Brian Thiebaux, Accreditation Liaison Officer/Accreditation Team Chair

"Our aim is to offer academic and vocational training which will fit our students for life in a specialized world, particularly as we know it in the Palo Verde Valley."

Palo Verde College Catalog, 1949-50

"Palo Verde College is a California community college that provides an exemplary learning environment with high quality educational programs and services. The College promotes student success, lifelong learning and community development. Our goal is to create better futures for our students and our communities."

Palo Verde College Mission Statement, 2007

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INTRODUCTION

History of Palo Verde College

This is the sixtieth year of Palo Verde College's existence. In those sixty years it has occupied four locations including a new campus which has nearly doubled in building square footage since it was first occupied in September of 2001, grown to include a significant part of San Bernardino County, established programs that are recognized as models nationally, and expanded its student body.

Palo Verde College was founded on September 15, 1947 as part of the Palo Verde Unified School District. Its first home was with Palo Verde High School on a former Army Air Corp primary training base six miles from the center of Blythe known locally as Morton Air Academy. By 1950 the College's enrollment had reached 250 students.

In September 1958 the College moved to a Spanish style building which had previously served as an elementary school and the high school on East Hobsonway in Blythe. At about that time athletics began to develop at the College. By 1966, the College's last year on East Hobsonway, enrollment had grown to 472 students.

In September 1967 Palo Verde College moved to a new campus adjacent to the high school campus on the corner of Lovekin Blvd. and Chanslorway. On July 1, 1973 the Palo Verde Community College District with its own five-member Board of Trustees came into being and the College separated from the Palo Verde Unified School District. About this time the instructional program expanded to include vocational-technical, developmental, and continuing education courses. Athletics remained an important part of Palo Verde College until 1978 when all sports programs were discontinued.

In 1998 the Palo Verde Community College District annexed the eastern part of San Bernardino County—an area coterminous with the Needles Unified School District—and added two seats to its Board of Trustees (bringing the total to 7) to represent the San Bernardino County section of its District. At that time the college staffed a center on the Needles High School campus. In 2005 the college created School Facilities District Number 1 which encompasses the entire San Bernardino County section of the Palo Verde Community College District. The voters of SFID #1 approved (with 66.6666% voting yes) the issuance of bonds to remodel a former retail building in downtown Needles to serve as a community college. Shortly after that the California Post Secondary Education Commission officially recognized the College's Needles Center. The Center will occupy its own facility in downtown Needles in September 2008. Enrollment in Needles has hovered around 275 students for the past several years.

In Spring Semester 2001 the College began a partnership with Ironwood State Prison, located in Blythe to offer distance education to inmates at the prison. Since then the College's distance education program has grown significantly and has been recognized by the State of California as a "best practice" and has received national recognition.[1] That program enrolled 932 students in Fall Semester 2007. While most of those students are at Ironwood State Prison, the College's distance education courses are now serving students at other state penitentiaries.

[1] "National Geographic Channel Profiles Inmate Community College Students," California Community College Chancellor's Office Press Release

In Fall Semester 2001 Palo Verde College moved to Phase I of an entirely new campus six miles from the center of Blythe and very close to where it began at the former Morton Air Academy. At that time the College's total enrollment had grown to over 3,652 students.

In Fall Semester 2006 the College occupied the Technology Building which is Phase II of the new campus. For the first time in its history it has facilities on its campus for automotive, welding and building trades programs. The College is completing construction on its Physical Education Complex during 2007-08. For the first time in its history Palo Verde College will have its own gymnasium and athletic fields. At the beginning of the 2008-09 academic year the College expects to begin construction on its Fine and Performing Arts Complex. The facility will include a 400 seat theater—the first such facility in Blythe—along with studios for music and art. At the end of the Fall Semester 2007 the College's enrollment had grown to 3,900 students.

From a shared facility on a former airport serving fewer than 200 students to a state-of-the-art campus serving nearly four thousand students, Palo Verde College has grown and prospered in its sixty years of serving people in California's Colorado River region and beyond.

Demographic Information

The following table shows trends in unduplicated student headcount from Fall Semester 2004 through Fall Semester 2007 for each of five key locations in which the College delivers instructional services: Blythe Main Campus, Needles Center, Spring Street campus, correctional facilities, and in-service training[2]:

	Fall 04	Fall 05	Fall 06	Fall 07
Blythe Main Campus	950	941	869	911
Needles Center	441	405	281	260
Spring Street Campus	601	721	610	548
Correctional Facilities[3]	480	547	681	932
In-Service Training[4]	1,688	2,300	1,593	1,268
TOTAL	4,160	4,914	4,034	3,919

Blythe main campus enrollment refers to "community students"[5] residing in Blythe, Ripley, Mesa Verde and other small communities within a few miles of the campus; growth in this student population has remained stable during the past four years, averaging about 900 students. During the same period, enrollment in the College's instructional programs of inmates from state correctional

[2] Registrar Documents

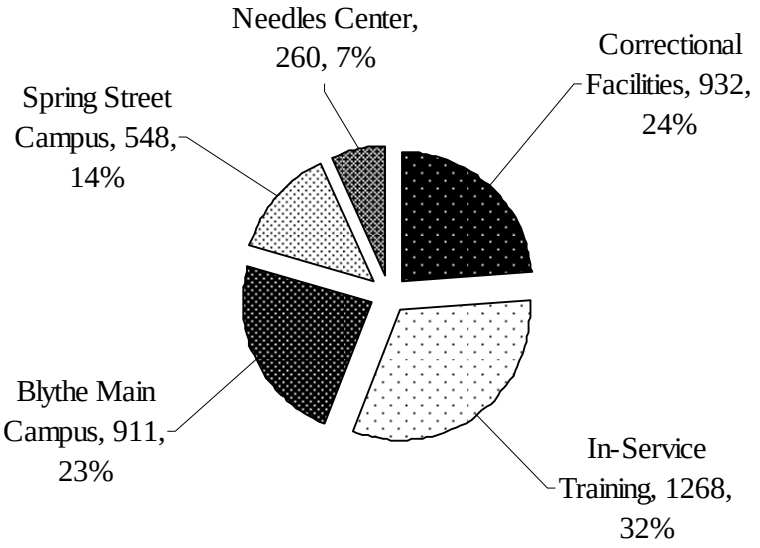
[3] The College delivers instructional services to inmates at a number of state prisons. The majority of these students are located at the Ironwood and Chuckawalla facilities within a few miles of the Blythe main campus.

[4] "In-service training" refers to instructional programs in police, fire and hazardous materials handling which the College delivers in areas outside the district. The College's programs are operated with the approval of the community college districts served by these areas.

[5] The term "community students" refers to non-inmate students receiving instructional and support services from faculty and staff at the Blythe main campus. The term distinguishes non-inmate students from inmates, who also receive instructional and support services from faculty and staff at the Blythe main campus via the College's distance education program.

facilities has grown significantly. Instruction and support services for inmates at state correctional facilities are provided by teaching and counseling faculty at the Blythe main campus. Instruction is delivered to these inmates via correspondence-style distance education mode of instruction. The Spring Street Campus provides primarily non-credit course instruction.

Relative student headcount, as of Fall Semester 2007, for the five key locations in which the College delivers instructional services is as follows:[6]



The following table shows the composition of the faculty, staff and administration by ethnicity, comparing Fall Semester 2002 and Fall Semester 2006.[7] This information is compared to the ethnicity of the College's student population as of Fall Semester 2006. Note that the sizable number of "Declined to state" among the students makes the comparison with faculty, staff and administration somewhat inconclusive.

	Faculty, Staff, Administration					Student Headcount	
	Fall 2002	**%**		**Fall 2006**	**%**	**Fall 2006**	**%**
Asian	5	2.7%		7	3.4%	137	3.5%
Black	9	4.8%		7	3.4%	357	9.0%
Filipino		0.0%		1	0.5%	54	1.4%
Hispanic	50	26.7%		54	26.5%	1,094	27.6%
Pacific Islander		0.0%			0.0%	30	0.8%
Native American	3	1.6%		3	1.5%	76	1.9%
White	120	64.2%		132	64.7%	2,214	55.9%
TOTAL	187	100.0%		204	100.0%	3,962	100.0%
Declined to state						332	

[6] Registrar Documents
[7] Data Mart, California Community College Chancellor's Office

The following table summarizes degrees and certificates awarded by the college during the five-year period 2002-03 to 2006-07: [8]

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
AA Business Administration	1	1			
AA Business Management	1	1			
AA Child Development					
AA Criminal Justice	1				
AA Liberal Arts	21	23	39	41	48
AS Accounting	1	1	2	1	
AS Admin Office Assist	1				
AS Building Technology	1				
AS Business Management	11	12	16	33	38
AS Child Development	3	2	1	5	4
AS Comp & Info Science		1	2		1
AS Criminal Justice		1	1	2	
AS General Clerical	2	2	1	1	
AS General Studies	31	33	49	49	46
AS Sec/Admin Assistant	2				
CERT Accounting			1		
CERT Admin Office Assist	1	2	3	1	
CERT Alcohol/Drug Studies					9
CERT Automotive Tech				1	4
CERT Basic Law Academy					
CERT Building Technology				1	
CERT Business Management			2		1
CERT Business Studies				3	7
CERT Certified Nursing Assist	26	26	25	25	21
CERT CHD Assoc Teacher	9	17	7	8	19
CERT CHD Master Teacher	2	3	1	5	
CERT CHD Teacher	2	3	1	6	3
CERT Computer & Info Science			1		
CERT Computer Repair		4	4		1
CERT Criminal Justice	1				
CERT CRJ Correction/Probation		1			
CERT CRJ Police Science					
CERT EMT	52	25	45	68	55
CERT General Clerical	1	5	2	1	1
CERT HAZMAT	1				
CERT Home Health Aide	30	27	6	7	
CERT Nursing LVN	9		6	20	9
CERT Personal Comp App	1	4	2		
CERT Phlebotomy		12		7	8
CERT Web Design		1	2		
CERT Welding Technology				6	12
CERT Welding & Cutting					3
TOTAL	211	207	219	291	290

[8] Institutional Research Studies; Registrar Documents

In 1998-99, the College created the AA in Liberal Arts, a degree that incorporated CSU-GE transfer requirements. In 2003-04, all other AA degrees (e.g., Business Administration, Child Development, etc.) were terminated, leaving only the AA in Liberal Arts.

To comply with recent revisions in Title 5, Division 6, Chapter 6 of the California Code of Regulations, College faculty and administrators are presently making significant changes in the College's associate degree programs.

Progress on the Previous Team's Recommendations

See page 32 for the College's responses to accreditation team recommendations from the most recent comprehensive evaluation, in 2002.

Student Achievement

The following student achievement data is from the Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC) 2008 draft report for Palo Verde College.[9] As of the date of this Self-Study, there was not yet ARCC data available from peer colleges with which to compare the College's data.

Table 1.1 Student Progress and Achievement Rate	1999-2000 to 2004-2005	2000-2001 to 2005-06	2001-2002 to 2006-2007
	22.8 %	30.5 %	41.6 %

ARCC Definition of Table 1.1: Percent of first-time students who showed intent to complete and who achieved any of the following outcomes within six years: Transferred to a four-year college; or earned an AA/AS; or earned a Certificate (18 units or more); or achieved "Transfer Directed" status; or achieved "Transfer Prepared status.

College Commentary on Table 1.1: The 2008 report is similar to 2007 in that while the percentages are low, there is a steady improvement in achievement in each of the cohort groups. The College attributes the increase to better transfer staffing and advisement, revamping of certain certificates, and the growth in inmate student population where there is strong commitment to program completion.

Table 1.1a Percent of Students Who Earned at Least 30 units	1999-2000 to 2004-2005	2000-2001 to 2005-06	2001-2002 to 2006-2007
	47.7 %	57.3 %	52.9 %

[9] ARCC 2008 Report (draft); see also Institutional Research Studies

ARCC Definition of Table 1.1a: Percentage of first-time students who showed intent to complete and who earned at least 30 units while in the California Community College system.

College Commentary on Table 1.1a: As in Table 1.1, the percentages are low, but the upward trend is encouraging.

Table 1.2 Persistence Rate	Fall 2003 to Fall 2004	Fall 2004 to Fall 2005	Fall 2005 to Fall 2006
	45.1 %	40.8 %	31.1 %

ARCC Definition of Table 1.2: Percentage of first-time students with a minimum of six units earned in a Fall term and who returned in the subsequent Fall term anywhere in the system.

College Commentary on Table 1.2: The decline in persistence rate is of particular concern and calls for further study by the College. Improving students' persistence rates is among the objectives of the College's enrollment management efforts.

Table 1.3 Annual Successful Course Completion Rate for Credit Vocational Courses	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
	93.9 %	93.4 %	91.8 %

ARCC Definition of Table 1.3: Success is defined as having been retained to the end of the term (or end of the course) in credit vocational courses with a final course grade of A, B, C, or CR.

College Commentary on Table 1.3: The College attributes this consistently high performance to the substantial motivation among students—police officers and firefighters seeking career advancement and skills upgrade—enrolled in the College's programs through instructional services agreements. The performance data in the 2007 ARCC report were similarly high.

Table 1.4 Annual Successful Course Completion Rate for Credit Basic Skills Courses	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
	51.8 %	48.3 %	50.9 %

ARCC Definition of Table 1.4: Successful completion is defined as having been retained to the end of the term (or end of the course) in credit basic skills courses with a final course grade of A, B, C, or CR.

College Commentary on Table 1.4: The completion rate in credit basic skills courses, while low, has remained fairly consistent in each of the three cohorts. In the 2007 ARCC report, the statewide average among the 108 colleges was 60.3 % for this indicator, compared to 48.8% for the College.

Table 1.5 Improvement Rates for ESL and Credit Basic Skills Courses	2002-2003 to 2004-2005	2003-2004 to 2005-2006	2004-2005 to 2006-2007
ESL Improvement Rate	10.6 %	0.0%	5.9 %
Basic Skills Impr Rate	51.8 %	49.5 %	38.5 %

ARCC Definition of Table 1.5: The ESL Improvement Rate measures the percentage of students in a particular cohort who, upon completing an ESL course, successfully completed a higher-level ESL course or English course within three academic years of having completed the initial ESL course. The Basic Skills Improvement Rate measures the percentage of students in a particular cohort who, upon completing a basic skills course, successfully completed a higher-level course in the same discipline within three academic years of having completed the initial basic skills course.

College Commentary on Table 1.5: The College is taking steps to improve these performance measures through its Basic Skills Initiative program and enrollment management efforts.

Student Learning Outcomes Update

In 2002, in response to requirements established in the new accreditation standards, the College formally started the process of identifying and measuring student learning. Course-level student learning outcomes are included in the course outline, typically written by the faculty member responsible for developing the course. The course outline is subsequently reviewed and approved by other faculty members from the division in which the course is taught, then by the Curriculum Committee and then by the Board of Trustees. At each step along the way, the course outline is evaluated on its inclusion of student learning outcomes, among other features.[10]

In 2006-07, the College, through the Academic Senate, implemented a process to identify, evaluate, and measure student learning outcomes at the degree level. The concept is codified in Academic Senate resolution: "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," 06-07-03, March 27, 2007.[11]

[10] Course Outline Samples; see complete course outlines on the Curriculum Committee Website: College Website: www.paloverde.edu, click on Academics (under the Student Menu), then click on Curriculum Committee
[11] Academic Senate Resolutions

The resolution establishes a system of degree level outcomes analogous to the component requirements of the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science, General Studies, degrees, and assigns responsibility for those outcomes to the appropriate division.

The College's system of measuring and evaluating learning outcomes at the degree level is relatively new; however, early indicators are promising. Several of the divisions have implemented pre-test (beginning of the semester) and post-test (end of the semester) procedures intending to measure degree-level learning, and implemented improvements as a result.[12]

As of November 2007, in the area of institutional effectiveness in student outcomes assessment, the College believes it has attained a level between "Development" and "Proficiency" according the "Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness," developed by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.[13]

The College has not yet adopted a system to identify and evaluate student learning at the program, or certificate, level; however, a proposed system was discussed in concept at the August 20, 2006 Flex day. The system has each certificate program assigned to a sponsoring division; the division faculty would be responsible for devising one or more learning outcomes for the program, and for implementing a process for measuring those outcomes.

Distance Learning and Off-Campus Sites

The College conducts ongoing review of its learning support services for students at off-campus sites, including overall management of the distance education program, staffing of the Needles Center, tutoring and support services at the correctional facilities and monitoring of specialized programs offered through instructional services agreements. Here is a review of progress in these areas:

An administrative dean and staff were hired in 2004 and are housed at the Blythe main campus to manage the College's distance education and noncredit programs. At the Needles Center, a new administrative dean and staff positions were created and filled in 2005; the staff includes a counseling faculty member assigned part-time to the Needles Center to provide support at that location. Both deans report to the Vice-President of Instructional Services to ensure consistency of access, support and instructional quality. An administrative manager, the College's Occupational Education Manager, is in charge of the instructional services agreements program, and reports as well to the Vice-President of Instructional Services.

Tutoring assistance for incarcerated students at each of the prison locations is provided by proctors who are employed in the education department of the prison, or inmates with associate's or bachelor's degrees who work under the direction of the proctor. Tutoring support is managed by the Office of Instructional Services, under the direction of the Associate Dean of Distance Education and Noncredit Programs.

[12] Student Learning Outcomes: Assessment Tools and Results
[13] Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness; ALO Reports to the Board of Trustees

To provide support services to incarcerated students at Chuckawalla and Ironwood, counseling faculty make periodic trips to the two major prisons (approximately 15 miles from the Blythe main campus) for registration, counseling, education plan review, and follow-up in case of academic deficiency.

Counseling and student support services are provided to students incarcerated at locations other than Chuckawalla and Ironwood by counselors on staff at the College and by prison proctors and counselors, specifically trained by College personnel. To address the need for counseling support in locations outside the district, the College created and filled a new counseling faculty position in the Fall Semester 2007. The counselor travels to each of the prison sites and provides counseling and other support services to inmates enrolled in the College's programs.

During the year, support services are supplemented by proctors and counselors employed in the education departments of each of the prison facilities; the proctors and counselors are fully trained by College personnel in orientation, counseling and advising, educational plan development, tutoring, and other support services.

The College also conducts a number of specialized instructional programs in police, fire and hazardous materials handling in areas outside the district, with the approval of the community college districts served by these areas. The College's Occupational Education Manager and his staff personally inspect each facility at least once each year. A counseling faculty member whose primary assignment is advising incarcerated students and students at the Needles Center is also available to provide counseling services to students enrolled in courses established through College's instructional services agreements.

Independent Audit and Grant Funds Management

The College arranges for an annual independent audit to help ensure its financial integrity and to verify its responsible use of financial resources. The audit assesses the College's compliance with federal and state rules and regulations, the propriety of revenues and expenditures, and the adequacy of financial accounting and internal controls.[14]

The College maintains a variety of grant, auxiliary, financial aid and contractual programs and services in support of students and the College's learning environment. Here are examples of some of the key entities with a description of how the College oversees their operations and finances:

Financial aid: The College's various student financial aid programs are managed by the Financial Aid Officer, under the general direction of the Vice President of Student Services. The program is reviewed and is audited independently each year as part of the College's audit. Annual financial compliance reports are also required throughout the year. The Financial Aid Officer prepares a program review report every five years. The Financial Aid office submits an operating budget annually for review and approval by the Budget Committee.

[14] Independent Audit Reports

Title 5 Hispanic Serving Institutions grant: From 2000 to 2005, the College managed a U.S. Department of Agriculture Hispanic Serving Institutions federal grant.[15] The program manager received monthly budget reports from the office of Administrative Services, submitted periodic progress reports to the funding agency, and submitted a final report. The grant was reviewed and audited independently each year as part of the College's annual audit.

EOPS, CalWORKS: The manager for these programs receives monthly financial statements for these student support programs. The manager also submits periodic reports to the funding agencies for these programs, and conducts program review for these programs every five years. These programs are subject to oversight by the Vice-President of Student Services.

ABSTRACT OF THE SELF-STUDY REPORT

Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

Standard I addresses two areas: 1) the College's commitment to a mission that emphasizes student learning; and 2) the College's commitment to an ongoing practice of planning, evaluation, and improvement of programs, systems and practices.

Self-Study Summary: The Strategic Plan together with statements of mission, vision and values, originally written in 2001 and since reviewed and modified collegially three times, reflects an understanding of the needs of the College's student populations and demonstrates commitment to addressing those needs. The Strategic Plan stresses, among other things, the College's commitment to enhance student learning. The inclusion of timelines and assigned responsibility for Strategic Plan objectives exemplifies this commitment.

The College's commitment to ongoing planning, evaluation and improvement is evident principally in the revisions to the program review process, Strategic Plan updates, Board of Trustees' policy updates, improvements to the job evaluation procedures, upgrade to an improved information technology hardware and software system, implementation of a process to identify and measure student learning outcomes, and ongoing collegial participation, through various venues—divisions, Flex Days, Institute Days, Faculty-Staff meetings, to name a few—in discussions of critical issues facing the College.

The College faces critical challenges: Burgeoning enrollment growth in the Distance Education program together with the construction of new facilities at the Blythe main campus and the Needles Center will require intensive application of planning, review, evaluation and improvement of processes vis-à-vis the College's programs and services.

Action Plan: Continue to improve upon the planning, evaluation and improvement processes currently in place throughout the College, with particular attention to the challenges emerging in Distance Education and new facilities in Blythe and Needles.

[15] Title 5 Hispanic Serving Institutions grant

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

Standard II addresses three broad areas associated with student learning: instruction, student services, and library and related areas that support learning. It asks the College to address how it evaluates and supports student learning, achieves learning outcomes, and maintains a quality learning environment.

Self-Study Summary: The College has made significant progress identifying, evaluating and making improvements with regard to student learning outcomes. It has much work to do in this area, however, and has set a course for itself to achieve sustained continuous improvement. The College's program review and job performance evaluation systems were improved since 2002, and these processes help maintain a quality learning environment. The College needs to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of its student support services, including learning support, particularly in its distance education programs. The College needs to develop stronger enrollment management systems, particularly in light of growth in distance education enrollment and the construction of new facilities, stressing student success as the key objective.

Action Plan: Continue on the present course in the area of student learning outcomes. Continue developing processes and practices in enrollment management, emphasizing student success (defined as persistence and completion of courses, programs and degrees), outreach, learning support services, program and enrollment planning for Distance Education, class scheduling, growth forecasting and program planning for the new facilities in Blythe and Needles.

Standard III: Resources—Human, Physical, Technology, Financial

Standard III addresses four key College resources: human, physical, technology, financial:

1. Self-Study Summary—Human Resources: The human resources function has been professionalized by the creation of a full-time manager position, resulting in a more systematic application of hiring rules and procedures. The improved job performance evaluation systems for teaching faculty, counseling faculty and administrators have helped make the College more effective as an educational institution. College policies governing human resources practices were revised and will be considered by the Board of Trustees by the end of the academic year. The College celebrates diversity through various academic programs and events, recognizing its value in an institution of higher learning. In 2004, the College was recognized by the Chancellor's office as among the California community colleges that had done the most to diversify its faculty during the preceding decade. Between 2002 and 2006, the College increased the number of faculty, staff and administration from 187 to 204, including the creation of an administrative dean position, counseling faculty, and part-time technical support positions at the Needles Center. The College will ensure that its job performance evaluation system for adjunct instructors is uniformly and consistently applied.

   Action Plan—Human Resources: The College will continue its current practices and plans in human resources, emphasizing improvement in the uniform and consistent application of job performance for adjunct instructors.

2. Self-Study Summary—Physical Resources: At all its facilities the College maintains a clean, safe, healthful, secure, and quiet environment conducive to learning. In 2001, the College relocated to an entirely new campus in Blythe. Since then, it has expanded with the completion of the technology building, the physical education complex—the PE building includes the College's first gymnasium since its founding in 1947—and the projected construction start of the fine arts and theater complex by the end of 2008. In Needles, the College will move from temporary facilities on the high school campus to its own facility in downtown Needles before the beginning of the 2008-09 academic year. The Facilities and Maintenance department is working diligently with College administrators, faculty and others in preparing for educational programs in the newly constructed, as well as planned, facilities.

   Action Plan—Physical Resources: The College will continue its current practices and plans in physical resources.

3. Self-Study Summary—Technology Resources: Because technology impacts virtually every aspect of College activity—student learning, student support services, MIS reporting, research, budgeting, and communications—the College is committed to maintaining effective technology resources. A major indication of that commitment is the College's recent purchase of Datatel, which is expected to benefit teaching, learning, communications, research and operations. While the IT department stays on top of the challenging task of keeping the College current in technology, a formal process managing technology evaluation and replacement is needed.

   The IT department's effectiveness would be enhanced, moreover, by greater involvement in the Technology Committee; this would provide the department with a valuable, broad-based resource for identifying College technology needs and uses.

   Action Plan—Technology Resources: The College will continue its current practices and plans in technology resources, emphasizing training and implementation of Datatel. The IT department will develop a formal process for technology evaluation and replacement. The IT department will increase its involvement in the Technology Committee.

4. Self-Study Summary—Financial Resources: The College recognizes that effective and conservative financial management is essential to maintain the programs and services provided by the College. For this reason, the College takes necessary steps to ensure that budget decisions are made with representation from all constituent groups, that student learning and supportive services are the key objective of budget decisions, and that steps are taken to ensure the financial solvency of the College. The College is audited independently each year. The recommendations of the independent auditor are addressed by the College consistently, and resolved to the mutual satisfaction of the College and the independent auditor.

   Action Plan—Financial Resources: While the budget process works well as it is currently practiced, the Budget Committee will be reviewing modifications to the

present budget proposal forms once Datatel is implemented. The Budget Committee wants to be able to compare the previous year's budgeted-and-actual expenses for each department with the department's proposal for the upcoming year. The modification would enable the Budget Committee to evaluate more effectively how each department is using its appropriations and help the committee make more informed budget recommendations.

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

Standard IV addresses two principal areas: College leadership and College governance. Leadership refers not only to the roles of administrators but to the climate of empowerment, innovation and effectiveness throughout the College. Governance refers primarily to the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees and the Superintendent/President.

Self-Study Summary: The College demonstrates commitment to empowerment, innovation, and excellence and demonstrates commitment to participative processes. These commitments are evidenced in the College's Strategic Plan and values, in its institutional code of ethics, in the criteria by which it evaluates job performance and in its organizational and committee structure which encourages collegial governance.

The formation of academic and vocational divisions in 2003, moreover, broadened opportunities for collegial participation by decentralizing certain areas of decision-making.

The roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees for establishing policies—to assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services; to assure the financial stability of the institution; and to select and evaluate the Superintendent/President—are established in Board Policies and Administrative Procedures and are in effect.

The Superintendent/President is the key leader of the College and its chief representative. He is given the authority by the Board of Trustees to administer policies in its behalf, and as such is entrusted with upholding the mission and ensuring the educational quality of the College. He promotes collegial participation, and encourages his immediate subordinates to do the same.

Action Plan: While the Board of Trustees, Superintendent/President and high-level administrators of the College actively adhere to and support College values and practices, their effectiveness would be strengthened by inviting collegial participation of the College community in formulating their annual goals. The benefits would be mutual: the College community would derive the satisfaction of having participated collegially in goal-setting at the highest administrative and governing levels; and, conversely, the Board of Trustees, Superintendent/President and high-level administrators would have the assurance that their goals are grounded in a broad-based assessment of College needs.

Another area requiring attention is the current revision of Board Policies and Administrative Procedures, which is expected to be completed by the end of the academic year. Once the revisions are accomplished, the College will put in place a process to continually update them.

ORGANIZATION FOR THE SELF-STUDY

Preparation of the Self-Study began nearly six years ago, following the 2002 accreditation visit and report. Part of its development includes a Progress Report in 2004, a Focused Midterm Report in 2005, and, during the past two years, the intensive work of members of the College community and the College's own Accreditation Team.

Chaired by the Accreditation Liaison Officer, the Accreditation Team consists of thirty members representing all constituent groups: students, faculty, staff and administrators. The findings, assessments and objectives presented in the Self-Study are the result of discussions and recommendations of the Accreditation Team. Because of the College's small size, and in view of the interrelatedness of the accreditation themes, the Accreditation Team decided to work through the writing of the Self-Study as a group instead of breaking down into subcommittees.

The findings of the Self-Study are also the result of discussions and recommended actions in other College venues comprising all members of the College community. These venues consist of Flex Days, Institute Days, Faculty-Staff meetings, Academic Senate meetings, division meetings, College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, and numerous other occasions—formal and informal—where dialog about the College and its future takes place.

In its final year of preparation, during 2006-07, the draft Self-Study was posted on the College website, and was continuously updated as revisions and corrections were made and new sections completed. The College community thus was provided the opportunity to observe the Self-Study as it was being created and to comment on it throughout its development.

Prior to the December 11, 2007 approval of the Self-Study by the Board of Trustees, the College devoted an Institute Day—held on October 3—to a campus-wide review of the draft report. Comments and suggestions resulting from the review were incorporated into the Self-Study.

The following are members of the College's Accreditation Team, with their constituent group and department affiliations identified:

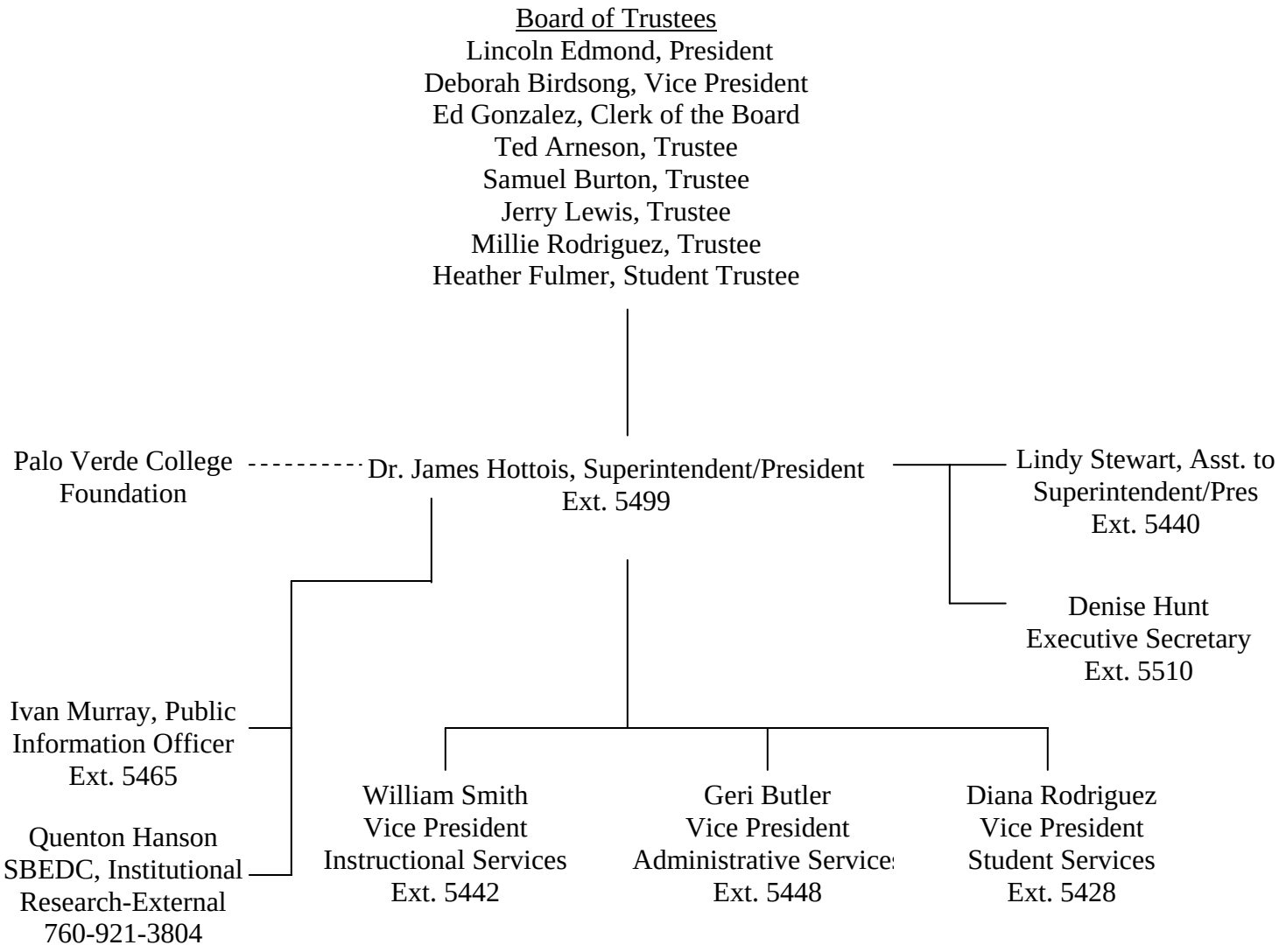
Brian Thiebaux	Faculty	Accreditation Liaison Officer/Team Chair
Vicki Attaway	Admin	Distance Education
Geri Butler	Admin	Admin Services
Rorie Chambers	CSEA	Financial Aid
Joyce Coleman	Admin	Needles Center
Mariana Crane	CSEA	Distance Education
Eric Egan	Mgmt	Information Tech
Sarah Frid	CSEA	Financial Aid
Louise Gallan	Faculty	Learning Skills Center
Michael Gaubeca	Faculty	Business
Dora Lee Grundy	CSEA	Student Services
Nicole James	CSEA	Instructional Services
Doretha Jones	Faculty	Business

Steven La Vigne	Faculty	Counselor
Staci Lee	CSEA	Student Services
Julene Marquez	CSEA	Distance Education
Debbie Mitchell	Mgmt	Human Resources
Biju Raman	Faculty	Science
Hortensia Rivera	Faculty	Counselor
Robert Robertson	Faculty	English
Claudia Sandoval	ASB	Student
David Silva	Faculty	Counselor
Stephanie Slagan	CSEA	EOPS
Willie Smith	Admin	Instructional Services
Rich Soto	CSEA	Information Tech
Sioux Stoeckle	Faculty	English
June Turner	Faculty	Librarian
Melinda Walnoha	Mgmt	Registrar
George Walters	Mgmt	Occupational Ed
Suzy Woods	CSEA	Admissions/Records

ORGANIZATION OF PALO VERDE COLLEGE

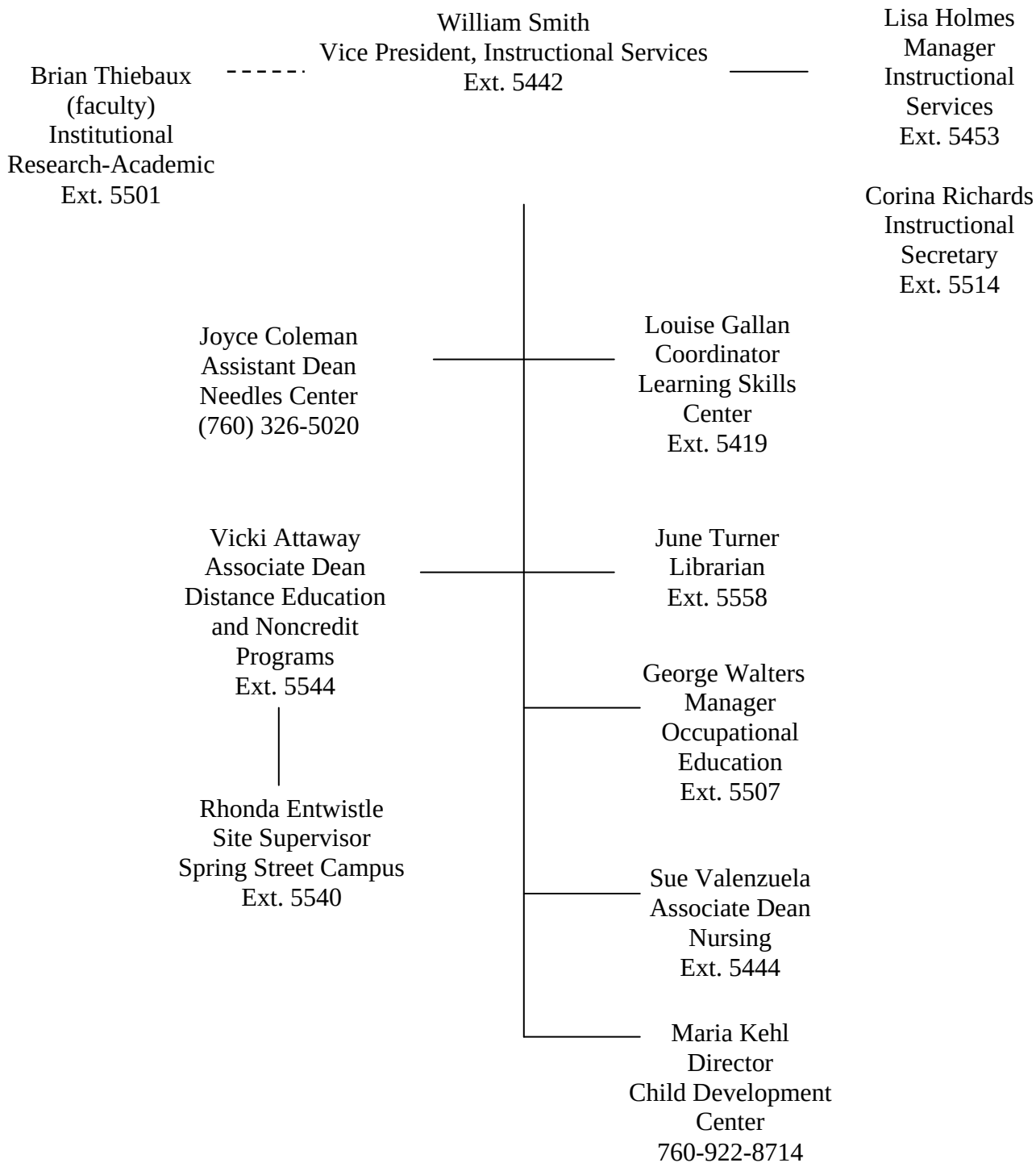
The following charts represent the College's key organizational functions and the individuals responsible for them. A complete listing of college organizations and committees, together with members' names and meeting times, is published annually and distributed to the College community.[16]

Board of Trustees and Key Administrators:

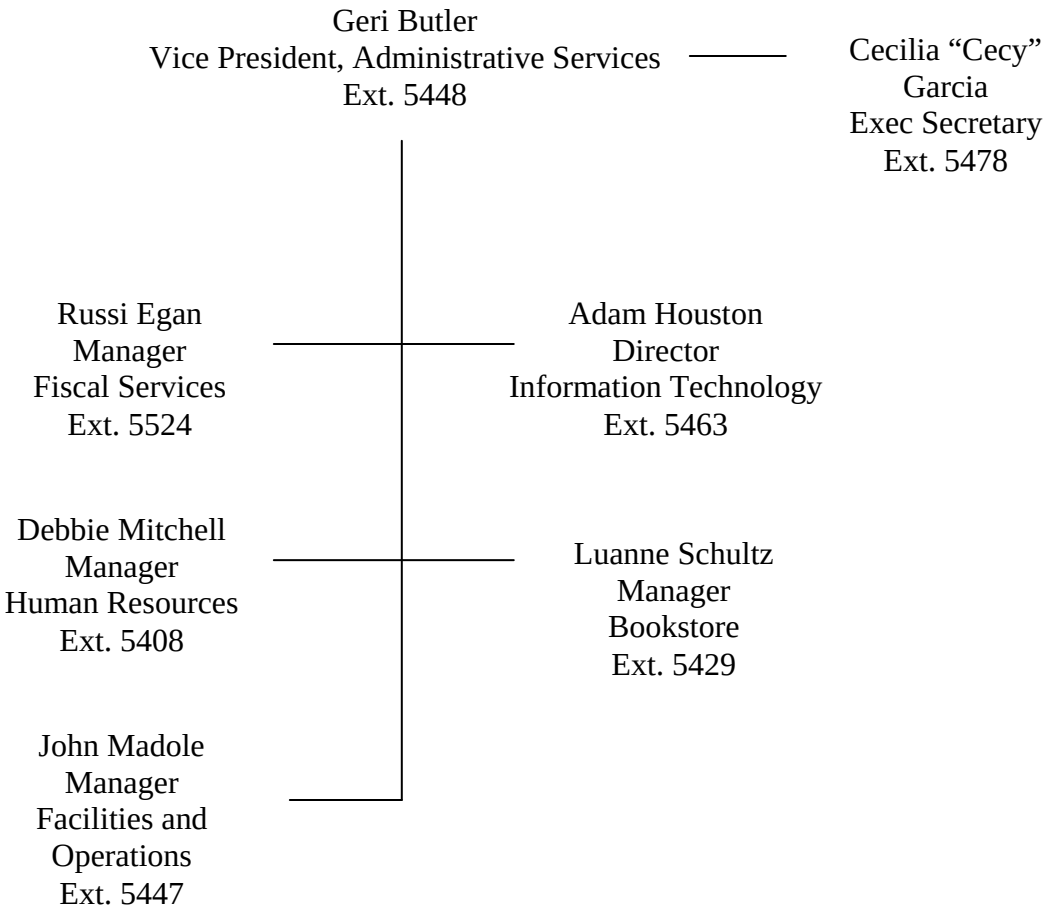


[16] List of College Organizations and Committees, 2007-08

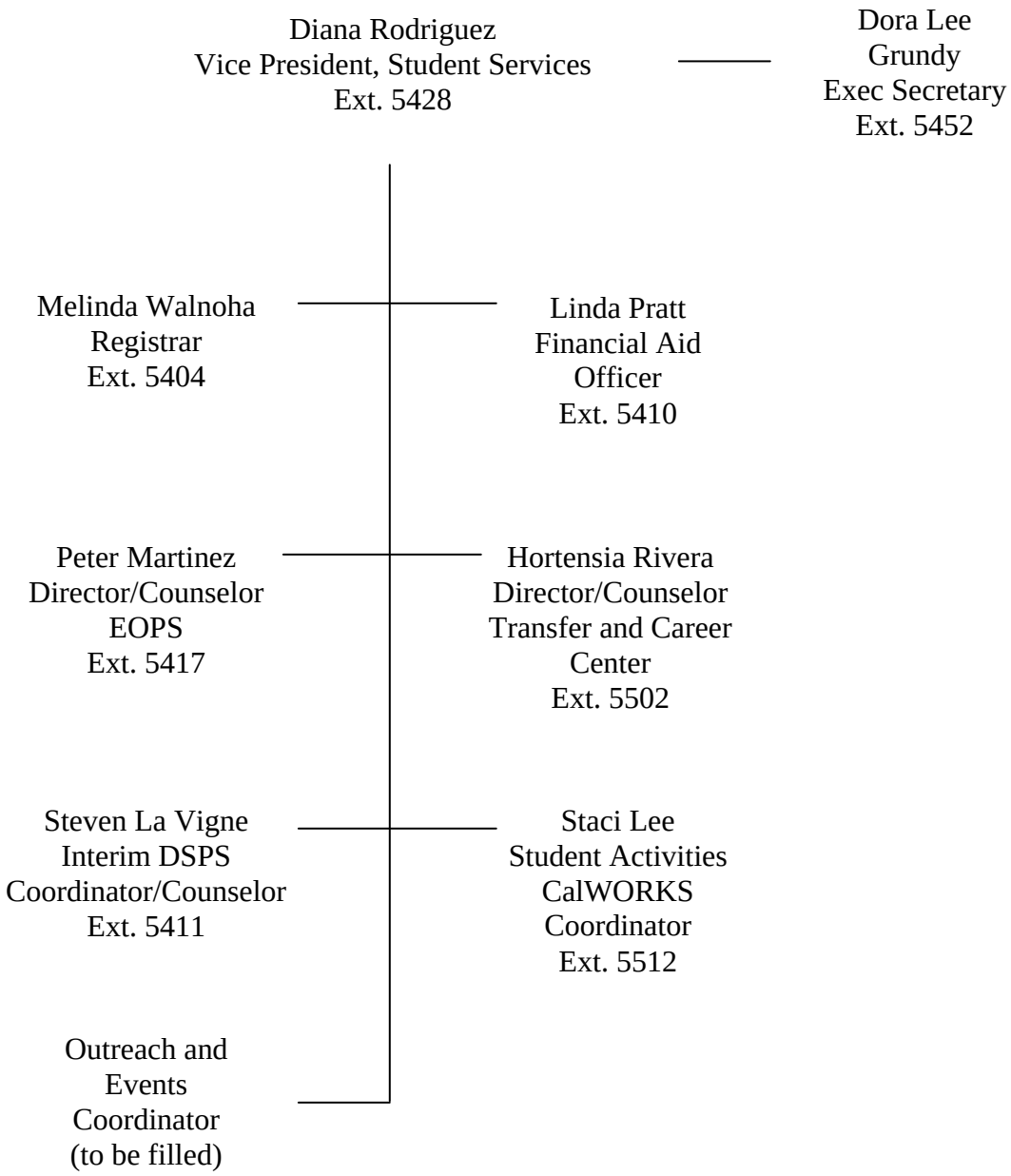
Office of Instructional Services:



Office of Administrative Services:



Office of Student Services:



Academic and Vocational Divisions:

Allied Health
Chair: Mickey Miranda-Copple, CNA/Allied Health Nursing Instructor
Ext. 5508

Business
Chair: Michael Gaubeca, Business Instructor
Ext. 5546

Language Arts and Communication
Chair: Dennese Lilley-Edgerton, English, Speech and ESL Instructor
Ext. 5547

History, Social and Behavioral Sciences
Chair: Chris Jones-Jones, Psychology Instructor
Ext.5545

Math and Science
Chair: Solomon Osayande, Biology/PE Instructor
Ext. 5414

Professional Technologies
Chair: Joe Boire, Welding Instructor
Ext. 5517

Student Academic Support Services
Chair: Hortensia Rivera, Transfer and Career Center Director/Counselor
Ext. 5502

Associated Student Body:

To contact students, see Staci Lee, Student Activities, Ext. 5512, or contact the ASB office, Ext. 5519

Claudia Sandoval, President
Rasza Cruz, Vice President
Tawnie Guthrie, Secretary
Ramiro Mendez, Business Manager
Heather Fulmer, Student Trustee

Academic Senate:

Peter Martinez, President, Ext. 5417
Sioux Stoeckle, Vice President, Ext. 5433
Victor Hernandez, Secretary, Ext. 5467

CTA:

Robert Robertson, President, Ext. 5521
Irma Dagnino, Vice President, Ext. 5552
Sandy Sher, Secretary, Ext. 5535
Doretha Jones, Treasurer, Ext. 5541
Barbara Gaubeca, Executive Board Member At-Large, Ext. 5432

CSEA:

Rich Soto, President, Ext. 5477
Denise Hunt, Vice President, Ext. 5510
Stephanie Slagan, Secretary, Ext. 5402
Maria Gamez, Treasurer, Ext. 5554

CERTIFICATION OF CONTINUED COMPLIANCE WITH ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Authority: Founded in 1947, Palo Verde College was originally accredited by the California Board of Education. In 1952, the College's accreditation was continued under the jurisdiction of the predecessor agency to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The educational facility in Needles, originally operated by the San Bernardino Community College District, was acquired by Palo Verde College in 1999 by agreement between the two districts. In 2006, the California Postsecondary Education Commission recognized Needles as an official outreach center.

   Palo Verde College District is regulated by the California Community College Board of Governors and is fully accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

2. Mission: The statement of Vision, Mission, and Values and the Strategic Plan were developed by the College community in Fall Semester 2001 and subsequently adopted by the Board of Trustees. The Mission Statement has been reviewed by the College on at least three occasions since 2002, and has remained essentially unchanged. The Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values is published on the College website. The statement of Vision, Mission and Values is published in the College Catalog, and the Mission statement appears in the Schedule of Classes each semester.[17]

3. Governing Board: The roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees for establishing policies to assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the College and of its student learning programs and services, to assure the financial stability of the institution and to select and evaluate the Superintendent/President are established and in effect in Board of Trustees Policies and Administrative Procedures.[18]

   To ensure that the Board of Trustees acts as an independent body, free of influence or economic interest in its decisions, members are required to file a conflict of interest statement in accordance with the provisions of Government Code of the State of California and restated in policy of the Board of Trustees.[19]

   Each member of the Board of Trustees is required to adhere to the provisions of the Board-adopted Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice, which state, in part: "I am committed to serve the needs of the citizens of the District…I am responsible to all citizens of the District, and not solely to those who elected me. The authority delegated to me by the voters must be exercised with as much care and concern for the least influential as for the most influential member of the community."[20]

[17] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values; College Catalog, 2007-08; Schedule of Classes, Spring Semester 2008
[18] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2431 and 2435, and AP 2431 and AP 2435
[19] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2710 and AP 2710-1
[20] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2715

4. Chief Executive Officer: The chief executive officer of the College is Dr. James Hottois, Superintendent/President. He is appointed by the Board of Trustees and his full-time responsibility is to the College. The Board of Trustees delegates to the Superintendent/President the executive responsibility for administering the policies adopted by the Board and executing all decisions of the Board requiring administrative action.[21]

5. Administrative Capacity: The College has sufficient administrative staff with appropriate preparation and experience to provide the administrative services necessary to support its mission and purpose.[22] See pages 20 ff for organizational charts of administrators and key staff members.

6. Operational Status: The College is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree and certificate programs.[23] See pages 6 and 8 for, respectively, the College's enrollment history and a history of degrees and certificates conferred.

7. Degrees: A substantial portion of the College's educational offerings are programs that lead to degrees, and a significant proportion of its students are enrolled in them.[24]

8. Educational Programs: All of the College's associate degree programs reflect the College's mission by providing quality educational programs in recognized higher education fields. All associate degrees are of two academic years in length.[25] To comply with recent revisions in Title 5, Division 6, Chapter 6 of the California Code of Regulations, College faculty and administrators are presently making further, substantial changes in the College's associate degree programs. The changes will affect students enrolling in the College in the Fall Semester 2009 semester.[26]

9. Academic Credit: The College's semester units of credit vis-à-vis instructor-student contact hours are consistent with the California Education Code and policies established by the California Community College's Chancellor's Office.[27]

   For students intending to transfer credits to a four-year institution, the College publishes detailed information in the Catalog in the section Requirements for Certificates, Degrees and University Transfer.[28] The explanation pertains to transfer to California State University campuses, University of California and private colleges and universities. It contains information about IGETC, the AA in Liberal Arts offered by the College, options for transferring with fewer than the required number of units, and course requirements for transfer.

[21] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2430
[22] Administrative Staff Biographical Information
[23] Schedule of Classes, Spring Semester 2008
[24] Student Educational Plans; College Catalog, 2007-08; see also page 8 for a history of degrees and certificates conferred.
[25] College Catalog, 2007-08
[26] Associate Degree Revisions
[27] Registrar Documents; see also "Contact Hours, Semester Units, and CTLCs," Institutional Research Studies
[28] College Catalog, 2007-08, pages 55 ff

For students seeking to transfer credits from another institution to the College, the Catalog makes clear that students must submit transcripts to the Registrar and that credits must be earned from an accredited institution. Furthermore, the College has procedures in place to facilitate transcript analysis, and this procedure is provided to prospective students when they apply for admission to the College and seek to apply credits toward their degree.[29]

10. Student Learning Achievement: Student learning outcomes for each course are listed in the course outline of record and may be found on the College Website.[30] Because student learning outcomes at the certificate and degree levels are still being formulated and evaluated by faculty, they are not yet listed in the Catalog. However, faculty have developed and implemented assessments of degree-level learning in certain disciplines.[31]

11. General Education: General courses for all associate degrees offered by the College include learning outcomes in the areas of humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences. General education includes outcomes in oral and written communication, information competency, computer literacy, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis/logical thinking, and the ability to acquire knowledge through a variety of means. General education also includes outcomes in ethics, interpersonal skills, respect for cultural diversity, and the willingness to assume civic, political and social responsibility. Courses in each of these disciplines contain learning outcome requirements that are listed in the course outlines of record. The attachment to Academic Senate resolution, "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," Resolution 06-07-03, March 27, 2007, lists the learning outcomes for most of these areas.[32]

12. Academic Freedom: A proposed Board policy on academic freedom, derived from two Academic Senate resolutions, will be considered by the Board of Trustees in 2007-08.[33] The two Academic Senate Resolutions are "Resolution on Academic Freedom—Faculty," 06-07-01, March 27, 2007, and "Resolution on Academic Freedom—Students," 06-07-02, March 27, 2007.[34]

13. Faculty: The College has a sufficient number of qualified faculty members with full-time responsibilities to the institution and with the credentials and experience to support the College's educational programs.[35] The Academic Senate has ratified a number of resolutions identifying faculty responsibilities in the areas of curriculum development and learning assessments.[36] Among the assigned faculty responsibilities provided for in the current CTA-District agreement is "curriculum or program development and evaluation."[37]

14. Student Services: In keeping with its stated mission, the College provides "an exemplary learning environment that promotes student success, lifelong learning and community

[29] Transcript Review Documents
[30] College Website: www.paloverde.edu
[31] Student Learning Outcomes: Assessment Tools and Results
[32] Academic Senate Resolutions; see also College Catalog, 2007-08
[33] Timeline for Completion of Updates and Revisions of Board of Trustees' Policies
[34] Academic Senate Resolutions
[35] College Catalog, 2007-08, pages 8-12; Schedule of Classes, Spring Semester 2008
[36] Academic Senate Resolutions
[37] CTA-District Agreement, 2007-2010, Section 7, General Time Assignments

development."[38] The College offers instructional programs and instructional support services to all students able to benefit from its programs. These programs are diverse; they include preparation for transfer, as well as professional and personal enrichment: the College offers certificates and degrees that prepare students for productive careers and for transfer to four-year institutions, and offers opportunities for personal and professional enrichment in credit and noncredit courses and programs. The College offers its courses in distance education and face-to-face modes to accommodate the life circumstances of its students, many of whom must balance the demands of family, work and school, and many of whom are pursuing their education while incarcerated.

In light of the diversity of programs and opportunities available to prospective students, the College provides educational support services that evaluate students' needs, recommend appropriate educational pathways, encourage progress along those pathways, and provide appropriate assistance when it is needed to keep students on track.

The College has a well-defined matriculation process described in the College Catalog, Student Handbook and Matriculation Plan, and which is reviewed regularly at meetings of the Matriculation Committee, Distance Education Committee, Academic Senate, Curriculum Committee, Distance Education Committee, College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, and in program review.[39] These committees and organizations are staffed variously by teaching faculty, counseling faculty, staff and administrators—affording broad College input into the review and assessment of support services.

15. Admissions: Admissions and enrollment policies are published in the College Catalog and Student Handbook and describe matters of eligibility, residency, open enrollment, fees and factors that may limit enrollment, such as pre-requisites and co-requisites.[40] The Matriculation Plan states as one of its goals that "Students, regardless of previous academic preparation and primary language, will find the admission process accessible."[41] Admissions application forms are available in Spanish and in English.[42]

16. Information and Learning Resources: The College supports the quality of its instructional programs by providing both the library and the Learning Skills Center with sufficient resources to operate effectively and meet students' learning needs. The library maintains print and online database research resources and offers services that are current and sufficient in quantity, depth and variety to support learning programs offered by the College. All students, including those enrolled at the Needles Center, have access to online research databases through the library page of the College website.[43] For incarcerated students, who are restricted access to online services by prison rules and policies, the College provides research assistance, when requested, through library personnel via correspondence.[44]

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[38] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values
[39] College Catalog, 2007-08, pages 24 ff; Student Handbook/Financial Aid Handbook, 2007-08, pages 22-23; Matriculation Plan, 2005; Matriculation Committee Minutes; see also: Curriculum Committee Minutes; Academic Senate Minutes; Program Review Reports (Student Services)
[40] College Catalog, 2007-08; Student Handbook/Financial Aid Handbook, 2007-08
[41] Matriculation Plan, 2005
[42] Admissions Documents
[43] College Website: www.paloverde.edu
[44] Library Documents

The Learning Skills Center provides tutoring services, administers assessment tests that appropriately place students in College classes, tracks the academic progress of students referred for tutoring support, provides a point of distribution of materials for students enrolled in College distance education classes, and offers a supportive work environment in close proximity to classrooms and faculty offices.[45]

All College contracts and agreements, including those involving the library and the Learning Skills Center, with external suppliers and vendors are documented and processed by the College's office of Administrative Services using purchase orders. The process requires that contracts or agreements be incorporated with the purchase order documents and maintained in the Administrative Services office.[46]

17. Financial Resources: The College's financial resources have an impact on every department and division of the College, and on all of its personnel. Its effective and conservative operation is essential to maintain the programs and services provided by the College in the delivery of student learning and the services that support learning. For this reason, the College takes necessary steps to ensure that budget decisions are made with representation from all constituent groups, that student learning and supportive services are the key objective of all budget decisions, that steps are taken to ensure the financial solvency of the College, and that budget planning is integrated with other College plans.[47]

18. Financial Accountability: Each year the College arranges for an independent financial audit by a reputable CPA firm. The independent audit report contains a Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs in which the auditor recommends changes in accounting and financial management procedures that will improve the accuracy and reliability of the College's financial statements. Each audit report also includes a follow-up on action taken by the College to resolve findings of prior years. The College systematically follows up on prior years' recommendations and has made changes that subsequently proved acceptable to the auditors.[48]

19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation: The College is committed to continuous evaluation and improvement in its programs and services, a commitment that is evident in the revisions, during the past few years, of several important processes, namely, program review, budget review, Strategic Plan, learning outcomes assessments, job performance evaluations, and more effective use of data. These matters are discussed in detail in Standard I.B.3. To be successful in implementing such revisions, the College recognizes the importance of vigilant follow-up on what has been started. The College will apply the same kind of continuous evaluation to new programs and services as they emerge. The College is planning for the new facilities at the Blythe main campus, the expanding distance education program, and the new building and program planning at the Needles Center.

[45] Learning Skills Center Documents
[46] Library Documents; Learning Skills Center Documents
[47] Budget Procedure; Independent Audit Reports
[48] Independent Audit Reports

20. Public Information: Except for the statement on academic freedom (which had not been adopted by the Board of Trustees at the time the 2007-08 Catalog was published), all items identified in this Eligibility Requirement appear in the College Catalog.[49]

21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission: In addition to working with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (Commission), the College works cooperatively with the accrediting agencies of specific programs, including nursing, administration of justice and alcohol and drug studies.[50]

    That the College complies with accreditation standards, policies and guidelines, and Commission requirements for public disclosure, Self-Study and other reports, team visits, and prior approval of substantive changes is evident by a review of College history. Since the start of the current accreditation cycle in 2002, the College has participated diligently in the accreditation process. In response to the Commission recommendations, the College prepared and submitted a Progress Report in 2004 and received members of the original team for a re-visit. In 2005, the College submitted a Focused Midterm Report, which was subsequently accepted by the Commission. The College has submitted other reports to the Commission in a timely manner and has worked diligently to resolve the issues raised in the 2002 accreditation report.[51]

We certify that the foregoing statement, consisting of Items 1 through 21 of the Eligibility Requirements for Accreditation, accurately reflects Palo Verde College's continuing compliance with the requirements established by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

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Dr. James Hottois, Superintendent/President

_____

Mr. Lincoln Edmond, President, Board of Trustees

[49] College Catalog, 2007-08; See also the response to Standard II.B.2
[50] Accreditation Documents
[51] Accreditation Documents

RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS
FROM THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION

The previous visiting accreditation team presented ten recommendations to the College in its 2002 report. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (Commission), after its review of the College's Self-Study and the team's report, added an eleventh recommendation. In response to the Commission's request, the College submitted a Progress Report in 2004 addressing three of those recommendations: #1, #4, and #11. The Commission accepted the Progress Report and asked the College to submit a focused midterm report, emphasizing follow-up on #1, as well as the other 2002 team recommendations and other action items presented by the College in the 2002 Self-Study. The College responded with a Focused Midterm Report in 2005, which the Commission subsequently accepted.[52]

1. <u>Team Recommendation:</u> That the institutional Planning Committee [i.e., College Council/Strategic Planning Committee] [should] immediately redefine the institutional planning process to ensure the use of comprehensive, reliable, and relevant data for setting strategic priorities, for defining the intended outcomes of planning efforts, and for linking other college plans. Planning developments should be shared with the college and community at large.

<u>Progress:</u> Since 2002, the collection and analysis of data has become an increasingly critical part of College planning and decision-making. Examples include analysis and action taken on the results of the Noel-Levitz student engagement survey conducted in 2005;[53] significant progress identifying, evaluating and making improvements in student learning outcomes;[54] improvement of program review reporting;[55] and the production of institutional research studies.[56]

Improved data collection and analysis for planning purposes is expected to result from the College's recent purchase of a new information technology system, replacing a system that proved inadequate for meeting the College's requirements. Apart from its benefits for data collection and planning, the new system—Datatel—is expected to be a significant benefit for learning support programs, campus communications and MIS reporting.

The College has made significant progress in its planning processes, particularly in the development and update of the College's Strategic Plan and in the improvements in program review procedures. Progress has also been made in linking College plans. Responsibility for the achievement of specific Strategic Plan objectives, for example, is assigned to various College departments, affording the opportunity for personnel in those departments to integrate department planning with College-wide objectives. The linking of College plans is evident also in the budget planning process, where faculty and staff must justify proposed expenditures for new personnel and equipment in accordance

[52] All accreditation documents, including the 2002 Self-Study, 2002 Team Report, 2004 Progress Report, 2005 Focused Midterm Report and relevant Commission letters are available for review in Accreditation Documents.
[53] Noel-Levitz SSI and IPS—Highlights
[54] Student Learning Outcomes: Assessment Tools and Results
[55] Program Review Guide; Program Review Reports
[56] Institutional Research Studies

with the Strategic Plan initiatives.[57] The Technology Master Plan—2004-05, similarly, integrates technology objectives with Strategic Plan objectives.[58]

College officials have endeavored to keep the Board of Trustees, College constituencies and the Blythe and Needles communities informed of College planning developments. This is accomplished in various ways: The College website contains comprehensive and informative information about the College, including Board policies, program reviews, institutional research, and accreditation documents.[59] The public information office maintains working relationships with the local media.[60] Monthly Faculty-Staff meetings keep College members informed of campus news and events. The College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee provides a forum in which constituent issues may be discussed and documented, and from which decisions and recommendations are conveyed back to constituent organizations and groups.[61]

Action Plan: The College will continue the practices and policies it has initiated in addressing this recommendation, emphasizing the integration of all College planning with the initiatives and objectives established in the Strategic Plan.

2. Team Recommendation: The Program Review committee [should] evaluate its overall structure and process to ensure that all units or appropriate functions are consistently and systematically evaluated and that the results are utilized for decision-making and allocating resources at all levels.

Progress: The program review process has been revised, codified in the Program Review Guide, and implemented in Fall Semester 2006.[62] During the past five years, the college completed a full cycle of instructional and non-instructional program review reports, representing all divisions and functions of the College.[63] To ensure that divisions are diligently following-up on program review goals, the Program Review Committee will consider requiring an "interim" program review. This would be a brief report in which divisions will assess progress in achieving goals established in the preceding program review report.

Action Plan: The College, through the Program Review Committee, will consider recommending adding an interim program review report to the program review process.

3. Team Recommendation: The College [should] review the catalog to insure that all programs and courses are described in clear and complete terms, that course descriptions and requirements are provided to students, and that those descriptions are consistent with the course outlines of record.

Progress: The catalog is undergoing continuous revisions and improvements to ensure clarity in the description of programs and policies. There is an established and publicized process for curriculum changes—from the divisions, to the Curriculum Committee, to the Instructional Services office, to

[57] Budget Procedure
[58] Technology Master Plan, 2004-05
[59] College Website: www.paloverde.edu
[60] Public Information Office Documents
[61] List of College Committees and Organizations; Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2510
[62] Program Review Guide
[63] Program Review Reports

the Board to Trustees, to the College Catalog.[64] In 2002, the course outline template was revised to include student learning outcomes and other course features, and, subsequently, all course outlines have been revised and are being continuously updated in accordance with the revised templates.[65]

Action Plan: The College will continue the practices it has implemented in response to this recommendation.

4. Team Recommendation: The college [should] develop and implement an effective enrollment management plan based on current and projected data about the college service area and students served. The plan should address declining and/or increasing student enrollments, changing demographics, current instructional needs of the community, and excessive cancellation of the printed course offerings in the schedule of classes.

Progress: The College is making progress in clarifying some of the various components of enrollment management as part of its enrollment management plan: student success (defined as persistence and completion of courses, programs and degrees), outreach, evaluation of demographic characteristics, class scheduling, and program planning and evaluation appropriate to students' learning and career needs.[66] Each of these components has been incorporated into the Strategic Plan, with specific goals and timelines. [67]

To help promote student success, in 2006, a Probation/Dismissal Intervention program developed by counseling faculty has resulted in a reduction of dismissal notices. Also, a writing lab and reading program were implemented to improve learning support services for students needing basic skills instruction. Services at the Needles Center were expanded to include a small computer lab-tutorial center, which will be further expanded once the new facility is operational. The Spring Street center offers tutorials and supplemental instruction labs for the courses offered there. A variety of academic services is now available to incarcerated students through a memorandum of understanding by which educational proctors and inmate tutors provide services directly to inmate students.[68] The College, through the library, provides support for student research, coordinating information through faculty and inmate clerks.

To assist in outreach career planning, the College sponsors an annual Career Day in the Fall Semester in which high school students are invited to visit the campus to attend seminars and instructional programs and to interact with the presenters, College faculty and staff.[69] The College initiated during the past year a Career Connection event in which employers from the community and surrounding areas present information regarding student employment opportunities.[70] Moreover, the College recently approved a new position of Outreach and Events Coordinator and has begun recruiting to fill it.

[64] Curriculum Committee Handbook; Academic Senate Resolutions
[65] Course Outline Samples; College Catalog, 2007-08
[66] Enrollment Management Plan
[67] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values; see especially Initiatives 1 (Instructional Programs and Support Services), 2 (Student Recruitment and Enrollment) and 3 (Student Success)
[68] Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Tutorial Services
[69] Career Day Documents
[70] Career Connection Documents

To help reduce the number of cancelled classes offered each semester, the Vice-President of Instructional Services works closely with the academic division chairs in formulating class schedules intended to avoid conflicts and that offer students reasonable schedule days and times for classes.

The Noel-Levitz student satisfaction survey, administered in Fall Semester 2005, provided useful information as to student needs and preferences vis-à-vis the College and its programs and services.[71]

Institutional research efforts have produced data on course enrollments and trends, providing important information to faculty to assist in the program review and evaluation process. Research has also provided the basis regarding academic planning and decision-making.[72]

The College is currently conducting a community needs assessment consisting of a series of focus groups to begin in 2008. The study is expected to provide useful information as to the College's current educational programs, including ideas for new programs.[73]

More work remains to be done, however, in the forecasting, and planning for, future enrollment growth—at the main campus, in distance education programs, and at the Needles Center:

> The Blythe main campus will open the Physical Education complex in 2008 and a Performing and Cultural Arts building in 2009. The College is planning for the programs and support services needed for these new facilities.
>
> The distance education program continues to expand, particularly with the increase in the number of correctional facilities participating in the College's program. The College needs to plan for this enrollment expansion by evaluating the adequacy of instructional and support resources and by evaluating the impact of this expansion on face-to-face courses and programs.
>
> The Needles Center will relocate from the Needles High School to the Claypool Building in the summer of 2008. With this change comes the need to plan for additional classes, particularly during the daytime.

Action Plan: The College will continue on its present course in managing enrollment, recognizing that much work remains to be done, particularly in the areas of program planning for the new facilities, managing growth in the distance education program, and planning for growth at the Needles Center.

5. Team Recommendation: The college [should] develop policies and procedures that delineate the roles of counselors and paraprofessional advisors and formalize selection standards, training and referral mechanisms for advisors and counselors to improve student support.

[71] Noel-Levitz SSI and IPS—Highlights
[72] Institutional Research Studies
[73] Community Needs and Interest Survey

Progress: The College's response to this recommendation in the Focused Midterm Report is appropriate for the current update: A Counselor Handbook for counselors and advisors was developed and distributed to all student services staff as a training tool for advisors and counselors.[74] Additionally, all new staff members, upon hire, receive training in their respective jobs, with duties and functions clearly delineated.[75] Meetings for counselors, as well as for all student services staff, are held regularly, and new procedures are reviewed with all staff to ensure that the various functions of advisors, counselors and staff are clearly defined. The Matriculation Committee, similarly, meets regularly to review policies and procedures related to matriculation.[76]

Action Plan: The College will continue with the practices it has established in defining counselors' and advisors' roles and responsibilities.

6. Team Recommendation: The college [should] review its learning support services for students at off-campus sites, in order to provide comparable access to information and learning resources to support the courses programs and degrees offered at these sites.

Progress: The College conducts ongoing review of its learning support services for students at off-campus sites, including overall management of the distance education program, staffing of the Needles Center, tutoring and support services at the correctional facilities and monitoring of specialized programs offered through instructional services agreements. Here is a review of progress in these areas:

An administrative dean and staff were hired in 2004 and are housed at the Blythe main campus to manage the College's distance education and noncredit programs. At the Needles Center, a new administrative dean and staff positions were created and filled in 2005; the staff includes a counseling faculty member assigned part-time to the Needles Center to provide support at that location. Both deans report to the Vice-President of Instructional Services to ensure consistency of access, support and instructional quality. An administrative manager, the College's Occupational Education Manager, is in charge of the instructional services agreements program, and reports as well to the Vice-President of Instructional Services.

Tutoring assistance for incarcerated students at each of the prison locations is provided by proctors who are employed in the education department of the prison, or inmates with associate's or bachelor's degrees who work under the direction of the proctor. Tutoring support is managed by the Office of Instructional Services, under the direction of the Associate Dean of Distance Education and Noncredit Programs.

To provide other support services to students incarcerated students at Chuckawalla and Ironwood, counseling faculty make periodic trips to the two major prisons (approximately 15 miles from the Blythe main campus) for registration, counseling, education plan review, and follow-up in case of academic deficiency.

[74] Counselor Handbook
[75] Counselor and Advisor Job Descriptions
[76] Matriculation Committee Documents

Counseling and other student support services are provided to students incarcerated at locations other than Chuckawalla and Ironwood by counselors on staff at the College and by prison proctors and counselors, specifically trained by College personnel. To address the need for counseling support in locations outside the district, the College created and filled a new counseling faculty position in the Fall Semester 2007. The counselor travels to each of the prison sites and provides counseling and other support services to inmates enrolled in the College's programs.

During the year, support services are supplemented by proctors and counselors employed in the education departments of each of the prison facilities; the proctors and counselors are fully trained by College personnel in orientation, counseling and advising, educational plan development, tutoring, and other support services.

The College conducts a number of specialized instructional programs in police, fire and hazardous materials handling in areas outside the district, with the approval of the community college districts served by these areas. The College's Occupational Education Manager and his staff personally inspect each facility at least once each year. A counseling faculty member whose primary assignment is advising incarcerated students and students at the Needles Center is also available to provide counseling services to students enrolled in courses established through College's instructional services agreements.

Action Plan: The College continuously evaluates the needs of students at its off-campus locations, and continuously evaluates the quality and effectiveness of its programs and services in these areas.

7. Team Recommendation: The college [should] develop a strategy to ensure legal, fair, and effective hiring practices and further the diversity of faculty and staff so that they more closely mirror the diversity of the larger community and the students they serve.

Progress: Two years ago the College created and filled the professional position of Human Resources Manager, resulting in a more systematic application of hiring rules and procedures including recruitment, screening and hiring. During the past year, the College revised and updated policies governing human resources practices, including a Commitment to Diversity policy,[77] which will be considered for approval by the Board of Trustees by the end of the academic year.[78]

In 2004, the College was recognized by the Chancellor's office as among the California community colleges that had done the most to diversify its faculty during the preceding decade. The College celebrates diversity, moreover, through various academic programs and events—these include the Multicultural Festival, Cinco de Mayo, Women's Day, and Black History Month—recognizing the value of diversity in an institution of higher learning.

The College's support for diversity is also evident in the formation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory committee and the drafting of an EEO plan, which is currently in process. Job descriptions for each position at the College list among the minimum qualification that candidates demonstrate "sensitivity to and understanding of the diverse academic, socioeconomic, cultural, disability, and ethnic backgrounds of community college students."

[77] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 7100 Draft
[78] Timeline for Completion of Updates and Revisions of Board of Trustees' Policies

The College regularly assesses its record in employment equity and diversity by reviewing applicant pools prior to interviewing, by selecting screening panels representative of College constituencies, and by periodically reviewing hiring trends, including trends in the hiring of personnel from under-represented groups. The College believes that its hiring practices are legal, fair and effective and that it is making diligent efforts to promote diversity in its hiring practices.

Action Plan: The College will continue the practices it has established in human resources policies and management, with emphasis on completing the EEO plan and submitting the revised human resources policies for approval by the Board of Trustees, and implementing them.

8. Team Recommendation: The college [should] develop a clear process for the evaluation of academic administrators that is conducted at stated intervals, and, where appropriate includes the participation of faculty and staff.

Progress: An evaluation system for academic administrators was developed, approved by the Board of Trustees, and implemented. The system defines the process, the intervals at which evaluations occur, and includes, where appropriate, participation of faculty and staff.[79]

Action Plan: Continue with implementation of administrator evaluation procedures now in place.

9. Team Recommendation: The college, through the Staff Development committee, [should] work to address the expressed training needs of faculty and staff.

Progress: The expressed training needs of the College's personnel are being examined more closely and are being addressed in various ways. Faculty and staff now have various avenues available to them to further their careers through professional development opportunities:

The CSEA negotiated a District-paid professional development fund enabling classified personnel to pursue courses, certificates and degrees at the College or at other educational institutions. The program is administered by the Professional Growth Committee, a committee internal to the CSEA. Successful applicants receive approval in the form either of financial assistance or release time.[80]

The College also administers a state-funded staff development program for all College personnel. The program is administered by the Staff Development Committee, which has established specific goals for the fund in addition to those set forth in the Board of Trustees' policy on staff development. As stated in Board of Trustees' policy, "Staff development monies will be used to enhance the College's mission, goals and objectives. Specific attention will be given to, but not limited to, the following goals:[81]

1. Attain instructional excellence.
2. Improve the delivery of student and employee services.

[79] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 7262, AP 7250-2 and 7262
[80] CSEA-District Agreement, 2005-08
[81] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, Human Resources Development Plan 4090

3. Respond accurately to the needs resulting from changing student populations.
4. Advance faculty and staff affirmative action.
5. Integrate faculty and staff development planning with District planning.
6. Coordinate with curriculum development, flex days, shared governance and other AB 1725-generated activities."

The Staff Development Committee, furthermore, established additional goals for the fund. These goals are:[82]

1. Faculty and staff make improvements in the areas of greatest concern as indicated in the most recent Student Satisfaction Survey.
2. Educate and implement practices of retention and recruitment for staff and faculty.
3. Promote staff and faculty collaboration with colleagues performing similar responsibilities at other California Community Colleges to enhance job performance.

Professional development opportunities are also available to personnel through the funding priorities established by the divisions to which they belong. Division and department budgets are prepared in the Spring Semester and considered for approval by the Budget Committee for implementation the following academic year.

Action Plan: The College will continue to examine the training needs of its personnel and continue make available to them several avenues to pursue professional development opportunities: CSEA professional growth for CSEA members; staff development opportunities for all College personnel; and division-funded professional development opportunities.

10. Team Recommendation: The college [should] develop a comprehensive process for soliciting broad input from the campus on issues and providing opportunities for the campus to respond to decisions while they are being formed. This process should include provisions for continuous feedback to all constituent groups regarding the status of decisions. It is equally important that these processes be formed in a manner that facilitates efficient and timely decision-making.

Progress: The College has made significant progress in developing effective processes for soliciting broad input into planning and decision-making from College personnel about issues of College-wide interest and concern.

Evidence of these processes comes in various forms: 1) development in 2004 (and subsequent periodic revision) of the collegial governance chart, which shows the functional relationships among the various campus organizations and committees;[83] 2) annually updated list of College organizations and committees, showing the membership and frequency of meeting of each campus organization and committee;[84] 3) the Strategic Plan (written in 2001 and subsequently updated by collegial participation three times), which demonstrates how the responsibilities for achieving College goals are distributed among constituent organizations;[85] 4) Board of Trustees' policies on

[82] Professional Development Committee, Minutes, April 18, 2007
[83] Collegial Governance Chart
[84] List of College Organizations and Committees, 2007-08
[85] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values

collegial governance, which identify the charge, membership and reporting requirement of each organization and committee;[86] and 5) meeting venues such as division-level meetings, Flex Days, Institute Days, and Faculty-Staff meetings which afford virtually all College personnel the chance to participate collegially in College planning and decision-making.[87]

Action Plan: The College will continue the processes it has established for soliciting broad-based participation in planning and decision-making about issues of College-wide interest and concern.

11. Commission Recommendation: The Commission recommends the following: The qualifications of faculty, especially new faculty, should be adequate to meet the needs of students and programs.

Progress: The College's response to this recommendation in the Progress Report and Focused Midterm Report is appropriate for the current update: In 2003, a comprehensive review was undertaken of the qualifications of all faculty members, part-time and full-time by the Superintendent/President, acting in place of the Vice-President of Instructional Services. Where there was any question as to meeting minimum qualifications, the instructor's file was referred to the Equivalency Committee for further evaluation and action. The Equivalency Committee is a committee of the Academic Senate and consists of the Vice-President of Instructional Services, the Academic Senate President, a representative of the relevant academic discipline, and a faculty keeper of records.[88]

The College acted promptly and effectively in addressing this important issue and resolving it satisfactorily. The Vice-President of Instructional Services regularly calls upon the Equivalency Committee when there is any question as to the qualifications of prospective part-time faculty members. When screening applications of new full-time faculty, the screening committee evaluates each application in terms of the applicant's meeting or exceeding the minimum qualifications described in the official College job description, as approved by the Board of Trustees.

Action Plan: The College will continue practices, described in its response to this recommendation, in ensuring that all faculty, full-time and part-time, have qualifications adequate to meet the needs of students and programs.

[86] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2510 and AP 2510
[87] Flex Days and Institute Days, Agendas and Supporting Materials
[88] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2510 and AP 2510

INSTITUTIONAL SELF-EVALUATION USING COMMISSION STANDARDS

Standard I
Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

The institution demonstrates strong commitment to a mission that emphasizes achievement of student learning and to communicating the mission internally and externally. The institution uses analyses of quantitative and qualitative data and analysis in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation, and re-evaluation to verify and improve the effectiveness by which the mission is accomplished.

Standard I.A.: Mission

The institution has a statement of mission that defines the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning.

Response to Standard I.A: Mission

Palo Verde College's statement of Vision, Mission and Values defines its broad educational purposes, intended student population, and its commitment to achieving learning. The statement is the preamble to the College's Strategic Plan[89] and is published in the College Catalog[90] and website.[91] The College Mission statement is published in the Schedule of Classes each term.[92]

Here follows the complete text of the statement of Vision, Mission and Values:

VISION

Palo Verde College will be known for excellence—educationally, socially, economically and culturally.

MISSION

Palo Verde College is a California community college that provides an exemplary learning environment with high quality educational programs and services. The College promotes student success, lifelong learning and community development. Our goal is to create better futures for our students and our communities.

[89] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values
[90] College Catalog, 2007-08
[91] College Website: www.paloverde.edu
[92] Schedule of Classes, Spring Semester 2008

VALUES

Excellence
Palo Verde College is committed to excellence. The College expects quality instruction and services, and applauds the achievement of its students, faculty and staff.

Learning
Palo Verde College facilitates lifelong learning and encourages scholastic achievement. The College believes that knowledge, understanding and their application are keys to a better future.

Integrity and Ethics
Palo Verde College maintains the highest standards of ethics and integrity. The College consistently demands respect, honesty and fairness in its educational programs, professional interactions and community relations.

Diversity
Palo Verde College celebrates diversity in its students, in its faculty and staff, and in its community, as a quality that enriches and strengthens us all.

Creativity
Palo Verde College supports and encourages creativity and innovation in teaching, course and program development and student learning support services.

Civic Responsibility
Palo Verde College promotes the value of civic responsibility among students, faculty and staff.

Standard I.A.1

The institution establishes student learning programs aligned with its purposes, its character, and its student population.

Response to Standard I.A.1

The College provides instruction to diverse student populations: students attending the Blythe main campus and Needles Center, inmates incarcerated at two nearby prisons (plus nine other facilities in California), students enrolled in noncredit programs, and students enrolled in programs through instructional services agreements. Each of these student populations requires creative approaches to help promote learning and success.

The statement of Vision, Mission and Values reflects the purpose and character of the College in terms of the needs of its diverse student population. The statement emphasizes "creativity and innovation in teaching, course and program development and student learning support services" in recognition of the fact that, for example, many students receive instruction via distance education at off-campus locations, including prison locations, and require innovative approaches to teaching and support.

That the College "expects quality instruction and services, and applauds the achievement of its students, faculty and staff" reflects a long-standing practice in acknowledging outstanding performance in students, faculty and staff with various awards and recognitions throughout the year.

The commitment to "an exemplary learning environment that promotes student success, lifelong learning and community development" is indicative of the College's emphasis on student learning outcomes, degree and certificate completion, transfer to four-year institutions and career advancement.

Standard I.A.2

The mission statement is approved by the governing board and is published.

Response to Standard I.A.2

The most recent revision of the statement of Vision, Mission and Values and Strategic Plan was September 4, 2007 in a regularly-scheduled faculty-staff meeting.[93]

The statement of Vision, Mission and Values and Strategic Plan is published on the College website. The statement of Vision, Mission and Values is published in the College Catalog, and the Mission statement appears in the Schedule of Classes each term.

Standard I.A.3

Using the institution's governance and decision-making processes, the institution reviews its mission statement on a regular basis and revises it as necessary.

Response to Standard I.A.3

The statement of Vision, Mission and Values was originally written in Spring Semester 2002 by a team of College faculty, staff, administrators and students. The statement has since been reviewed and modified three times: September 2004, January 2005 and September 2007. Each update occurred in either a faculty-staff meeting or Institute day, in which all members of the College community were invited to participate.

Standard I.A.4

The institution's mission is central to institutional planning and decision-making.

Response to Standard I.A.4

The statement of Vision, Mission and Values is the preamble to the Strategic Plan, which sets forth a comprehensive set of initiatives guiding the College in its projects and decisions. The statement of Vision, Mission and Values and the Strategic Plan constitute the central planning guide for the College. Apart from being published on the College website and in the College Catalog, the statement of Vision, Mission and Values and the Strategic Plan are alluded to in other College

[93] Flex Days and Institute Days, Agendas and Supporting Materials

documents. Program reviews, for example, must demonstrate how the program, whether instructional or non-instructional, is consistent with the College's Mission.[94] Annual budget proposals from faculty and staff, similarly, must justify certain expenditures for new personnel and equipment in accordance with the Strategic Plan initiatives.[95]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard I.A.: Mission

The College believes it has met, or exceeded, all components of this standard, including I.A, I.A.1, I.A.2, I.A.3 and I.A.4. The statement of Vision, Mission and Values and Strategic Plan is the central planning document of the College and has been reviewed periodically by a broad representation of the College community, was modified when needed, and the results published for internal and external audiences. The document reflects an understanding of the needs of its student populations and demonstrates commitment to addressing those needs. It stresses, among other things, the College's commitment to enhance student learning.

Action Plan: Standard I.A.: Mission

The College will continue its practice of periodically reviewing the statement of Vision, Mission and Values and Strategic Plan and refining it to reflect the College's evolving educational purposes, its changing student populations and, most importantly, the learning needs of its students.

Standard I.B: Improving Institutional Effectiveness

The institution demonstrates a conscious effort to produce and support student learning, measures that learning, assesses how well learning is occurring, and makes changes to improve student learning. The institution also organizes its key processes and allocates its resources to effectively support student learning. The institution demonstrates its effectiveness by providing 1) evidence of the achievement of student learning outcomes and 2) evidence of institution and program performance. The institution uses ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning to refine its key processes and improve student learning.

Response to Standard I.B: Improving Institutional Effectiveness

With the emphasis on student learning outcomes in the new accreditation standards, the College has placed a high priority on identifying and evaluating student learning, and making changes that improve learning. The process began with a Curriculum Committee requirement, later codified by Academic Senate resolution that all course outlines provide for measurable student learning outcomes in each course.[96]

[94] Program Review Guide
[95] Budget Procedure
[96] Curriculum Committee, Agendas and Minutes; see also Academic Senate Resolutions, especially, "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," 06-07-03, March 27, 2007, and "Resolution Recognizing the Central Role of Faculty in Developing and Assessing Student Learning Outcomes and Implementing Improvements," 05-06-01, February 14, 2006

In 2006-07, the College, through the Academic Senate, implemented a process to identify, evaluate, and measure student learning outcomes at the program and degree levels.[97]

The same year, the College implemented revised guidelines for program review, requiring programs—instructional and non-instructional—to demonstrate, in addition to other measurable performance indicators, how they support student learning.[98]

There are three major venues at which the College engages in self-reflective dialogue about student learning and College processes. These venues are divisions, organizations and committees, and campus-wide meetings in the form of faculty-staff meetings, Institute days and Flex days. Issues relevant to student learning, as well as other College processes, are discussed among appropriate constituencies.

The College supports an institutional research function to provide objective data and analysis as the basis of planning and decision-making. Institutional research consists of an *internal*, or *academic*, component and an *external* component. The academic component, staffed by a faculty member, concentrates on the collection and analysis of data pertaining to student learning and performance outcomes and an evaluation of the systems designed to deliver those outcomes. The external component, staffed by an administrator, emphasizes the analysis of local and regional demographic and economic trends that affect the College and its programs.[99]

Standard I.B.1

The institution maintains an ongoing, collegial, self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes.

Response to Standard I.B.1

Dialogue pertaining to the continuous improvement of learning and institutional processes takes place in three kinds of venues: academic and vocational divisions; College organizations and committees; and faculty-staff meetings, Flex days and Institute days. The following is a summary of these venues:

Academic and vocational divisions: The faculty is organized into seven divisions, each headed by a chair who is elected annually. Division members meet periodically to discuss issues and policies pertaining to them, in particular, and to the College. During the past two years, division faculty members have discussed and implemented student learning measures, and several have applied them to their courses. Division faculty members also conduct performance evaluations, participate in hiring committees and are represented in several College-wide committees. Except for Student Support Services, division faculty members write curricula and plan teaching schedules.[100]

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[97] Academic Senate Resolutions, "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," 06-07-03, March 27, 2007

[98] Program Review Guide

[99] Institutional Research Studies

[100] CTA-District Agreement, 2007-10; see also Academic Senate Resolutions, "Resolution to Establish and Define the Scope of Responsibility of Academic and Vocational Divisions, and to Establish and to Define the Function and Scope of Division Chairs," 03-04-3, October 28, 2003, Amended November 25, 2003

Committees and organizations: The College has 32 organizations and committees;[101] each is assigned a specific charge, membership and reporting requirement, as defined by Board of Trustees' policy.[102] The organizational and committee structure affords virtually all members of the College community the opportunity to participate, through collegial dialogue, in the governance of the College. The aim is to achieve ongoing improvement in the College's processes, with emphasis on student learning and success.

Faculty-staff meetings, Flex days and Institute days: Faculty-staff meetings are scheduled regularly. Topics are varied, and usually are subjects of broad interest, such as campus building projects, updates from departments and units, and accreditation and student learning.

Flex days cover subjects pertaining to effective teaching and processes to enhance student learning and success.[103] One Flex Day during the Fall Semester is traditionally devoted to a career-day event: students from the Palo Verde High School are invited to attend special career-related presentations by College faculty and staff members.[104] In May 2007, the College sponsored a special career day, "Career Connection," devoted to current Palo Verde College students. Although not a Flex day, the event proved a success that helped address an important student need, and accordingly, is planned to be repeated. [105]

Institute days are College-wide meetings devoted to discussions about topics affecting the College as an institution of higher learning. Institute days have presented topics such as Strategic Plan update, discussion of the Noel-Levitz student survey results, and getting prepared for accreditation.[106]

The College has sponsored numerous forums—staff meetings, Flex days, and Institute days—over the past several years devoted to discussions of plans to promote student learning.[107] Here is a sampling of the topics of those forums:

> "Getting Ready for Accreditation," part of Institute Day, September 7, 2005
> "Roll Up Your Sleeves: It's Crunch Time for SLOs," part of Flex Day, January 17, 2006
> "Student Learning Outcomes: Dialogue and Decision," Flex Day, August 21, 2006
> "SLOs: Assessment Instruments by Division," part of Flex Day, January 16, 2007
> "Are We Ready for Accreditation?" Faculty-Staff Meeting, March 6, 2007
> "Progress Report on Student Learning Outcomes," part of Flex Day, March 20, 2007
> "Student Learning Outcomes: Tools for Measurement and Their Results," part of Flex Day, August 20, 2007

[101] List of College Organizations and Committees, 2007-08
[102] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2510 and BP 2510
[103] Flex Days and Institute Days, Agendas and Supporting Materials
[104] Flex Days and Institute Days, Agendas and Supporting Materials
[105] Career Connection Documents
[106] Flex Days and Institute Days, Agendas and Supporting Materials
[107] Flex Days and Institute Days, Agendas and Supporting Materials

College Self-Evaluation: Standard I.B.1

The College believes it is making an earnest attempt to meet this standard, particularly with regard to conducting ongoing dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning. The College recognizes it has a way to go to fully incorporate student learning assessments into all its processes, but believes it is heading in the right direction. The College has a strong structure of organizations and committees that affords the opportunity for wide participation and discussion in these matters.

Action Plan: Standard 1.B.1

Continue efforts in encouraging dialogue among all constituents about student learning and improving institutional processes.

Standard I.B.2

The institution sets goals to improve its effectiveness consistent with its stated purposes. The institution articulates its goals and states the objectives derived from them in measurable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be determined and widely discussed. The institutional members understand these goals and work collaboratively toward their achievement.

Response to Standard I.B.2

Here are some examples in which the College, through its various organizations and committees, establishes goals in measurable terms and encourages wide discussion regarding the degree to which such goals have been achieved:

Student learning outcomes: With the introduction of the new accreditation standards in 2002, the College placed a high priority on identifying and evaluating student learning, and making changes that improve learning. The process began with the revision of the course outline template, the inclusion of a section in the template for student learning outcomes, and the updating of all existing course outlines. Since 2002, all course outlines for new and modified courses are required to list expected student learning outcomes as a condition of approval by the Curriculum Committee. To broaden access to course information to students and the general public, all College course outlines are published on the Curriculum Committee page of the College website.[108]

In 2005-06, the College, through the Academic Senate, devised and began implementing a process to identify, evaluate, and measure student learning outcomes at the program and degree levels. The process includes instructional disciplines, as well as student support services, such as counseling, library and the Learning Skills Center. The Academic Senate adopted the following resolutions establishing accountability and measurable goals in the achievement of student learning outcomes:[109]

[108] Course Outline Samples; see complete course outlines on the Curriculum Committee page of the College Website: www.paloverde.edu, click on Academics (under the Student Menu), then click on Curriculum Committee
[109] Academic Senate Resolutions

1. "Resolution Recognizing the Central Role of Faculty in Developing and Assessing Student Learning Outcomes and Implementing Improvements," 05-06-01, February 14, 2006—Recognizes that faculty play a key role in learning outcomes assessment and establishes accountability.

2. "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," 06-07-03, March 27, 2007—Acknowledges that student learning outcomes shall be established at the course, program/certificate, and degree levels. Identifies learning outcome measures for each academic and vocational division and establishes target dates for implementing such measures.

Program review: In 2006-07 the College implemented a revised program review system for all programs—instructional and non-instructional. The system provides more rigorous measures of performance, including how and to what extent programs support student learning. Programs are also evaluated on, among other factors, their achievement of prior goals, adherence to budget (non-instructional programs), consistency with the College mission, and course and certificate completions (instructional programs). Program review reports are presented to the Program Review Committee, a mutual agreement committee consisting of representatives from each constituency for review, and then presented to the Board of Trustees for formal acceptance. The process ensures that College programs are widely discussed and evaluated.[110]

Strategic Plan: The most recent update of the College Strategic Plan added three new features to each of the plan objectives: a) the identification of departments or areas responsible for completing the objective; b) a timeline for completion of the objective; and c) evidence demonstrating completion of the objective. The Strategic Plan was approved by the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee in March 2007, and subsequently reviewed and adopted by the College community on Institute Day, September 4, 2007.[111]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard I.B.2

The College is making good progress infusing measurable goals into its plans and evaluation systems. The concept of student learning outcomes is increasingly becoming part of the College culture. While progress has been made in developing student learning outcomes at the course level, more work is yet to be done at the program and degree levels. Program performance is evaluated against stated goals and widely discussed through the program review process. The Strategic Plan assigns specific departments with the responsibility of completing objectives; it establishes timelines; and it requires evidence proving the completion of objectives.

Action Plan: Standard I.B.2

The College will continue to make progress in identifying and implementing measures of student learning outcomes at the program and degree levels. It will continue to ensure that all areas establish measurable goals to the extent that progress in achieving those goals may be evaluated and

[110] Program Review Guide
[111] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values

widely discussed. The Academic Senate resolution, "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," Resolution 06-07-03, ratified March 27, 2007, established target dates for implementing and evaluating student learning outcomes for programs and degrees. The Academic Senate will continue to assess progress in meeting this goal.

Standard I.B.3

The institution assesses progress toward achieving its stated goals and makes decisions regarding the improvement of institutional effectiveness in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation. Evaluation is based on analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Response to Standard I.B.3

The College is committed to the practice of systematic planning and evaluation in assessing progress toward achieving its goals. At the heart of this practice is the Strategic Plan. Originally developed and implemented in 2002, the Strategic Plan has since been revised three times, as new priorities emerge or as goals are achieved. The College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, consisting of representatives from all College constituencies, oversees the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the assessment of progress.

Here are some sample progress assessments by the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee of Strategic Plan goals[112]:

1. All course outlines have been updated to incorporate student learning outcomes; the process of identifying and assessing learning at the program and degree levels began Fall Semester 2006 and is ongoing. (Initiative 1, Objective 1)[113]

2. Program review studies have become regularized with the production of a schedule and revised templates and the timely completion of program reviews. (Initiative 1, Objective 3)[114]

3. A community needs assessment was started in Spring Semester 2007 with the purchase of demographic information in the geographic areas surrounding Blythe and Needles; the assessment is continuing into the 2007-08 year with focus group studies. (Initiative 2, Objective 2)[115]

4. Tutorial resources have been expanded by the implementation of a Writing Lab in 2004 and the offering of this resource to all students. (Initiative 3, Objectives 3 and 8)[116]

[112] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values
[113] Course Outline Samples; see also Academic Senate Resolutions, "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," 06-07-03, March 27, 2007
[114] Program Review Guide
[115] Community Needs and Interests Survey
[116] Writing Lab Documents

5. The College governance chart was updated in 2006-07 and will be updated annually. (Initiative 4, Objective 1)[117]

6. A replacement management information system has been selected by the College, through the efforts of the Enterprise Resource Planning committee; the new system is expected to improve efficiencies in reporting and data collection. (Initiative 5, Objective 3)[118]

Apart from the Strategic Plan, other systematic planning and evaluation processes are ongoing. These include:

Budget process: Each year, during the Spring Semester, the Budget Committee reviews budget proposals from College departments and programs for the upcoming academic year. As part of the review process, budget proposals are required to justify new personnel and equipment in terms of specific Strategic Plan initiatives and objectives. Budget proposals are also evaluated in terms of the appropriateness of proposed spending to the effectiveness of its services in serving students. In The Budget Committee began reviewing in Fall Semester 2007 a revised budget form requiring proposing departments to explain budget requests vis-à-vis prior year funding. The purpose of the revision, once adopted, would be to provide Budget Committee members and personnel writing up budget proposals some historical perspective on each budget area, resulting in better planning, evaluation and decision-making.[119]

Job performance reviews: The faculty job performance evaluation system was substantially revised in collective bargaining and implemented in 2005-06. The revised system provides rigorous and clearly defined measures of performance, and establishes a timeline for remediation where needed.[120] The College developed and implemented an evaluation procedure for administrators in 2005.[121]

Student and staff survey: In Fall Semester 2005, the College administered the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) and Institutional Priorities Survey (IPS), student engagement surveys produced by Noel-Levitz, Inc. The College had conducted the surveys twice before—in 2000 and 1995. Data from the 2005 survey was tabulated and developed into a series of interpretive analyses and recommended actions to address the problems revealed in the survey results. The reports were presented to the College community during the October 2006 Institute day and published on the College website. The Institute day participants engaged in problem-solving sessions to develop ways to address those problems. Several of the findings from the survey—review class scheduling practices; notify earlier students with academic deficiencies; review transfer and career counseling practices—were incorporated into the Strategic Plan September 2007 revision. Other findings—investigate campus safety (specifically, Needles Center and Spring Street); develop plans for computer labs in Needles; and explore options for tutoring services at the correctional facilities—were referred to the offices of Student Services and Instructional Services for action.[122]

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[117] Collegial Governance Chart
[118] Enterprise Resource Planning Committee, Agendas and Minutes
[119] Budget Procedure
[120] CTA-District Agreement, 2007-10 (Faculty Evaluation Procedure)
[121] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 7262, AP 7262, and AP 7250-2
[122] Noel-Levitz SSI and IPS—Highlights. These documents are also available at www.paloverde.edu; click on Institutional Research, under Visitor Menu. See also Flex Days and Institute Days, Agendas and Supporting Materials, specifically, October 4, 2006

Other College plans: Plans have been produced by various College departments, usually as part of the compliance requirements of external agencies. These include the Matriculation Plan (2005); EEO Advisory Plan (in progress); and Five-Year Construction Plan (2006-10). Other plans were written to address particular internal needs, and include the Enrollment Management Plan (2007) and Technology Master Plan (2004-05).[123]

More effective use of data: Increasingly, the College is using data, quantitative and qualitative, to guide planning and decision-making. Examples of this practice are in the revised program review process; budget review and approval procedure; the inclusion of accountability and timeline measures in the Strategic Plan; actions prompted by the analysis of Noel-Levitz survey data; and more rigorous job performance assessments of faculty and administrators.[124]

Enrollment management: The College is making progress in clarifying some of the various components of enrollment management as part of its enrollment management plan: student success (defined as persistence and completion of courses, programs and degrees), outreach, evaluation of demographic characteristics, class scheduling, and program planning and evaluation appropriate to students' learning and career needs.[125] Each of these components has been incorporated into the Strategic Plan, with specific goals and timelines. [126]

More work remains to be done, however, in the forecasting, and planning for, future enrollment growth—at the main campus, in distance education programs, and at the Needles Center:

> The Blythe main campus will open the Physical Education complex in 2008 and a Performing and Cultural Arts building in 2009. The College is planning for the programs and support services needed for these new facilities.
>
> The distance education program continues to expand, particularly with the increase in the number of correctional facilities participating in the College's program. The College needs to plan for this enrollment expansion by evaluating the adequacy of instructional and support resources and by evaluating the impact of this expansion on face-to-face courses and programs.
>
> The Needles Center will relocate from the Needles High School to the Claypool Building in the summer of 2008. With this change comes the need to plan for additional classes, particularly during the daytime.

College Self-Evaluation of Standard I.B.3

The College is committed to continuous evaluation and improvement in its programs and services, a commitment that is evident in the revisions, during the past few years, of several important processes, namely, program review, budget review, Strategic Plan, learning outcomes assessments, job performance evaluations, and more effective use of data. To be successful in implementing

[123] College Plan Documents
[124] See these items: Program Review Guide; Budget Procedure, Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values, Noel-Levitz SSI and IPS--Highlights; CTA-District Agreement, 2007-10 (Faculty Evaluation Procedure); Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 7262, AP 7262, and AP 7250-2
[125] Enrollment management Plan
[126] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values; see especially Initiatives 1 (Instructional Programs and Support Services), 2 (Student Recruitment and Enrollment) and 3 (Student Success)

such revisions, the College recognizes the importance of vigilant follow-up on what has been started. The College will apply the same kind of continuous evaluation to new programs and services as they emerge. The College is planning for the new facilities at the Blythe main campus, the expanding distance education program, and the new building and program planning at the Needles Center.

Action Plan: Standard I.B.3

Conduct ongoing, rigorous follow-up of existing programs and services to ensure their effectiveness. Apply the same kind of continuous evaluation to new programs and services as they emerge. Focus more aggressively on developing systems for enrollment management, emphasizing forecasting and planning for growth, particularly at the Blythe main campus, the distance education program and the Needles Center.

Standard I.B.4

The institution provides evidence that the planning process is broad-based, offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.

Response to Standard I.B.4

Planning is broad-based; the College offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies: The response to Standard I.B.1, earlier, describes three kinds of venues in which dialogue takes place. The venues—divisions, organizations and committees, and College-wide meetings—also afford the opportunity for broad-based input into planning and decision-making. Evidence of this comes in various forms: the collegial governance chart, which shows the functional relationships among the various campus organizations and committees; the list of College organizations and committees, which shows the membership and frequency of meeting of each campus organization and committee; the Strategic Plan demonstrates how the responsibilities for achieving of College goals are distributed among many constituent organizations; and Board of Trustees policies on collegial governance, which identify the charge, membership and reporting requirement of each organization and committee.[127]

Planning allocates necessary resources: College personnel recognize that resources come in various forms—financial, physical, human and technological, to name a few. Different goals may require different kinds of resources. Here are some varied examples how planning resulted in the allocation of appropriate resources to accomplish a goal:

1. Selection of a replacement management information system. (Key resources: financial, human) The College recently acquired a new management information system after conducting an extensive study of its MIS requirements and review of vendor proposals. The process started with the formation, in Fall Semester 2006, of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) committee consisting of representatives of key MIS users. The ERP committee, in turn, hired a consultant specializing in the MIS requirements of California

[127] Collegial Governance Chart; List of College Organizations and Committees; Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values; Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2510 and AP 2510

community colleges. The consultant assisted the College, working through the ERP committee, in four principal ways: a) helping the College identify current and future requirements; b) advising during RFP solicitations and presentations; c) assisting in choosing a system; and d) assisting in implementing the system. In accomplishing this goal, the College allocated significant human and financial resources to help make the right decision.[128]

2. Revision and update of Board of Trustees' policies and administrative procedures. (Key resources: financial, human) The College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee recognized in 2005-06 that the policies of the Board of Trustees needed to be re-evaluated and aligned in form and content with community college board policies recommended by the Community College League of California, as well as applicable federal and state regulations, California Education Code, accreditation standards and best practices of the California Community College system. The College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee engaged the services of a consultant to assist in the process. Committee members began in Spring Semester 2006 systematically rewriting Board policies with the aid of the consultant's recommendations. The policy revision process is progressing and is expected to be completed in 2007-2008.[129]

3. Development of the distance education program: (Key resources: financial, human) Shortly after it began providing instruction via distance education to inmates at two nearby state prisons in 2001, the College recognized it had a promising program—one that could serve not only inmates, but community students otherwise unable to attend certain face-to-face classes. After 2001, the College established the office of Distance Education and Noncredit Programs and staffed it with an associate dean and secretary. The Distance Education committee was subsequently formed by the Academic Senate to provide faculty advice on the management of the program; later, the Distance Education committee was recast as a mutual agreement committee, broadening the committee membership to include all College constituencies.[130]

4. Development of the Needles Center: (Key resources: financial, human, physical, technological) The Needles Center, originally operated by the San Bernardino Community College District, was taken over by Palo Verde College in 1999 by agreement between the two districts. The Needles Center was housed on the campus of Needles High School; however, the College recognized that it needed a larger, and permanent, facility to effectively serve the growing student population. In 2005, Needles' voters approved a bond measure that would renovate another, existing building in Needles—the Claypool Building, which the College acquired in 2006 and which is expected to be ready for use in the summer of 2008. The Needles Center is staffed with an assistant dean, counselor, and clerical support staff. Courses are taught by adjunct instructors from the Needles area, as well as by full-time instructors in person and via interactive television originating at the Blythe main

[128] Enterprise Resource Planning Committee, Agendas and Minutes
[129] Timeline for Completion of Updates and Revision of Board of Trustees' Policies
[130] Academic Senate Resolutions; see "Resolution Establishing New Committees of the Academic Senate: Distance Education, Class Scheduling [later changed to Division Chairs Committee], Articulation and Transfer, and Scholarship 03-04-03, September 23, 2003; College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, Agendas and Minutes

campus. In 2006, the California Postsecondary Education Commission recognized Needles as an official outreach center.[131]

Planning leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness: In each of the examples cited above, broad-based planning by appropriate constituencies and the allocation of appropriate resources resulted in achieving a College goal. A new management information system was purchased and is being implemented. Policies of the Board of Trustees are being revised. The distance education program is being managed by an administrative staff, with guidance from a broad-based College committee. And the Needles Center is being managed by an administrative and counseling staff, is being supported in some of its classes with interactive television originating at the Blythe campus, and will soon be housed in a new facility.

College Self-Evaluation of Standard I.B.4

The College's structure of organizations and committees not only encourages broad input from its various constituencies, but also is effective in procuring sufficient resources and getting things done. Because of its small size, the College encourages its people to participate in planning and decision-making by taking on multiple organization and committee assignments. The College is realistic about allocating resources—human, financial, physical or technological—as needed in order to achieve results.

As of November 2007, in the area of institutional effectiveness in planning, the College believes it has attained a level between and "Proficiency" and "Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement," according the "Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness" developed by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.[132]

Action Plan: Standard I.B.4

Continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the organization and committee structure of the College, encourage collaboration among College constituencies, and establish goals that are measurable and achievable and that bring benefits consistent with the College's mission and purpose.

Standard I.B.5

The institution uses documented assessment results to communicate matters of quality assurance to appropriate constituencies.

Response to Standard I.B.5

There are various means by which the College communicates matters of institutional quality to its constituencies, including the general public. Chief among these are the website, the College Library, and the Public Information Office.

[131] College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, Agendas and Minutes.
[132] Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness (ACCJC); ALO Reports to the Board of Trustees

The College Website contains a variety of campus news and information. The main page is a compilation of current events, highlighting activities such as graduation, club activities, and student awards and honors. The main page also provides access to the College Catalog, addenda to the Catalog, and class schedules. Elsewhere on the website, the Accreditation page contains links to all of the College's accreditation reports and documents and to program review reports. The Curriculum Committee page has links to course outlines and Curriculum Committee minutes. The Institutional Research page contains studies about the College's performance, including the ARCC 2007 report, and findings and analyses of the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory and Institutional Priorities Survey. A Site Map link appears on the main page and provides an index to website contents.[133]

The College library maintains various hard-copy documents having to do with institutional quality, such as program reviews, Academic Senate resolutions and agendas, accreditation documents, student learning outcome analyses, agendas from key campus organizations, and institutional research reports.

The public information office manages day-to-day media relations for the College and the Palo Verde College Foundation, including writing press releases and publicity and placing class schedule information in the local newspaper, the *Palo Verde Valley Times* and the *Needles Desert Star*.[134]

College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee represents all College constituent groups, and is the key decision-making organization of the College, apart from the Board of Trustees. Members are expected not only to report on the activities of their constituent groups, but as well, to relay back to their constituent groups the decisions of the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, thus providing effective means of disseminating important College business. Board of Trustees' agendas are reviewed in joint meetings of the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee and the Administrative Council. The Administrative Council consists of academic and classified management personnel.[135]

Monthly faculty-staff meetings: Led by the Superintendent/President, the monthly faculty-staff meetings are planned by College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee and are designed to be of broad campus interest, covering topics such as campus building projects, budget, accreditation issues, and updates from departments and units.

There are other ways in which the College communicates quality assurance information to its constituencies. To assist faculty in writing program reviews, for example, the Institutional Researcher-Academic, provides a database containing student performance information from which faculty members can conduct various kinds of analyses of their courses and programs. The database contains grade distributions combined with scheduling information, enabling users to prepare studies of completion rates by courses, programs, and method of delivery, and location of delivery.[136]

[133] College Website: www.paloverde.edu
[134] Public Information Office Documents
[135] List of College Organizations and Committees; College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, Agendas and Minutes
[136] Institutional Research Studies

To keep faculty members and other staff apprised of their program expenditures, the Administrative Services office distributes monthly budget summaries. The summaries are used for planning current as well as future expenditures.[137]

Two electronic message boards—one situated on the bridge overlooking the main campus drive and the other mounted inside the CS building—provide important information, such as registration times, financial aid deadlines and campus activities, principally for students.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard I.B.5

On matters of quality assurance the College strives to be open and candid with its constituencies and the general public. The College website is comprehensive and informative. The public information office maintains working relationships with the local media. Monthly faculty-staff meetings keep College members informed of campus news and events. The College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee provides a forum in which constituent issues may be discussed and from which decisions and recommendations are documented, and conveyed back to constituent organizations.

Action Plan: Standard I.B 5

The College will continue its practice of keeping an open campus environment, providing important campus information to College constituents, as well as to the general public.

Standard I.B.6

The institution assures the effectiveness of its ongoing planning and resource allocation processes by systematically reviewing and modifying, as appropriate, all parts of the cycle, including institutional and other research efforts.

Response to Standard I.B.6

The College conducts ongoing examination and re-evaluation of its planning and resource allocation processes in various ways. Here are examples illustrating a few of the ways in which the College has modified processes to improve their effectiveness:

Combine College Council with Strategic Planning Steering Committee: The combining of these two groups in 2004 was done partly to streamline the number of meetings, but, more importantly, to create in a single, representative body the breadth to oversee and manage the planning and evaluation of several related College functions, namely, strategic planning, accreditation and College policies and general College operations. The benefit of this combination has been to enable the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee to evaluate College plans and programs and to integrate them more effectively with the Strategic Plan.

[137] Budget Procedure

Create internal (academic) and external institutional research functions: The assigning of institutional research as two separate, but related, functions was designed to address more effectively two College needs: a) data collection and analysis of student learning outcomes and accreditation and related academic matters; and b) the assessment of external, or community, needs vis-à-vis the College. The academic researcher is a faculty member who is also responsible for accreditation liaison. The external researcher is an administrator who directs the Small Business Economic Development Center, the economic development arm of the College.

Academic Senate resolutions to clarify or modify processes: The Academic Senate regularly reviews academic planning and evaluation processes to enhance their effectiveness, and adopts resolutions to codify changes and clarifications. Some examples of such Academic Senate resolutions are[138]:

1. "Resolution Reaffirming the Curriculum Development Process," 06-07-04, March 27, 2007—Clarifies specific steps by which curriculum is to be developed and approved; the resolution, while not breaking new ground, defines in writing an established process.

2. "Resolution on Including Critical Information in Course Syllabi," 05-06-02, February 14, 2006— Establishes minimum essential information to be included in all course syllabi, including student learning outcomes, thereby helping to promote student learning and success.

3. "Resolution Establishing New Committees of the Academic Senate: Distance Education, Class Scheduling [later changed to Division Chairs Committee]; Articulation and Transfer, and Scholarship," 03-04-02, September 23, 2003—Establishes key committees designed to meet specific planning and evaluation needs of the College.

4. "Resolution to Establish and to Define the Function and Scope of Responsibility of Academic and Vocational Divisions, and to Establish and to Define the Function and Scope of Division Chairs," 03-04-03, October 28, 2003, Amended November 25, 2003—Establishes academic and vocational divisions to facilitate program review, class scheduling, course initiation and policy development. Later, the responsibilities of the divisions were broadened to include participation in faculty performance evaluations and budget preparation.

In each of these resolutions Academic Senate members saw the need to create, clarify or modify a system. In some cases the modifications were major—such as the creation of academic and vocational divisions—while others codify an existing process, such as the curriculum approval procedure.

Revise faculty and administrator evaluation systems: The College faculty association, the CTA, revised the faculty job performance evaluation system in 2004-05 as part of the collective bargaining process. Faculty members recognized the existing evaluation system needed to be made

[138] Academic Senate Resolutions

clearer and more rigorous, and it needed a procedure for faculty remediation, where appropriate. The College developed and implemented an evaluation procedure for administrators in 2005.[139]

Replace the management information system: The College has had a difficult history with management information systems. Since the mid-1990s the College has operated two different systems, neither of which was satisfactory: they were costly, failed to produce the data and reports the College needed to evaluate itself, were difficult to use, and did not provide useful information for effective enrollment management. In 2006, the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee authorized the creation of the Enterprise Resources Planning (ERP) committee whose charge was to review current and anticipated requirements and to decide on the acquisition of a new system. The ERP engaged the assistance of a consulting firm which guided the ERP members through the process of evaluating the College's requirements, preparing an RFP, evaluating proposals and selecting the right product.[140]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard I.B.6

The College has the organizational structure—and the institutional will—to change a system if it is not working to the best advantage of its students and personnel. Key organizations such as the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee and the Academic Senate periodically ask these questions: Is the process producing the intended results? Does the process advance student learning and success? What can be done to improve the process? If the answers to these questions suggest that a process needs improvement, the College has demonstrated that it will fix it.

Action Plan: Standard I.B 6

The College will continue to review and evaluate all institutional processes to ensure they advance student learning and success, and to take steps to improve them when necessary.

Standard I.B.7

The institution assesses its evaluation mechanisms through a systematic review of their effectiveness in improving instructional programs, student support services, and library and other learning support services.

Response to Standard I.B.7

Revision of the program review process: In 2002, the College recognized that the existing program review process needed to be updated and clarified, particularly with regard to the emphasis of the new accreditation standards on identifying and measuring learning outcomes. After extensive collaboration between the faculty and the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee,

[139] CTA-District Agreement, 2007-10 (Faculty Evaluation Procedure); Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 7262, AP 7262, and AP 7250-2

[140] Enterprise Resource Planning Committee, Agendas and Minutes

the resulting document, the Program Review Guide, was completed and approved by the Board of Trustees September 2006, and implemented in 2006-07. Program review is among the major tools the College uses to systematically evaluate its processes and improve student learning.[141]

As of November 2007, in the area of institutional effectiveness in program review, the College believes it has attained the level of "Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement," according the "Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness," developed by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.[142]

Assessment of student learning: In 2002, in response to requirements established in the new accreditation standards, the College formally started the process of identifying and measuring student learning. Course-level student learning outcomes are included in the course outline, typically written by the faculty member responsible for developing the course. The course outline is subsequently reviewed and approved by other faculty members from the division in which the course is taught, then by the Curriculum Committee and then by the Board of Trustees. At each step along the way, the course outline is evaluated on its inclusion of student learning outcomes, among other features.[143]

In 2006-07, the College, through the Academic Senate, implemented a process to identify, evaluate, and measure student learning outcomes at the degree level. The concept is codified in Academic Senate resolution: "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," 06-07-03, March 27, 2007.[144]

The resolution establishes a system of degree level outcomes analogous to the component requirements of the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science, General Studies, degrees, and assigns responsibility for those outcomes to the appropriate division. For example, Area A for the AA degree at Palo Verde College is "Communications in the English Language and Critical Thinking." The comparable requirement for the AS degree in General Studies is "Communications." Responsibility for implementing learning outcomes for this degree-level area is assigned to the Language Arts and Communications division faculty, which established the following degree level learning outcome: "Demonstrate college-level proficiency in communication, whether oral or written."

Another example is Area D for the AA degree, titled "Social, Political and Economic Institutions and Behavior, Historical Background." The comparable area for the AS degree in General Studies is Area 5A and B, "Social Sciences." The division assigned this degree level learning outcome is History, Social and Behavioral Sciences. The division faculty decided upon an important college-level skill that is taught by all instructors in the division, namely, that "students shall demonstrate mastery of research essay concepts and methodologies."

The College's system of measuring and evaluating learning outcomes at the degree level is relatively new; however, early indicators are promising. Several of the divisions have implemented

[141] Program Review Guide
[142] Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness (ACCJC); ALO Reports to the Board of Trustees
[143] Course Outline Samples; see complete course outlines on the Curriculum Committee page of the College Website: www.paloverde.edu; click on Academics (under the Student Menu), then click on Curriculum Committee
[144] Academic Senate Resolutions

pre-test (beginning of the semester) and post-test (end of the semester) procedures intending to measure degree-level learning, and implemented improvements as a result.

As of November 2007, in the area of institutional effectiveness in student outcomes assessment, the College believes it has attained a level between "Development" and "Proficiency" according the "Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness," developed by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.[145]

The College has not yet adopted a system to identify and evaluate student learning at the program, or certificate, level; however, a system was discussed in concept at the August 20, 2006 Flex day. The system has each certificate program assigned to a sponsoring division; the division faculty would be responsible for devising one or more learning outcomes for the program, and for implementing a process for measuring the outcomes.

Counseling and student support services: The revision of the faculty performance evaluation system, implemented in 2007-08, called for the addition of a new component, namely, the evaluation of counseling faculty and advisors by their student advisees. The new feature is expected to yield useful information to help counseling faculty and advisors enhance the quality of support services to students.[146]

Other student support areas have initiated assessments of student learning, including the Financial Aid department and the library. Financial Aid conducts pre-interview and post-interview tests to evaluate students' understanding of financial aid rules and procedures. Library personnel, in cooperation with faculty members, present seminars in information literacy for students, and conduct pre- and post-tests for each session.[147]

Basic skills placement test: The College recognizes that its placement exams must be reviewed and validated frequently to ensure that students are placed at the appropriate levels of English and mathematics, and whether they may be required to take courses in remedial reading. The Learning Skills Center, which administers the test to new students, conducts validation studies of the placement tests in cooperation with English and mathematics faculty members every four years, and adjusts cutoff scores where necessary.[148]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard I.B.7

The College, through its various divisions and departments, systematically reviews processes that evaluate the effectiveness of its instructional programs, student support services, and library and other learning support services. Examples of the College's commitment are: the revision of the program review process; more rigorous evaluation of student learning at the course, program and degree levels; student evaluations of counseling faculty and advisors; assessments of learning in Financial Aid and the library; and ongoing validation studies of English and mathematics placement exams.

[145] Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness (ACCJC); ALO Reports to the Board of Trustees
[146] CTA-District Agreement, 2007-10 (Faculty Evaluation Procedure)
[147] Student Learning Outcomes: Assessment Tools and Results
[148] Learning Skills Center Documents

Action Plan: Standard I.B.7

The College will continue reviewing the effectiveness of the processes that evaluate instructional and student support services and continue to use the results of such reviews to make improvements.

Standard II
Student Learning Programs and Services

The institution offers high-quality instructional programs, student support services, and library and learning support services that facilitate and demonstrate the achievement of stated student learning outcomes. The institution provides an environment that supports learning, enhances student understanding and appreciation of diversity, and encourages personal and civic responsibility as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development for all of its students.

Standard II.A: Instructional Programs

The institution offers high-quality instructional programs in recognized and emerging fields of study that culminate in identified student outcomes leading to degrees, certificates, employment, or transfer to other higher education institutions of programs consistent with its mission. Instructional programs are systematically assessed in order to assure currency, improve teaching and learning strategies, and achieve stated student learning outcomes. The provisions of this standard are broadly applicable to all institutional activities offered in the name of the institution.

Response to Standard II.A: Instructional Programs

The College is making progress in identifying, assessing and making improvements relative to learning outcomes at the course-level and has begun assessing degree-level outcomes. It needs to continue its efforts in identifying certificate-level learning outcomes, and devising methods to measure them.

The College's program review and Curriculum Committee systems review all instructional programs rigorously and frequently and by a broad representation of constituents—division faculty, Curriculum Committee, Program Review Committee, Board of Trustees—ensuring that all instructional programs are consistent with the College's mission and that they uphold its integrity. All instructional programs are reviewed by the program review process every five years. All course outlines of record must be updated every five years. A rigorous faculty evaluation system is in place to assess the quality of instruction.

The College ensures that all courses and instructional programs carrying its name are presented in a manner appropriate to an institution of higher learning and consistent with the College's mission. This includes college-level courses, pre-collegiate courses, courses offered face-to-face as well as distance education, and courses offered in various locations under the auspices of the College.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A

The College is making good progress in identifying and measuring learning at the course, certificate and degree levels. It has effective systems in place—review by division-level faculty, program review process, and Curriculum Committee oversight—that ensure consistent quality of its courses

and programs. While the College has a rigorous faculty evaluation system in place, it needs to make sure all part-time faculty members are consistently evaluated.

Action Plan: Standard II.A

The College needs to continue its progress in identifying, measuring and implementing improvements that affect student learning outcomes in its courses and programs. It needs to continue its rigorous course and program review processes. It needs to make sure that its faculty evaluation procedure is applied with equal rigor to all part-time faculty.

Standard II.A.1

The institution demonstrates that all instructional programs, regardless of location or means of delivery, address and meet the mission of the institution and uphold its integrity.

Response to Standard II.A.1

The College's Program Review Guide, implemented in 2006-07, revised the guidelines for the preparation of program review reports for all programs, instructional and non-instructional. In the template for instructional programs, Item 1, Support of the College Mission, asks that the program under review address three areas: a) State the purpose of the program; 2) Describe how the program supports the overall mission of the College as adopted by the Board of Trustees; and 3) Describe the unique institutional goal the program achieves.[149]

Here are examples of how faculty members have addressed these areas in program review reports[150]:

1. "We provide exemplary learning environments and experiences in our classrooms, workstations, offices and off-campus settings, which, in keeping with the College's Mission, 'promote student success, lifelong learning, and community development.'" (Business Division, 2003)

2. "The goals of the programs offered support the following college missions: life-long learning and the ability to think independently and reason by teaching the students healthcare is always evolving, improving and discovering." (Nursing Program, Division of Nursing and Allied Health, 2006)

3. "The program supports the overall mission of the College by providing high quality programming in a particular vocational area. CRJ courses provide an opportunity for lifelong learning in that they offer the opportunity for professional development and certification." (Criminal Justice Department, Division of Nursing and Allied Health, 2006)

[149] Program Review Guide
[150] Program Review Reports; reports are available in paper copy as well as on the College Website: www.paloverde.edu Click on Accreditation under the Visitor Menu.

4. "This program supports Initiative 1 Instructional program objective 5: offer courses that encourage personal growth and career enhancement. It also supports the value of the mission statement, especially learning, by offering lifelong learning and encouraging scholastic achievement." (Psychology Department, Division of History, Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2007)

5. "The Mission Statement of Palo Verde College states that the college "provides an exemplary learning environment that promotes student success, lifelong learning, and community development. The Political Science department fulfills this primary mission through the delivery of 16 history and 8 political science courses offered by the department." (Political Science Department, Division of History, Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2007)

All College instructional programs—whether taught face-to-face or distance education; offered credit or non-credit; taught at the Needles Center or at the Blythe main campus; or taught under instructional services agreements—are required to address in program review how they support the mission of the College.

To ensure programs uphold the integrity of the College, they are reviewed by a broad-based representation of the College in program review every five years. Vocational programs are additionally reviewed as updates every two years. All program review reports must first be reviewed and approved by the Program Review Committee, composed of representatives of key College constituents. Once approved by the Program Review Committee, the report is presented to the Board of Trustees at its regular meeting or study session for acceptance. Once accepted, the report is published on the College website.

New, revised and updated courses and programs are reviewed by the Curriculum Committee to ensure they are academically rigorous and uphold the integrity of the College. The Curriculum Committee consists of representatives from the academic and vocational divisions, a representative from the Associated Student Body, the Librarian, Registrar, and Articulation Officer. It is co-chaired by the Vice-President of Instructional Services and a faculty member. The Curriculum Committee meets monthly.

Most Curriculum Committee decisions affect how courses and programs are presented in the College Catalog; these decisions are published as addenda, and are inserted loose-leaf into the Catalog and published on the College website. Curriculum Committee minutes are also published on the College website.[151]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.1

The College's program review and Curriculum Committee systems, by virtue of the fact that they review all instructional program—regardless of mode of delivery or location—rigorously and frequently and by a broad representation of constituents, ensure that all instructional programs are consistent with the College's mission and that they uphold its integrity.

[151] College Catalog, 2007-08; College Website: www.paloverde.edu

Action Plan: Standard II.A.1

Maintain the existing processes of program review and Curriculum Committee oversight of all instructional programs.

Standard II.A.1.a

The institution identifies and seeks to meet the varied educational needs of its students through programs consistent with their educational preparation and the diversity, demographics, and economy of its communities. The institution relies upon research and analysis to identify student learning needs and to assess progress toward achieving stated learning outcomes.

Response to Standard II.A.1.a

The preparedness of students for College-level work varies considerably. To enhance students' chances for academic success, the College continuously examines its instructional programs and makes changes to improve them.

Here are some specific examples of instructional programs designed to address students' unique educational needs, and some of the changes made to improve their effectiveness:

1. English as a Second Language: learning outcomes assessments. In 2006-07 the ESL instructor initiated pre-test and post-test assessments of students in all levels of her classes. The pre-test was administered early in Fall Semester, and the post-test was administered in Spring Semester. ESL courses are offered at various levels of proficiency, and students are placed initially as the result of the placement test (which, for this study, served as the pre-test). At the time, each course ran for 9 weeks—it has since been changed to 18 weeks—so students took up to four courses in an academic year. The purpose was to determine: a) whether scores improved on the post-test; and 2) if there was a correlation between post-test scores and the number of courses taken. The results showed that a majority of students—22 students out of 26—improved test scores, but there was no clear correlation between the number of courses taken and post-test scores. The instructor plans to administer the pre- and post- tests again, but will segment the test questions to pinpoint areas (grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, etc.) where improvements are especially weak, or strong. The results will assist her in improving teaching approaches.[152]

2. The Writing Lab was established in 2004-05 to enable students to focus on developing writing skills in learning environment devoted exclusively to writing. Prior to 2004-05, developmental English courses were delivered with lectures and labs combined into single sections. Faculty believed that this arrangement did not provide students with sufficient emphasis on writing practice, as a separate lab would. The result was to separate the lab from the lecture and require it as a separate section, co-requisite with the accompanying lecture section. An additional benefit of the lab section—referred to as the Writing Lab—was to make it available to all students, not just those enrolled in English. The English faculty will evaluate the results of the change by assessing course completion and persistence, and will evaluate the use of the Writing Lab by students enrolled in courses other than English.

[152] Student Learning Outcomes: Assessment Tools and Results

3. The reading program was established in 2004-05 in response to placement test results that identified persistent reading deficiencies among students. In 2007-08, two of the four reading classes were expanded to include a lab, affording more class time for building reading skills.

4. Several new certificate programs were implemented, or are in the process of being implemented, to accommodate students' interests and in response to growing employment opportunities: a) fast-track Licensed Vocational Nursing certificate enabling students to complete requirements in a shorter time (2005); b) Alcohol/Drug Studies certificate resulting from increasing employment opportunities in health care (2007); c) Pharmacy Technician certificate (pending), resulting from increasing employment opportunities in health care; and d) Geographic Information Systems certificate (2006), resulting from growing need for persons with GIS skills in various career fields.[153]

5. Changes in the AA degree. In 1998-99, the College's associate in arts degree requirements were made identical to the California State University's general education requirements, providing students seeking an AA degree the additional benefit of having satisfied the general education requirements for transfer to CSU. The change, however, produced a problem: students seeking the AA degree with a major (or "emphasis") in another field, such as business administration or criminal justice, found they needed to take more than 60 units to satisfy the CSU general education transfer requirement as well as the requirements of a major. To remedy this problem, in 2003-04, the College terminated AA degrees with majors except for the AA in Liberal Arts (equivalent to CSU general education transfer requirements), enabling students to complete the degree in a timely manner and be qualified for transfer to CSU. Students seeking the associate in science degree, however, have several majors available to them; these majors are listed in the College Catalog.[154]

   In response to recent revisions in Title 5, Division 6, Chapter 6 of the California Code of Regulations, College faculty and administrators are presently collaborating on making further, substantial changes in the College's associate degree programs. The changes will affect students enrolling in the College in Fall Semester 2009.[155]

6. The College has conducted other research on the learning needs of its students. As was discussed in the response to Standard I.B.3, page 49, the College administered the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory and Institutional Priorities Survey in Fall Semester 2005 and discussed the results in a campus-wide Institute day in October 2006. The discussion resulted in several recommendations that were later incorporated into the Strategic Plan.[156] These recommendations are:

   a. Develop course planning and scheduling procedures to minimize conflicts that delay students' progress toward program completion. (Initiative 1, Objective 2)

   b. Support student learning by expanding tutorial resources and other supportive educational services for all students needing these services. (Initiative 3, Objective 3)

[153] College Catalog, 2007-08
[154] College Catalog, 2007-08; see also degrees and certificates conferred, 2001-2006, page 8 of the current Self-Study.
[155] Associate Degree Revisions
[156] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values; Noel-Levitz SSI and IPS—Highlights

c. Implement a system to track student progress during and after their college experience, and use the results and feedback to improve the effectiveness of programs. (Initiative 3, Objective 6)

d. Expand counseling and advisement services to provide students with timely and informative guidance as to careers and continuing education. (Initiative 1, Objective 4)

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.1.a

The examples cited in this response demonstrate that the College actively seeks to identify the learning needs of its students in various ways, and takes steps to address those needs. Whether assessing the learning needs of students in developmental classes, or the learning needs of students intending to transfer to four-your institutions, the College, through its faculty and staff, continuously seeks better ways to help students learn. The College conducts research on student learning, as evidenced in the Noel-Levitz surveys and the ESL studies, and acts on the results.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.1.a

Continue the practice of assessing students' learning needs through research, and continue seeking ways to enhance student learning. Act on the Noel-Levitz findings and Strategic Plan objectives enumerated above, and evaluate progress in those efforts.

Standard II.A.1.b

The institution utilizes delivery systems and modes of instruction compatible with the objectives of the curriculum and appropriate to the current and future needs of its students.

Response to Standard II.A.1.b

Faculty and administrators recognize that there are many factors that influence how courses might be delivered. These factors may include: the subject matter of the course; external requirements, such as transfer and professional licensure; the academic preparedness of students; the unique circumstances of students apart from preparedness; and the teaching skills of the faculty member. Acknowledging these factors, the College encourages creativity and innovation in instruction.

Here are some examples illustrating the College's approach to each of these factors:

Subject matter of the course: While the majority of courses taught at the College are delivered in the traditional classroom lecture mode over an 18-week period, other programs by virtue of their subject matter are presented differently. Computer science courses, as well as many physical and biological science courses, are taught in a lab. Child development courses and nursing courses often require that a portion of instructional time be in a clinical setting. Courses in theater and

speech are delivered in an auditorium, enabling students to practice performing and speaking before an audience.[157]

External requirements: The College offers students the opportunity to complete the IGETC pattern of courses, as well as California State University general education requirements, as part of or in lieu of an associate degree. Such transfer programs have specific requirements—such as a science lab, for example, or that a course consists of a minimum number to units to transfer—established by four-year institutions that influence how they are delivered. Similarly, the College's nursing program adheres to standards established by the state of California Board of Vocational Nurses as to the number of clinical and lecture hours required of certain courses.

Academic preparedness of students: Because many students arrive not fully prepared for college work, particularly in math and English, they are required to take developmental-level courses in these areas. Faculty members in both fields, recognizing that students placed in these courses need practice in skill development, require that such practice include lab time as well as lecture. Developmental math courses are taught as combined lecture and lab, while developmental English courses are taught as lecture with a co-requisite lab, which is also referred to as the Writing Lab.

Unique circumstances and objectives of students: Approximately 900 students are taking courses while in prison. Courses are delivered to these students via a correspondence-style distance education mode of instruction. Course materials are prepared by the instructor and are sent by courier to the inmate; completed work is returned to the instructor also by courier. Prison regulations prohibit the use of internet services, and because several of the nine prison facilities served by the College are outside the immediate geographic area, the correspondence method of distance education prevails. The College also delivers a small number of courses by interactive television. These courses originate at the Blythe main campus and are transmitted to the Needles Center, or vice versa.

Special teaching skills of the faculty member: At present, there are only a few faculty members delivering courses online. The courses are in chemistry, English and math and are taught voluntarily by faculty possessing skills in online teaching. The College encourages faculty to develop online teaching as a way to reach more students and to accommodate different learning needs.[158]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.1.b

The College, through its faculty and administration, takes into account many factors that determine how courses and programs should be delivered. Whether instructional methods are determined by the course subject matter, external requirements, the academic preparedness of students, the unique circumstance of students, or the teaching skills of the faculty member, the objective is to accommodate effectively the learning needs of students and enable them to complete their programs of study successfully.

[157] College Catalog, 2007-08; Schedule of Classes, Spring Semester 2008
[158] Schedule of Classes, Spring Semester 2008

Action Plan: Standard II.A.1.b

Continue utilizing various instructional methods that fulfill the objectives of the curriculum, accommodate students' learning needs and help them complete programs of study successfully.

Standard II.A.1.c

The institution identifies student learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates, and degrees; assesses student achievement of those outcomes; and uses assessment results to make improvements.

Response to Standard II.A.1.c

Course learning outcomes: Since revising the course outline template in 2002, the College requires that all new, updated and revised course outlines of record identify learning outcomes. Course outlines are also required to identify instructional methods to assess student learning. The use of assessment results to make improvements in course delivery is the responsibility of faculty members who teach the course, and decisions regarding improving courses take place at the division in which the course is taught. Course outlines are reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee and by the Board of Trustees. Examples of recently implemented changes to improve learning at the course level are:

1. The reading instructor added lab hours to certain reading courses to provide students more instructional time to develop reading skills, effective 2007-08.[159]

2. History faculty added ENG 101, English Composition, as a recommended prerequisite for certain history courses to enhance students' writing proficiency, effective 2007-08.[160]

3. English faculty requires the inclusion of a work of literature in the curriculum for ENG 101, English Composition, and effective 2006-07.

Program and certificate learning outcomes: Although the College has not yet adopted a system to identify and evaluate student learning at the program, or certificate, level, a system was discussed in concept at the August 20, 2006 Flex Day.[161] The system provided for each certificate program to be assigned to a sponsoring division; the division faculty would be responsible for devising one or more learning outcomes for the certificate program, and for implementing a process for measuring the outcomes.

As the division faculty members become more practiced in identifying and measuring learning at the degree level, they will apply similar assessment procedures to certificate programs.

Degree outcomes: In 2006-07, the College, through the Academic Senate, implemented a process to identify, evaluate, and measure student learning outcomes at the degree level. The concept is

[159] Curriculum Committee, Agendas and Minutes
[160] Curriculum Committee, Agendas and Minutes
[161] Flex Days and Institute Days, Agendas and Supporting Materials

codified in Academic Senate resolution: "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," Resolution No 06-07-03, March 27, 2007.[162]

The resolution establishes a system of degree-level outcomes analogous to the component requirements of the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science in General Studies, and assigns responsibility for those outcomes to the appropriate academic division. For example, Area A for the AA degree is "Communications in the English Language and Critical Thinking." The comparable requirement for the AS degree in General Studies is "Communications." Responsibility for implementing learning outcomes for this degree-level area is assigned to the Language Arts and Communications division faculty, which established the following degree level learning outcome: "Demonstrate college-level proficiency in communication, whether oral or written."

During 2006-07 the Language Arts and Communications division faculty conducted "pre" and "post" assessments of student writing. In Fall Semester 2006 faculty collected writing samples early in the semester from students enrolled in different levels of English, including developmental and collegiate level courses. The samples were assessed by faculty using a rubric they developed for this purpose. At the end of the semester, faculty collected a second batch of writing samples from the same students and graded them using the same rubric. In Spring Semester 2006, the division faculty refined the rubric and applied it again to samples gathered early in the semester and at the end of the semester.[163]

Another assessment of degree-level learning was conducted by the History, Social and Behavioral Sciences division. This division was assigned Area D for the AA degree, "Social, Political and Economic Institutions and Behavior, Historical Background," which is comparable to Area 5A and B, "Social Sciences," of the AS degree in General Studies. The division decided on research skills as a learning outcome because research is essential in the social sciences and an important skill to anyone earning an associate's degree. The degree-level outcome adopted by the division is: "Students shall demonstrate mastery of research essay concepts and methodologies."

The History, Social and Behavioral Sciences division developed and implemented a rubric in Spring Semester 2007 to measure student skills in research and presented the results in the March 20, 2007 Flex Day.[164]

The Business Division faculty developed a degree-level assessment process as well, but took a different approach. Instead of assessing a component area of the AA degree or the AS degree in General Studies, division faculty evaluated learning in ten key competency areas essential for the AS degree in Business Management. The competency areas each test a particular aspect of the overall outcome, "Describe and evaluate critically the role and significance of business in the community and the world." Division faculty devised a rubric and applied it as a pre-test and post-test to students enrolled in two business courses, BUS 101 and ACC 101 during Spring Semester 2007 and evaluated the results in Fall Semester 2007.[165]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.1.c

[162] Academic Senate Resolutions
[163] Student Learning Outcomes: Assessment Tools and Results
[164] Student Learning Outcomes: Assessment Tools and Results
[165] Student Learning Outcomes: Assessment Tools and Results

The College has made good progress in identifying, assessing and making improvements relative to learning outcomes at the course level and has made a good start at assessing degree level outcomes and implementing improvements as a result of these assessments. The College needs to continue the work started in these areas and expand its efforts to include all academic and vocational divisions. The College will develop a process for identifying, measuring and improving learning outcomes for certificate programs, and implement it.

As of November 2007, in the area of institutional effectiveness in student outcomes assessment, the College believes it has attained a level between "Development" and "Proficiency" according the "Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness" developed by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.[166]

Action Plan: Standard II.A.1.c

Continue work started to date in course and degree learning outcomes and expand it to all academic and vocational departments. Implement a process that identifies, measures, and makes improvements in learning outcomes for certificate programs.

Standard II.A.2

The institution assures the quality and improvement of all instructional courses and programs offered in the name of the institution, including collegiate, developmental, and pre-collegiate courses and programs, continuing and community education, study abroad, short-term training, courses and programs, programs for international students, and contract or other special programs, regardless of type of credit awarded, delivery mode, or location.

Response to Standard II.A.2

The College offers various kinds of instructional courses and programs. The following is a list of these programs, with explanations:[167]

Collegiate—These are college level courses and programs leading to associate degrees and certificates and are transferable to California State University and, in many cases, to University of California. They are also courses that qualify for IGETC certification and satisfy California State University general education requirements.

Developmental—These are basic skills courses in English, math and reading and are pre-requisites to certain college-level courses. Students assessed with deficiencies in any or all of these areas must pass the appropriate developmental course.

[166] Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness (ACCJC); ALO Reports to the Board of Trustees

[167] Information on most of these types of courses and programs is available in the College Catalog, 2007-08 and the Schedule of Classes, Spring Semester 2008. Short-term training consists of public safety programs offered through instructional services agreements; these courses are listed on the College Website: www.paloverde.edu. Click Schedule of Courses, then Public Safety, and then select the desired academic term.

Pre-Collegiate—See Developmental, above.

Community Education—The College offers community education in the form of noncredit Adult Basic Education and Noncredit Basic Education courses at the Spring Street campus, located in downtown Blythe, and at the Needles Center.

Face-to-face—These are courses delivered in the traditional classroom and laboratory environment.

Distance education—Correspondence—Most distance education courses are offered in a correspondence mode in which class materials are delivered between students and faculty members via courier or through the Office of Distance Education.

Distance Education—Interactive television—A handful of course sections is offered via interactive television between the Blythe main campus and the Needles Center.

Distance education—Online—A few course sections are offered online. This mode of course delivery is still in its early stage of development.

Specialized instructional services: The College conducts a number of instructional programs in police, fire and hazardous materials handling in areas outside the district. Such programs are conducted under agreements requiring compliance with all requirements governing educational programs established by the California Government Code Title 5, California Education Code, and the College. The College's Occupational Education Manager personally inspects each facility at least once each year. Such programs are operated with the approval of the community college districts served by these areas.

Study abroad programs or programs for international students are not offered by the College.

All courses offered in the name of Palo Verde College—which include all courses and programs listed above—must be approved in the form of a course outline of record by faculty members from the division in which the course is taught, by the Curriculum Committee and by the Board of Trustees. The Curriculum Committee, consisting of faculty representatives from all academic and vocational divisions, a representative from the Associated Student Body, the Librarian, Registrar, and Articulation Officer, assures that courses meet consistent, high standards of academic rigor. The Curriculum Committee is co-chaired by the Vice-President of Instructional Services and a faculty member, and it meets monthly.[168] Following Curriculum Committee approval, all course outlines are presented to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Course outlines must be written on the course outline template approved by the Curriculum Committee, and must adhere to standards and procedures described in the Curriculum Committee Handbook.[169] The Curriculum Committee requires that, at least every five years, all existing course outlines be updated and re-approved by the division, Curriculum Committee and Board of Trustees. Courses not offered by the College for a period of five years are submitted to the Curriculum Committee and recommended for inactive status.[170] All course outlines are published on the

[168] List of College Organizations and Committees, 2007-08; see also Curriculum Committee, Agendas and Minutes
[169] Curriculum Committee Handbook
[170] Curriculum Committee Handbook

Curriculum Committee page of the College website.[171] A listing of all courses with their scheduled revision dates is also published on the Curriculum Committee page of the College website.

The College assures the improvement of all instructional programs by requiring that they be evaluated every five years in program review.[172]

The College's Office of Instructional Services requires that faculty members prepare a new course syllabus each time a course is taught and copies of syllabi be distributed to students and submitted to the Office of Instructional Services early in the semester in which they are taught. The Office of Instructional Services examines course syllabi for clarity, thoroughness, and consistency with the course outline of record.[173]

To further ensure academic quality in courses offered in the name of the College, the Academic Senate adopted "Resolution on Including Critical Information in Course Syllabi," Resolution 05-06-02, February 14, 2006. The resolution establishes minimum essential information to be included in all course syllabi, including student learning outcomes consistent with those listed in the course outline of record.[174]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.2

The College takes great care in assuring that all courses and programs, regardless of type or mode or location or delivery, are reviewed and improved upon where needed. It accomplishes this by requiring that all course outlines of record and programs be reviewed by a broad representation of faculty and College personnel: first by the division faculty, then by the Curriculum Committee, and finally by the Board of Trustees. All programs are evaluated in program review every five years. All courses currently offered must have syllabi consistent in content, objectives and learning outcomes with its corresponding course outline, and syllabi are reviewed by the Office of Instructional Services.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.2

Maintain the development and review process for all courses and programs; make continuing improvements in them and continue to ensure all courses and programs offered in the name of the College remain of high quality.

Standard II.A.2.a

The institution uses established procedures to design, identify learning outcomes for, approve, administer, deliver, and evaluate courses and programs. The institution recognizes the central role of its faculty for establishing quality and improving instructional courses and programs.

[171] College Website: www.paloverde.edu; click on Academics (under the Student Menu), then click on Curriculum Committee
[172] Program Review Guide
[173] Course Syllabi Samples
[174] Academic Senate Resolutions

Response to Standard II.A.2.a

The established procedures used by the College to develop, deliver and evaluate courses and programs are codified in various documents:

Course Outline Template: Located on the Curriculum Committee page of the College website, the course outline template is the required form for proposing new courses to the Curriculum Committee. It was designed in 2002 and revised in 2003. Approved course outlines are also posted on the Curriculum Committee page.[175]

Curriculum Committee Handbook: Describes the function of the Curriculum Committee, its composition and responsibilities, and describes criteria for the establishment of courses and curriculum. The Handbook is posted on the Curriculum Committee page.[176]

Bloom's Taxonomy: Matches learning competencies with sample verbs that may be used to express learning outcomes on curriculum documents. Bloom's Taxonomy is posted to the Curriculum Committee page.[177]

Program Review Guide: Provides instructions and approved templates for conducting program reviews. The Guide is located on the Accreditation page of the College website. Program reviews of instructional programs are prepared by division faculty members, reviewed by the Program Review Committee and presented for acceptance by the Board of Trustees.[178]

Prerequisite Justification Statement: The statement, prepared by the faculty member according to established guidelines, provides justification for course co-requisites and pre-requisites and is submitted with the course outline to the Curriculum Committee for approval.[179]

Links to Other Resources: The Curriculum Committee page also lists links to other resources beneficial to developing and evaluating curricula. These are: California Community College Chancellor's Office, Statewide Academic Senate, excerpts from relevant Title 5 regulations, and links to other colleges' course outlines.[180]

That the faculty play a central role in establishing quality and making improvements in curriculum is evidenced in "Resolution Recognizing the Central Role of Faculty in Developing and Assessing Student Learning Outcomes and Implementing Improvements," Resolution 05-06-01, February 14, 2006. The resolution recognizes that faculty members play a key role in learning outcomes assessment and establishes accountability.[181]

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[175] College Website: www.paloverde.edu
[176] Curriculum Committee Handbook
[177] College Website: www.paloverde.edu
[178] Program Review Guide
[179] Curriculum Committee Handbook; the form is also posted to the Curriculum Committee page, www.paloverde.edu
[180] College Website: www.paloverde.edu; see Curriculum Committee page
[181] Academic Senate Resolutions

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.2.a

The College, primarily through its faculty members, uses established procedures to develop courses and programs, identify learning outcomes, and evaluate and improve upon academic quality. Procedures relevant to this standard are codified as written documents that are timely, comprehensive and accessible. Two key committees, the Program Review Committee and Curriculum Committee, ensure that the procedures are followed.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.2.a

With faculty playing a central role, maintain the timeliness of established procedures to develop courses and programs, identify learning outcomes, and evaluate academic quality.

Standard II.A.2.b

The institution relies on faculty expertise and the assistance of advisory committees when appropriate to identify competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees. The institution regularly assesses student progress towards achieving those outcomes.

Response to Standard II.A.2.b

As stated in the response to Standard II.A.2.a, page 73, faculty members play a central role in maintaining the academic quality of courses and programs. Part of that role includes identifying desired competency levels and learning outcomes, and assessing student progress towards achieving those outcomes. Here are the various ways this is accomplished:

Division review: Prepared by individual faculty members, each new, revised and updated outline is reviewed by the division in which the course is taught. Courses are reviewed for several characteristics, including need, appropriateness for the college level, rigor of learning outcomes, currency of the subject, pre-requisites, recommended textbook, teaching methods, evaluation methods, and assigned work. Once approved, the course is recommended for review by the Curriculum Committee and subsequently by the Board of Trustees.

Division faculty members have also taken responsibility for identifying and measuring student learning outcomes at the levels of certificates and degrees. Academic Senate resolution, "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," Resolution No 06-07-03, March 27, 2007, identifies the divisions to which degree-level learning outcomes are assigned.[182]

While much work remains to be done to fully implement the process of identifying and measuring learning at the certificate and degree levels, progress is being made. Faculty members from each division identify areas of knowledge and skill appropriate to the certificate or degrees awarded and administer assessments that measure the extent of such knowledge and skill. The results of assessments are used to evaluate learning and to evaluate instruction. A detailed explanation of

[182] Academic Senate Resolutions

how degree-level outcomes are identified and measured is found in the response to Standard II.A.1.c, page 69.

Curriculum Committee review: Subsequent to division approval, all courses are reviewed by the Curriculum Committee, consisting of representatives from each academic and vocational division, a representative from the Associated Student Body, the Librarian, registrar, and articulation officer.[183] The Curriculum Committee is co-chaired by the Vice President of Instructional Services and a faculty member. The Curriculum Committee examines each course for the same qualities the division does, but from a broader, College-wide perspective. The Curriculum Committee may approve a course, approve it with modifications or disapprove it and send it back to the sponsoring division for rework.

Program review: All programs are required to be formally reviewed once every five years. The system, documented in the Program Review Guide, expects each program to demonstrate how and to what extent it promotes student learning.[184] Program review reports are prepared by faculty members and presented to the Program Review Committee, a mutual agreement committee consisting representatives from each constituency, and then presented to the Board of Trustees for formal acceptance. The process ensures that College programs are widely discussed and evaluated.

As of November 2007, in the area of institutional effectiveness in program review, the College believes it has attained a level of "Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement," according the "Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness" developed by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.[185]

Advisory committees: For vocational and occupational programs the College looks to community members and experts outside the College for advice and guidance to supplement faculty oversight of these programs.[186] Programs with advisory committees are:

1. Business Division—Composed of business leaders in the Blythe and Needles communities; meets every year to discuss program reviews and updates of Business Division courses and programs, namely, accounting, business and management, computer information science, and office administration.

2. Child Development—Members represent communities in the College district area and the Riverside County Childcare Consortium, and demonstrate interest in child development academic programs. Program coordinators, educators, students, and school counselors attend meetings regularly. The committee meets in the Fall and Spring semesters of the school year early enough in each semester to advise on class scheduling and community academic needs.

3. Criminal Justice, Tech Prep, VTEA 1C, Fire Science, Automotive, Welding, Building Trades—Members represent local business and industry, government, current students, program graduates, community leaders and College faculty from Blythe and Needles. The

[183] Curriculum Committee Handbook; List of College Organizations and Committees, 2007-08
[184] Program Review Guide
[185] Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness; ALO Reports to the Board of Trustees
[186] Advisory Committees, 2007-2008

committee meets once a year at a minimum to review course and program updates, student learning outcomes, equipment purchases and community needs.

4. Health Science –Members represent program graduates, the Palo Verde Hospital and laboratories, Blythe Nursing Care Center, emergency medical services; nursing administrators from the Chuckawalla and Ironwood prisons, and current students. The committee meets at least once each year and provides guidance as to future programs and budget and spending decisions for equipment and supplies.

Articulation: The College aggressively pursues articulation with four-year institutions to ensure that students are given every possible opportunity to transfer course work beyond the associate degree. The College offers a broad range of courses that meet California State University general education requirements, IGETC requirements and transfer requirements of the University of California. When courses must be modified to retain transfer and articulation certification, faculty members from the appropriate division are responsible for making required changes. In so doing, the College maintains, through the efforts of its faculty, Curriculum Committee, and Articulation Officer, competency levels and learning outcomes in its courses and programs suitable to college-level work.[187]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.2.b

The College relies on the expertise of faculty and the assistance of advisory committees to establish competency levels and learning outcomes. Faculty review takes place within the division, in Curriculum Committee and in program review. The College utilizes the assistance of advisory committees, primarily for vocational and occupational programs, in establishing standards for learning outcomes. The College also relies on standards established by course and program articulation agreements with four-year institutions.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.2.b

Continue utilizing faculty expertise and, for vocational and occupational programs, the suggestions of advisory groups in identifying learning outcomes. Continue making progress in measuring and assessing learning at the levels of courses, programs and certificates, and associate degrees. Continue the practice of incorporating into course and program requirements, where appropriate to accommodate transfer and articulation, academic standards established by four-year institutions.

Standard II.A.2.c

High-quality instruction and appropriate breadth, depth, rigor, sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning characterize all programs.

Response to Standard II.A.2.c

Faculty members play a significant role in determining the breadth, depth and rigor of programs, and they draw ideas and guidance from various sources. Chief among them are: the academic

[187] Articulation Reports

expertise and professional judgment of faculty themselves; review of programs with fellow faculty members; course and program planning (including textbook selection) at division, Academic Senate, and Curriculum Committee meetings and in program review; knowledge and skills derived from professional development training; observation of the practices of other colleges with similar programs; recommendations of advisory committees (for vocational and occupational programs); articulation and transfer requirements of four-year institutions; California licensing boards; California Education Code; and the California Community College Chancellor's Office.

Commitment to high-quality instruction is evidenced by a rigorous faculty performance evaluation system. As part of the College's commitment to instructional quality, new faculty members are evaluated annually for the first four years of full-time teaching, and, following the granting of tenure, once every three years.[188] The system provides for peer evaluation (including classroom observation), student evaluations, faculty self-evaluation, administrative evaluation, and provision for remediation when necessary. Adjunct instructors are evaluated during the first or second semester of employment, and a minimum of every two years thereafter. The purpose of the system is to provide a well-rounded assessment of faculty teaching performance that enables each faculty member to build upon strengths and to improve in weak areas.

Appropriate breadth, depth, and rigor of programs are evidenced in the course outline, course syllabus and certificate and degree requirements. The College course outline template requires that the course initiator provide various indicators as to the breadth, depth and rigor of each course.[189] Pre-requisites, co-requisites and advisories must be substantiated with the Pre-requisite Justification Form submitted along with the outline to the Curriculum Committee for review and approval. The course outline must also list, among other items, course objectives and learning outcomes, an outline of topics, examples of writing assignments, assignments that demonstrate critical thinking and instruction and evaluation methods for both face-to-face and distance education sections. The course outline must also identify a representative textbook or other study materials appropriate to the course. Course outlines must be updated every five years, and be resubmitted for approval to the Curriculum Committee.

Course syllabi prepared by the individual instructor for each course each time it is taught are required by Academic Senate resolution to list, at a minimum: course description; content; student learning outcomes (consistent with the corresponding course outline); titles of textbooks or other learning materials; and assignments and projected due dates.[190]

Certificate and degree requirements are determined by various factors, depending upon the nature and objective of the program. The College offers one AA degree, in Liberal Arts.[191] The AA degree satisfies California State University general education requirements and is intended to enable students to transfer to any California State University campus, subject to specific requirements of the student's academic major area of study. Except for institutional requirements established by the College through the Academic Senate and Curriculum Committee, the course requirements of the AA degree are determined entirely by articulation standards. The College articulation officer

[188] CTA-District Agreement, 2007-10 (Faculty Evaluation Procedure)
[189] College Website: www.paloverde.edu; see Curriculum Committee page for the course outline template. See also Course Outline Samples
[190] Academic Senate Resolutions, "Resolution for Including Critical Information in Course Syllabi," 05-06-02, February 14, 2006; see also Course Syllabi
[191] College Catalog, 2007-08, page 61

advises faculty of CSU-GE requirements and annually prepares requests to California State University for CSU-GE certification. Like the AA/CSU-GE program, the IGETC program requirements are determined entirely by articulation.

Apart from the AA degree, the College offers several AS degrees, the most popular of which is the AS in General Studies. The degree is meant to provide students who do not intend to transfer to a four-year institution with the opportunity to earn an associate degree.[192] The AS in General Studies meets the unit and academic area requirements established by the California Community College Chancellor's Office. The institutional requirements of the AS in General Studies are identical to those of the AA in Liberal Studies. While the AS in General Studies gives students a broader range of course options than the AA degree, most of the AS in General Studies course requirements are transferable. With recommendations from the Academic Senate and the Office of the Vice President of Instructional Services, the College is preparing for changes in the math and English requirements for all AS degrees.[193]

The College offers other AS degrees in particular occupational areas.[194] Each of these degrees meets the unit and academic area requirements established by the California Community College Chancellor's Office and is reviewed periodically by advisory committees, along with College faculty who teach in these disciplines (see discussion on advisory groups in the response to Standard II.A.2.b, page 75). Other than the AS in General Studies, the College offers AS degrees with majors in:

Accounting
Automotive Technology
Building Technology
Business Management
Child Development
Computer Information Science
Criminal Justice
Hazardous Materials Specialist
Administrative Office Assistant
General Clerical Assistant

In addition to associate degrees, the College offers twenty-five certificate programs. Each of these programs has an assigned advisory committee to provide suggestions and guidance to faculty. The requirements of a majority of certificates are determined by College faculty of the sponsoring division, with recommendations by advisory committees, and by the Curriculum Committee; certificate programs calling for 17 or more semester units require further review and approval by the California Community College Chancellor's Office. Some, like the certificates in Nursing and Alcohol/Drug Studies, are regulated as to content, scope and units by California licensing boards, whose requirements supersede faculty and advisory committee recommendations.

Time to completion of programs is provided for in the educational plans for all certificate and degree programs, except for the AA in Liberal Arts (same as CSU-GE), AS in General Studies and

[192] College Catalog, 2007-08, page 76
[193] Academic Senate Resolutions
[194] College Catalog, 2007-08, page 66

IGETC.[195] Most certificate programs project in their educational plans a time to completion of one or two semesters. All AS degree programs project four semesters. The actual time to complete these programs, however, is usually longer, for various reasons: many students must make up deficiencies by taking pre-requisite courses, including developmental mathematics and English; many students "stop-out" from time to time from their academic work; many change their educational objectives; and scheduling of required courses sometimes causes conflicts with other courses, or with work or family demands. Course cancellations due to insufficient enrollments can cause delay as well, although the growth during the past five years in the number of class sections offered as distance education has helped mitigate some of scheduling conflicts among face-to-face sections.

The College recognizes that it must do a better job in projecting time to completion of certain programs, namely, the AA in Liberal Arts, the AS in General Studies and IGETC. The implementation of a two-year schedule of courses is, in fact, an objective of the Strategic Plan.[196]

Synthesis of learning is, as the College sees it, deriving one or two learning outcomes out of several related courses within a program. In their work formulating degree-level learning outcomes, faculty members from each division are attempting to synthesize one or two learning outcomes out of several courses within their divisions.[197] So, for example, faculty in the Language Arts and Communications division formulated this learning outcome from courses in composition and speech: *Demonstrate college-level proficiency in communication, whether oral or written.* Faculty members in the History and Social Sciences division have chosen to focus on research skills: *Students shall demonstrate mastery of research essay concepts and methodologies.* Faculty in the Business Division ask that their students be able to *Describe and evaluate critically the role and significance of business in the community and the world*. Each of these is an example of degree-level learning outcomes that result from a synthesis of learning from each academic area.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.2.c

The College effectively uses many resources to ensure it provides high-quality instruction and offers programs of appropriate breadth, depth, rigor, sequencing and time to completion. Those resources include a rigorous faculty evaluation procedure; the expertise, training and professional judgment of faculty members; the Curriculum Committee and Academic Senate forums; recommendations of advisory committees; articulation and transfer requirements established by four-year institutions; guidelines of California licensing boards; California Education Code; and the guidelines of the California Community College Chancellor's Office. All of these resources are utilized, in varying degrees, to help guide the way programs are delivered and to ensure optimal learning by students.

[195] Educational Plans; see also College Catalog, 2007-08, pages 67 ff
[196] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values, Initiative 3, Objective 2 states: "Implement a 2-year schedule of courses to facilitate timely completion of degrees and certificates."
[197] Academic Senate Resolutions, "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," 06-07-03, March 27, 2007

Action Plan: Standard II.A.2.c

Continue the work being done to achieve this standard, including work on certificate and degree level learning outcomes. Expand educational plans for the AA in Liberal Arts, AS in General Studies, and IGETC, showing projected time to completion for each of these programs.

Standard II.A.2.d

The institution uses delivery modes and teaching methodologies that reflect the diverse needs and learning styles of its students.

Response to Standard II.A.2.d

As stated in the response to Standard II.A.1.b, page 67, the College recognizes that there are many factors that influence how courses might be taught, and therefore encourages creativity and innovation in delivery modes and teaching methodologies. Such factors as the subject matter of the course, external requirements such as transfer and professional licensure, students' academic preparedness, students' unique circumstances apart from preparedness, and faculty teaching skills have an impact on how courses are presented.

While the majority of courses at the College are in a traditional classroom lecture and discussion format, a substantial proportion of its class sections are delivered as distance education. The distance education program is a correspondence-style method of delivery; it is designed to accommodate the needs of students who are pursuing their education while incarcerated and other students for whom the demands of family and work make it difficult or impossible, to attend face-to-face classes.

There are a small but growing number of classes delivered via interactive television between the Blythe main campus and the Needles Center. Additionally, a few faculty members have developed and are delivering courses online.

Faculty members, encouraged to try different approaches to teaching, have demonstrated they are sensitive to students' diverse needs and learning styles; this is evidenced in the following examples:

Online lab: A chemistry instructor developed curriculum for delivering lab courses online.

Lecture and online hybrid: Several faculty members operate websites that supplement their regular face-to-face courses.

Field trips: A geosciences instructor obtained a grant that helped pay for a study trip to Europe with several of his students during the summer of 2006. A biology instructor recently took students on a field trip to the Marine Science Institute, U.C. Santa Barbara.

Service learning: A geosciences instructor participates with the National Park Service and Bureau of Reclamation in selecting students for internships with these agencies. Students acquire service skills and work in the local community as well as at nationwide locations.

Classroom technologies: Many instructors use computers and other kinds of technology in their classes to aide instruction. As part of her teaching methodology, a reading instructor uses a video camera to project text onto a classroom screen.

Weekend classes: A computer science instructor offered semester-length courses compressed into a series of weekend classes to accommodate the learning needs of his students.

Open entry/open exit: The ESL instructor's courses are offered on an open entry/open exit basis to accommodate the unique learning styles of her students.

Library and information technology: The College Librarian, in cooperation with faculty members, regularly presents mini-seminars about library use, including online research and information technology. The workshops help students realize the library has a presence.

Online math: One of the faculty members developed an online math course. The course incorporates multimedia content, interactive Web-facilitated practice exercises, mini-chapter tests/quizzes, and tutorials. The on-line course is designed to be flexible to accommodate students' schedules.

Interactive TV: Several instructors conduct classes on interactive television, linking the Blythe main campus and the Needles Center.

While the College supports innovative teaching approaches, only a small amount of research has been done to evaluate how different teaching methodologies affect learning. In light of the work the College is now doing on learning outcomes assessment, it is expected that such research will be expanded to assess learning as it is affected by different teaching methodologies.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.2.d

The College encourages innovation and creativity to meet the diverse learning needs of its students. This is evidenced in the variety of teaching methodologies practiced by its faculty. The College recognizes that more work needs to be done to assess learning, particularly as it is affected by differing methods of teaching and course delivery.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.2.d

The College will continue to encourage innovation and creativity in teaching approaches and boost its efforts in researching the impact of different teaching methods on learning outcomes.

Standard II.A.2.e

The institution evaluates all courses and programs through an on-going systematic review of their relevance, appropriateness, achievement of learning outcomes, currency, and future needs and plans.

Response to Standard II.A.2.e

As testimony to the College's support for ongoing and systematic review, the text of this standard is quoted in the introduction to the College's Program Review Guide, the key document containing

instructions and templates for the completion of all program reviews, instructional and non-instructional.[198] Program review is conducted every five years—every two for vocational programs—and is the major tool the College has to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of its learning programs.

In addition to the program review process, moreover, courses and programs are evaluated for relevance, appropriateness, achievement of learning outcomes, currency, and future needs and plans in other ways.

Relevance: The College defines *relevance* in this standard as the extent to which courses and programs are consistent with the educational objectives defined in the College's Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values. Those objectives are to "deliver quality educational programs, emphasizing student learning and leading to certification, conferral of associate degrees, transfer to four-year institutions, and personal growth and career enhancement, defined by faculty and by advisory committees and assisted by student support services."[199]

All instructional programs are required, in program review reports which are conducted every five years, to describe how the program and its courses are supportive of the overall mission of the College. Program review reports are examined and accepted by the Program Review Committee and by the Board of Trustees.

Additionally, courses and programs are reviewed continuously by division faculty and members of the Curriculum Committee to assess their relevance to certificate and degree requirements and objectives. As requirements change that affect certificates, degrees and transfer, for example, changes are made, where needed, in courses and programs.

Courses and programs are also reviewed semester-by-semester and year-by-year to evaluate enrollment trends and numbers of certificate and degree awards. Courses that have either chronically low enrollments, or are rarely offered, are reviewed by division faculty in conjunction with the Vice-President of Instructional Services; the decision is made jointly whether to recommend to the Curriculum Committee removal from the Catalog.[200]

The process for terminating programs and degrees due to lack of enrollment or conferrals is similar to that for courses, but requires approval by the Academic Senate. All changes in courses and programs, including termination, are reviewed by the Board of Trustees.[201]

Appropriateness: The College defines "appropriateness" in this standard as the extent to which courses and programs are consistent with the educational *values* held by the College and its personnel. The statement of educational values is in the College's statement of Vision, Mission and Values. According to the statement, the College "maintains the highest standards of ethics and integrity [and] "demands respect, honesty and fairness in its educational programs."[202]

[198] Program Review Guide
[199] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values, Initiative 1
[200] Curriculum Committee Handbook
[201] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 4020 and AP 4020-0
[202] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values

All instructional programs are required, in program review reports which are conducted every five years, to describe how the program and its courses are supportive of the overall mission of the College. Courses and programs are also reviewed by division faculty and members of the Curriculum Committee to assess their appropriateness vis-à-vis the overall mission and educational values of the College.

Achievement of learning outcomes: All program reviews must address the process by which learning outcomes are identified, measured and evaluated at the course, program and degree levels. Program reviews must also describe the process by which improvements are made and provide evidence that this process is being followed.

The College recognizes that while program review is an essential tool in the review of program performance, the assessment of learning outcomes is a continuous process and must be done more frequently than once every five years. The faculty, through the Academic Senate, has taken a leadership role in developing and assessing student learning, and has established target dates for implementing learning outcome measures.[203] Several divisions have already implemented measures and have produced results for study.[204]

Currency: All course outlines must be updated every five years, a procedure that is monitored by the office of the Vice-President of Instructional Services. Updating requires that faculty take a fresh look at the course outline, compare it to how changes have affected the way the course is actually taught, and make adjustments in the course outline accordingly. Currency is also evaluated in program review and, additionally for vocational programs, by advisory committees.[205]

Future needs and plans: All program reviews are required to describe changes needed for improvement. Major changes, such as those involving hiring new personnel or purchasing equipment and materials, must be reviewed and approved by the College Council and Strategic Planning Steering Committee or the Budget Committee, or both.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.2.e

The College has a satisfactory process for evaluating courses and programs in terms of their relevance, appropriateness, achievement of learning outcomes, currency, and future needs and plans. While program review accomplishes many of the objectives of this standard, the College has other systems in place, including review by division faculty, the Curriculum Committee, Office of the Vice-President of Instructional Services, Academic Senate, advisory committees and the Board of Trustees, that achieve those objectives continuously.

[203] Academic Senate Resolutions; see "Resolution Recognizing the Central Role of Faculty in Developing and Assessing Student Learning Outcomes and Implementing Improvements," 05-06-01, February 14, 2006 and "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," 06-07-03, March 27, 2003
[204] Student Learning Outcomes: Assessment Tools and Results
[205] Curriculum Committee Handbook

Action Plan: Standard II.A.2.e

Continue the existing evaluation process of courses and programs, with special emphasis on the examination of learning outcomes: focus on better methods to measure learning, and on steps taken to improve learning.

Standard II.A.2.f

The institution engages in ongoing, systematic evaluation and integrated planning to assure currency and measure achievement of its stated student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees. The institution systematically strives to improve those outcomes and makes the results available to appropriate constituencies.

Response to Standard II.A.2.f

That the College is engaged in systematic, integrated planning in the matter of evaluating and measuring student learning is evidenced in the program review process. All campus personnel—faculty, administrators and staff—are required to conduct program review, following the guidelines established in the Program Review Guide.[206] Everyone is required, furthermore, to address in the program review report how they promote and support student learning.

For non-instructional programs, such as student services and library, the following questions are to be answered:

1. "Describe specific, documented accomplishments that support and facilitate the achievement and assessment of student learning outcomes, including measures employed to evaluate program effectiveness in achieving such outcomes."

2. "Describe specific professional development activities in which program members participate, and explain how such activities benefit or enhance the program and support and facilitate student learning outcomes."

For instructional programs, which include divisions engaged in teaching, the following questions are to be answered:

1. "Describe the process by which the program identifies measures and evaluates student learning outcomes at the course, program and degree levels, and provide evidence that this process is being followed."

2. "Describe the process by which program improvements are made, and provide evidence that this process is being followed."

The integration of learning outcomes is further evidenced in Academic Senate resolution, "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," 06-07-03, March 27, 2007.[207] The resolution, which applies to all academic and vocational divisions, acknowledges that

[206] Program Review Guide; see templates for non-instructional and instructional programs
[207] Academic Senate Resolutions

student learning outcomes shall be established at the course, program/certificate, and degree levels. It identifies learning outcome measures for each academic and vocational division and establishes target dates for implementing such measures. The resolution, to which the timeline for implementation of learning outcome assessments is attached, provides in a single, integrated document, the plan for learning outcome assessment.

Additionally, all program review reports, instructional and non-instructional, are reviewed and discussed by the Program Review Committee, a mutual agreement committee consisting of representatives from all College constituencies prior to being referred to the Board of Trustees. This broad-based review helps provide an integrated perspective of the program, including its support of and contribution to student learning.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.2.f

Recognizing that each division and department may have differing approaches to improving student learning, the College nonetheless can demonstrate that its faculty, staff and administration are committed to an integrated approach. This commitment is evident in the program review process, which evaluates all programs in terms of, among other matters, what they are doing to bring about or support student learning. The Academic Senate resolution, "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," Resolution 06-07-03, March 27, 2007, incorporates in one plan student learning outcome strategies for all academic and vocational divisions.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.2.f

The College will continue its present integrated approach to evaluating and planning, with ongoing emphasis on developing increasingly more effective assessments of student learning among all College divisions and departments, instructional and non-instructional.

Standard II.A.2.g

If an institution uses departmental course and/or program examinations, it validates their effectiveness in measuring student learning and minimizes test biases.

Response: Standard II.A.2.g

There are two areas in which the College uses examinations or assessments outside of regular course-level examinations:

Basic skills placement test: All first-time students are required to take a basic skills assessment exam which tests skills in English, mathematics and reading.[208] The test results are the basis for placement of students in those subject areas. The College recognizes that placement exams must be reviewed and validated frequently to ensure that students are placed at the appropriate levels of English and mathematics, and whether they may be required to take courses in remedial reading. The Learning Skills Center Coordinator, who administers the test, conducts validation studies of the

[208] Learning Skills Center Documents

placement tests in cooperation with English and mathematics faculty members every four years, and adjusts cutoff scores where necessary.

Division examinations and assessments: Several academic divisions have implemented assessments of student learning in the context of degree-level learning outcomes.[209] The results of these assessments are intended to provide instructors with indicators of what students are learning, and what they are not; the results are not used for grading. The Business Division, for example, administered a pre- and post-test in two business courses in 2006-07 to evaluate students' learning of general business concepts and principles. The results were used to evaluate how instructors might improve their teaching effectiveness. Two mathematics faculty members administered pre- and post-test assessments of their students to evaluate learning. Other kinds of assessments include the English faculty conducting pre- and post-assessments of writing skills based on writing samples at the beginning and at the end of a semester; the History and Social Sciences faculty are doing an assessment of research paper skills; the ESL instructor used pre- and post-test results to help provide guidance in her teaching emphasis.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.2.g

The basic skills assessment test is used to place new students in appropriate classes of English, mathematics, and, where necessary, remedial reading. It is validated every four years by the Learning Skills Center Coordinator, with assistance from faculty members. Other examinations are administered by faculty members in order to evaluate learning in the context of degree learning outcomes. These examinations are meant to assist faculty in assessing student learning in terms of broad degree outcomes, and they are meant to provide guidance to faculty in making improvements that will enhance learning.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.2.g

Continue the practice of validating results of the basic skills assessment test with faculty members. Expand the assessment process among academic and vocational divisions in the context of evaluating degree-level learning outcomes. Encourage changes in teaching or curriculum, where appropriate, to enhance learning.

Standard II.A.2.h

The institution awards credit based on student achievement of the course's stated learning outcomes. Units of credit awarded are consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted norms or equivalencies in higher education.

Response: Standard II.A.2.h

Units of credit in a course are awarded to students for completion of the requirements of the course as established by the faculty member, within the guidelines stated on the course outline of record; the course requirements, listed the course outline, include learning outcomes. Learning outcomes

[209] Student Learning Outcomes: Assessment Tools and Results

have been established for virtually all the College's courses, credit and noncredit. The College's semester units of credit vis-à-vis instructor-student contact hours are consistent with the California Education Code and policies established by the California Community College's Chancellor's Office.[210]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.2.h

The College invests authority in faculty members to award units of credit for the completion of requirements that are consistent with the course's stated learning outcomes. The College, through the office of the Registrar, adheres to the policies of the California Education Code and the California Community College Chancellor's Office in terms of the awarding of units of credit.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.2.h

Continue the College's current practices in awarding academic credit.

Standard II.A.2.i

The institution awards degrees and certificates based on student achievement of a program's stated learning outcomes.

Response: Standard II.A.2.i

The College awards certificates and degrees on the basis of students having completed the required courses for the program—as defined by units of credit earned from those courses—and by having achieved the minimum required grade point average, or higher. The College has established learning outcomes for virtually all courses it offers.

For certificate and degree learning outcomes, the College looks to the faculty to assess those outcomes and to implement changes in teaching or curriculum where appropriate. This is a self-regulating process on the part of faculty. The College does not use exit or qualifying exams as a requirement to receive a certificate or degree.

As described in the response to Standard II.A.1.c, page 69, moreover, the College's degree-level learning outcomes are analogous to the component requirements of the Associate in Arts and the Associate in Science in General Studies degrees. The outcomes are closely aligned with the subject area requirements of the College's two most frequently-awarded degrees, and responsibility to identify and measure those outcomes rests with the faculty members of the appropriate academic divisions.

The College, therefore, relies on the judgment and expertise of its faculty—in divisions, Curriculum Committee and Academic Senate—to determine what students are learning not only to pass their courses, but as well, to earn their certificates and degrees.

[210] Registrar's Office Documents

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.2.i

The College awards its degrees and certificates on the basis of stated learning outcomes, relying on faculty expertise and judgment. The College has made good progress in identifying degree level learning outcomes—it needs to do the same for certificate programs—and it has more work to do to improve upon how it assesses degree-level learning and implementing procedures for making changes that improve learning.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.2.i

Continue making progress in developing effective measures of degree-level learning outcomes. Apply the same efforts to developing effective measures for certificate programs.

Standard II.A.3

The institution requires of all academic and vocational degree programs a component of general education based on a carefully considered philosophy that is clearly stated in its catalog. The institution, relying on the expertise of its faculty, determines the appropriateness of each course for inclusion in the general education curriculum by examining the stated learning outcomes for the course.

Response to Standard II.A.3

All associate degrees—including the AA degree in Liberal Arts and all AS occupational degrees—offered by the College require as part of their curriculum courses in: mathematics, science, social sciences, arts and humanities, English and lifelong learning. These general education requirements are reflective of a philosophy of education expressed in the College's Values Statement:

"Palo Verde College facilitates life long learning and encourages scholastic achievement. The College believes that knowledge, understanding and their application are keys to a better future."[211]

While the AA in Liberal Arts satisfies transfer requirements of California State University general education courses, the AS prepares students primarily for specific occupations, not transfer to four-year institutions.[212] Nonetheless, most of the general education core requirements of the AS degree are transferable, thus affording students with transfer options even though transfer may not be their immediate objective. Requiring students to take general education courses, furthermore, helps promote learning in areas outside their occupational specialty, and gives them broader career choices and opportunities for better futures—educational principles consistent with the philosophy expressed in the College's Mission Statement.

The general education courses selected as requirements for the associate degrees, particularly the AS degree, were selected by the College and its faculty long before the emphasis on student learning outcomes emerged as part of accreditation standards. So, it made sense that when the faculty formulated degree-level learning outcomes, it based those outcomes on subject areas shared in common by all associate degrees, namely, mathematics, science, social sciences, arts and

[211] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values
[212] Student Educational Plans

humanities, English and lifelong learning. And it made sense, furthermore, to assign responsibilities for those learning outcomes to the divisions that teach them. This assignment of responsibility is evidenced in Academic Senate resolution, "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," Resolution 06-07-03, March 27, 2007.[213]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.3

The College has built into all associate degree requirements opportunities consistent with its educational philosophy, namely, to facilitate life long learning and encourage scholastic achievement. The College believes that knowledge, understanding and their application are keys to a better future.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.3

Continue the current practice with regard to associate degree general education requirements.

General education has comprehensive learning outcomes for the students who complete it, including the following:

Standard II.A.3.a

An understanding of the basic content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge: areas include the humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences.

Standard II.A.3.b

A capability to be a productive individual and life long learner: skills include oral and written communication, information competency, computer literacy, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis/logical thinking, and the ability to acquire knowledge through a variety of means.

Standard II.A.3.c

A recognition of what it means to be an ethical human being and effective citizen: qualities include an appreciation of ethical principles; civility and interpersonal skills; respect for cultural diversity; historical and aesthetic sensitivity; and the willingness to assume civic, political, and social responsibilities locally, nationally, and globally.

Response to Standards II.A.3.a, II.A.3.b, and II.A.3.c

General courses for all associate degrees offered by the College include learning outcomes in the areas of humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences. General education includes outcomes in oral and written communication, information competency, computer literacy,

[213] Academic Senate Resolutions

scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis/logical thinking, and the ability to acquire knowledge through a variety of means. General education also includes outcomes in ethics, interpersonal skills, respect for cultural diversity, and the willingness to assume civic, political and social responsibility. Courses in each of these disciplines contain learning outcome requirements that are listed in the course outlines of record. The attachment to Academic Senate resolution, "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," Resolution 06-07-03, March 27, 2007, lists the learning outcomes for most of these areas, including the following:[214]

Humanities and fine arts: "Describe and evaluate critically the role and significance of written, oral and artistic expression in the community and world." This outcome is assigned to the Language Arts and Communications division, and is evaluated in one or more courses. Examples of these courses are: ART 110, ENG 125, MUS 121, ENG 102, and HIS 110.

Natural sciences: "Demonstrate research, analytical reasoning, applied science and technological skills for real life expectations." This outcome is assigned to the science faculty of the Math and Science division and is evaluated in one or more science courses, including lab and non-lab courses. Examples of such courses are: AST 101, CHE 101, GEO 101, and BIO 110.

Social sciences: "Describe and evaluate critically the role and significance of history, social and behavioral sciences in the community and the world, with special emphasis on developing mastery of research essay concepts and skills." This outcome is assigned to the History, Social and Behavioral Sciences division and is evaluated in one or more courses offered in this division. Examples of such courses are: ANT 100, HIS 150, PSY 101, and SOC 111.

Oral and written communication: "Demonstrate college-level proficiency in communication, whether oral or written." This outcome is assigned to the Language Arts and Communication division, and is evaluated in: ENG 101, ENG 103, SPE 101, SPE 102 and SPE 103.

Information competency: "Students shall demonstrate information literacy upon completion of their educational goals." This outcome is assigned to the Library. It is measured and evaluated periodically during information literacy seminars and tutorials delivered to students by the College Librarian and staff.

Computer literacy: "Demonstrate proficiency in the practical applications of the computer." This outcome is assigned to the Business division and is evaluated in one or more of these classes: CIS 101, CIS 102 and CIS 106. These courses constitute part of the institutional requirements for all associate degrees.

Scientific and quantitative reasoning: "Demonstrate research, analytical reasoning, applied science and technological skills for real life expectations." This outcome is assigned to the mathematics faculty of the Math and Science division and is measured by performance in one or more courses offered in this division. Examples of such courses are: MAT 083, MAT 084, MAT 106, MAT 108 and MAT 110.

[214] Academic Senate Resolutions

Ability to think critically and logically: This outcome is the responsibility of all courses, as evidenced by a provision in each course outline of record which requires that all courses identify "appropriate assignments that demonstrate critical thinking." More specifically, the outcome is part of the AA in Liberal Arts requirements, and is measured by performance in these courses: ENG 103, PHI 210, SPE 102 and SPE 103.

Ability to acquire knowledge through a variety of means: "Students shall demonstrate information literacy upon completion of their educational goals." This outcome is assigned to the Library. It is measured and evaluated periodically during information literacy seminars and tutorials delivered to students by the College Librarian and staff.[215]

Appreciation of ethical principles, development of interpersonal skills, respect for cultural diversity, and willingness to assume civic, political and social responsibility: This group of outcomes is assigned to various courses, all which qualify for the Lifelong Learning and Self-Development requirement of each associate degree offered by the College. Courses include: ADS 101, ADS 102, CHD 201, GEO 108, GES 115, HEA 128, HEA 140, HEA 142, PHE [various courses], PSY 110, and SOC 111.

College Self-Evaluation: Standards II.A.3.a, II.A.3.b, and II.A.3.c

The general education learning outcomes of all associate degrees offered by the College are comprehensive and are addressed by various courses. Each outcome is assigned to a division or department, and a specific grouping of courses taught within that division is responsible for producing that outcome.

Action Plan: Standards II.A.3.a, II.A.3.b, and II.A.3.c

Continue to develop effective measures of degree-level learning outcomes of courses that constitute the general education content areas of the College's associate degrees.

Standard II.A.4

All degree programs include focused study in at least one area of inquiry or in an established interdisciplinary core.

Response to Standard II.A.4

Of the College's associate degree programs, two include focused study in an established interdisciplinary core, and the other ten degree programs include focused study in at least one area of inquiry.[216]

[215] The Library learning outcome is stated in Academic Senate Resolution, "Plan for Developing an Implementing - Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," 06-07-03, March 27, 2007; see also Student Learning Outcomes: Assessment Tools and Results

[216] Student Education Plans

The AA in Liberal Arts and the AS in General Studies each include study in an interdisciplinary core. The AA in Liberal Arts meets the California State University general education requirements, while the AS in General Studies offers a broad program of general education courses, but is not intended to prepare student for transfer to four-year institutions.

The other ten AS degrees each include focused study in at least one area of inquiry. These degrees and their areas of inquiry are:

AS Accounting
AS Administrative Office Assistant
AS Automotive Technology
AS Building Technology
AS Business Management
AS Child Development
AS Computer Information Science
AS Criminal Justice
AS General Clerical Assistant
AS Hazardous Materials Specialist

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.4

All of the degrees—AA and AS—offered by the College include focused study in at least one area of inquiry or in an established interdisciplinary core.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.4

In response to recent revisions in Title 5, Division 6, Chapter 6 of the California Code of Regulations, College faculty and administrators are presently collaborating on making further, substantial changes in the College's associate degree programs. The changes will affect students enrolling in the College in Fall Semester 2009.[217]

Standard II.A.5

Students completing vocational and occupational certificates and degrees demonstrate technical and professional competencies that meet employment and other applicable standards and are prepared for external licensure and certification.

Response to Standard II.A.5

Here are the vocational degrees and certificates offered by the College and the means by which each program enables students to demonstrate competencies that meet employment and external licensure requirements. Most programs have local advisory committees, many require review by the Region 9 Occupational Deans' Consortium and others require program review by an external—

[217] Associate degree revisions

that is, statewide or national—organizations, such as the California Water Board, or California Board of Vocational Nurses:[218]

Vocational Degrees:

AS Accounting—Business Advisory Committee

AS Administrative Office Assistant—Business Advisory Committee

AS Automotive Technology—Career and Technical Advisory Committee; Automotive Service Excellence

AS Building Technology—Career and Technical Advisory Committee; National Center for Construction Education and Research

AS Business Management—Business Advisory Committee

AS Child Development—Child Development Advisory Committee

AS Computer Information Science—Business Advisory Committee

AS Criminal Justice— Career and Technical Advisory Committee; Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)

AS General Clerical Assistant—Business Advisory Committee

AS Hazardous Materials Specialist—Career and Technical Advisory Committee; California Water Board

Vocational Certificates:

3-D Computer Animation—Business Advisory Committee

Accounting—Business Advisory Committee

Administrative Office Assistant—Business Advisory Committee

Alcohol/Drug Studies—California Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors; California Association of Alcohol/Drug Educators

Automotive Technology—Career and Technical Advisory Committee; Automotive Service Excellence

Building Technology—Career and Technical Advisory Committee; National Center for Construction Education and Research

[218] Advisory Committees, 2007-08

Business Management—Business Advisory Committee

Business Studies—Business Advisory Committee

Child Development, Associate Teacher—Child Development Advisory Committee

Child Development, Teacher—Child Development Advisory Committee

Computer Information Science—Business Advisory Committee

Criminal Justice—Career and Technical Advisory Committee; Peace Officer Standards and Training

Fire Science Technician—Career and Technical Advisory Committee; California Fire Marshall

General Clerical Assistant—Business Advisory Committee

Hazardous Material Technician—Career and Technical Advisory Committee; California Fire Marshall

Nursing/Allied Health—Board of Vocational Nursing
- Certified Nursing Assistant
- Emergency Medical Technician
- Home Health Aide
- Licensed Vocational Nurse
- Phlebotomy

Welding Technology— Career and Technical Advisory Committee; American Welding Society

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.5

The College ensures that its vocational programs are preparing students with competencies that meet employer standards and make students competitive for jobs. It accomplishes this by requiring active advisory committees for each of its vocational degree and certificate programs, by consulting with the regional vocational consortium where necessary, and by ensuring program compliance with standards established by statewide, national and industry trade organizations.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.5

The College will continue its current vocational practices in teaching students technical competencies that will prepare them for employment and external licensure and certification.

Standard II.A.6

The institution assures that students and prospective students receive clear and accurate information about educational courses and programs and transfer policies. The institution describes its degrees and certificates in terms of their purpose, content, course requirements, and expected student learning outcomes. In every class section students receive a course syllabus that specifies learning objectives consistent with those in the institution's officially approved course outline.

Response to Standard II.A.6

Information about educational courses and programs is provided under the Announcement of Courses section and Programs of Study section, respectively, of the College Catalog.[219]

Courses are listed in alphabetical order by discipline under Announcement of Courses. Each course entry includes the course title, description, number of units, number of laboratory and lecture hours, and transferability.

Educational programs, namely, IGETC and the AA in Liberal Arts, which provide opportunities for transfer to four-year institutions, are listed in the section titled Requirements for Certificates, Degrees and University Transfer.[220] For each of these programs, information is provided in the Catalog as to their purpose, specific course requirements, and policies on certification upon completion of course requirements.

Educational programs, including certificates and AS degrees, which are not intended to prepare students for transfer, are listed in the Programs of Study section of the Catalog. Each certificate and degree program lists all courses and electives required for completion. With the exception of the AS in General Studies, all certificates and AS degrees provide time-to-completion plans.

Student learning outcomes for each course are listed in the course outline of record and may be found on the College Website. Because student learning outcomes at the certificate and degree levels are still being formulated and evaluated by faculty, they are not yet listed in the Catalog.

Policies relevant to transfer to four-year institutions are explained in the Requirements for Certificates, Degrees and University Transfer section of the Catalog. The explanation pertains to transfer to California State University campuses, University of California and private colleges and universities.

Academic Senate resolution, "On Including Critical Information in Course Syllabi," 05-06-02, establishes minimum requirements for course syllabi content. These requirements include learning outcomes consistent with those in the officially approved course outline.[221]

[219] College Catalog, 2007-08, pages 101 and 66
[220] College Catalog, 2007-08, page 55
[221] Academic Senate Resolutions

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.6

The College believes it has met most of the elements of this standard, namely, that educational courses and programs and transfer policies are clearly explained in the Catalog. At present, none of the College's degrees and certificates is listed in the Catalog with their associated learning outcomes. Once the College has refined the process of identifying and measuring learning outcomes for certificates and degrees, it will list them in the Catalog. The College also needs to provide a time-to-completion plan for IGETC, AA in Liberal Arts and AS in General Studies.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.6

The College will continue its current method of explaining courses and programs and transfer policies in the Catalog. The College will list learning outcomes for all degrees and certificate programs once the process for measuring such outcomes has been refined. The College will provide a time-to-completion plan for IGETC, AA in Liberal Arts and AS in General Studies.

In response to recent revisions in Title 5, Division 6, Chapter 6 of the California Code of Regulations, College faculty and administrators are presently collaborating on making further, substantial changes in the College's associate degree programs. The changes will affect students enrolling in the College in Fall Semester 2009.[222]

Standard II.A.6.a

The institution makes available to its students clearly stated transfer-of-credit policies in order to facilitate the mobility of students without penalty. In accepting transfer credits to fulfill degree requirements, the institution certifies that the expected learning outcomes for transferred courses are comparable to the learning outcomes of its own courses. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements as appropriate to its mission.

Response to Standard II.A.6.a

For students intending to transfer credits to a four-year institution, the College publishes detailed information in the Catalog in the section Requirements for Certificates, Degrees and University Transfer.[223] The explanation pertains to transfer to California State University campuses, University of California and private colleges and universities. It contains information about IGETC, the AA in Liberal Arts offered by the College, options for transferring with fewer than the required number of units, and course requirements for transfer.

For students seeking to transfer credits from another institution to the College, the Catalog makes clear that students must submit transcripts to the Registrar and that credits must be earned from an accredited institution. Furthermore, the College has procedures in place to facilitate transcript

[222] Associate Degree Revisions
[223] College Catalog, 2007-08, page 55

analysis, and this procedure is provided to prospective students when they apply for admission to the College and seek to apply credits toward their degree.[224]

The evaluation of credit is assessed, where possible, by matching the learning outcomes of the incoming course with a comparable existing course at the College. Because course outlines for courses from other colleges are rarely available, it is often necessary to evaluate such credit on the basis of other criteria, such as course description, pre-requisites, comparable courses from other California colleges identified on ASSIST and information provided from CollegeSource, an online catalog information service. College faculty members, who teach in the discipline, are often called upon to examine an incoming course to assess its comparability with an existing College course. To make the course review process more efficient and consistent, counseling faculty implemented a shared file system that maintains an ongoing record of their decisions; if a course from a particular institution has been accepted, that decision is made part of the shared file and is honored by subsequent reviewers.

The College works with other community colleges in the Region 9 in compiling annual updates to the Region 9 Community College Course Grid. This document lists courses taught at each of the participating colleges, and shows comparability of those courses, by discipline, among the different colleges.[225]

The College Articulation Officer works closely with the Transfer and Career Center Director and other counseling faculty to assure that articulation agreements are in place with institutions to which the majority of students transfer. Articulation agreements with campuses of California State University and University of California, and selected majors offered by those institutions, are available for review by anyone on the ASSIST website.

Transfer-of-credit policies and practices are reviewed frequently by the Matriculation Committee, a regular committee of the College that meets monthly.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.6.a

The College is thorough and detailed in developing, communicating and evaluating its policies and practices with regard to transfer-of-credit to and from the College.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.6.a

Continue with the current practice in transfer-of-credit practices and policies.

Standard II.A.6.b

When programs are eliminated or program requirements are significantly changed, the institution makes appropriate arrangements so that enrolled students may complete their education in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption.

[224] Transcript Review Documents
[225] Region 9 Community College Course Grid

Response to Standard II.A.6.b

When programs are eliminated or substantially changed, the College ensures that students are guaranteed Catalog rights as of the semester they were initially enrolled, provided they remain continuously enrolled through the completion of the program.[226] Exceptions to this would be changes beyond the control of the College, such as changes in articulation and transfer requirements established by four-year institutions.

In 2003-04, the College terminated AA degrees with majors, except for the AA in Liberal Arts. Students enrolled in those programs and who remained enrolled according to the terms defined in the College Catalog, were guaranteed Catalog rights to complete those degrees according to the regulations in effect at the time they began their studies.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.6.b

The College guarantees Catalog rights to students adhering to the enrollment requirements specified in the Catalog at the time they began their studies.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.6.b

The College will continue to abide by its policy on Catalog rights when programs are terminated or substantially changed.

Standard II.A.6.c

The institution represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently to prospective and current students, the public, and its personnel through its catalogs, statements and publications, including those presented in electronic formats. It regularly reviews institutional policies, procedures, and publications to assure integrity in all its representations about its mission, programs, and services.

Response to Standard II.A.6.c

The key document containing most of the College's essential information about its personnel, programs and services is the Catalog. The Catalog is published annually—in paper copy as well as on the College website—under the direction of the Vice President of Instructional Services, with advice from the Catalog Committee. Changes in courses, program requirements, and key policies take place first in the Catalog draft templates, which are reviewed for accuracy and subsequently reprinted in other College publications. Student education plans for degrees and certificates that are provided to students, for example, are reprinted from the Catalog to ensure consistency and accuracy. Policies that appear in the Student Handbook, likewise, are reprinted from the Catalog so that the policy language of one publication matches the policy language of the other.

[226] College Catalog, 2007-08, page 2

The Catalog reflects curriculum changes resulting from the previous year's meetings of the Curriculum Committee. Once the Catalog is published, new curriculum changes resulting from subsequent Curriculum Committee decisions during the year are published on the College website as Catalog addenda and are inserted loose-leaf into the Catalog for distribution.

The accumulated Catalog addenda during the year become the source documents for course and program changes in the Catalog for the following year.

The College, through the Catalog Committee, will implement an evaluation of the Catalog and its production, emphasizing these areas: handling of addenda and other changes; procedures for reviewing for accuracy and thoroughness prior to publication; organization and presentation of topics; and indexing and cross-referencing. The College also seeks to review the function and composition of the Catalog Committee. (See College response to Standard II.B.2, page 112.)

The College Articulation Officer prepares annually a summary of transfer curriculum changes; the report lists changes in courses that affect their transfer status. The report is inserted loose-leaf into the Catalog and is sent to articulation officers at selected four-year and two-year colleges in California.

A Schedule of Classes is produced several weeks prior to the start of classes for Fall and Spring semesters, and for Summer Session. It is produced in paper form and published on the College website. As the start of classes approaches, and changes are made that affect class scheduling—course additions and cancellations, instructor changes, room changes, and others—such information is posted to the College website in the form of class schedule errata. In this way, students, faculty and others are kept informed of timely course information prior to the start of classes.

Other information published on the College website, such as the Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission, and Values and course outlines of record, are reviewed periodically to ensure they are timely and accurate.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.6.c

The College takes great care to ensure that it represents itself, both in print and on the website, in a manner that is clear, accurate and timely. The central document for the College is the Catalog; it is the source from which other key publications, such as the Schedule of Classes, student educational plans, and Student Handbook, are drawn. The website, similarly, is monitored periodically to ensure that its content is timely and accurate.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.6.c

The College will continue its current practices in the way it represents itself to students, current and prospective, and to the general public.

Standard II.A.7

In order to assure the academic integrity of the teaching-learning process, the institution uses and makes public governing board-adopted policies on academic freedom and responsibility, student

academic honesty, and specific institutional beliefs or worldviews. These policies make clear the institution's commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge.

Response to Standard II.A.7

A proposed Board policy on academic freedom, derived from two Academic Senate resolutions, will be considered by the Board of Trustees in 2007-08. The two Academic Senate Resolutions are "Resolution on Academic Freedom—Faculty," 06-07-01, March 27, 2007, and "Resolution on Academic Freedom—Students," 06-07-02, March 27, 2007.[227]

The policies of the Board of Trustees are currently being re-evaluated and updated in form and content consistent with recommendations of the Community College League of California, as well as applicable federal and state regulations, California Education Plan, accreditation standards, and best practices of the California Community College system. The College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee is doing the re-write with the assistance of a consultant.

The College Catalog and Student Handbook/Financial Aid Handbook each contain a section titled Student Rights and Responsibilities.[228] The section clearly defines two acts of academic dishonesty, namely, cheating and plagiarism, and sets forth the consequences of being found committing these acts. The section also enumerates specific examples of unacceptable student conduct, and describes the steps the College will take to fully investigate, review and act upon violations. The section describes the Complaint Procedure/Due Process and explains the procedures for filing complaint pertaining to general complaints, as well as complaints pertaining to discrimination and sexual harassment.

The College does not adhere to or espouse a particular belief or world view; however, it does demand "respect, honesty and fairness in its educational programs, professional interactions and community relations," and so states in the Strategic Plan.[229]

That the College is committed to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge is evidenced in the opening statement to the Complaint Procedures/Due Process section of the Catalog. It states:

"The student is encouraged to pursue course work and other college-sponsored activities that will promote intellectual growth and personal development. In pursuing these goals, the students should be free of unfair and improper action by any member of the academic community."[230]

The College's commitment is also evidenced in its institutional values, expressed in the Statement of Vision, Mission and Values:

"Palo Verde College facilitates life long learning and encourages scholastic achievement. The College believes that knowledge, understanding and their application are keys to a better future."[231]

[227] Academic Senate Resolutions
[228] College Catalog, 2007-08, page 48 and Student Handbook/Financial Aid Handbook, 2007-08, page 56
[229] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values
[230] College Catalog, 2007-08, page 50
[231] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.7

The College assures academic integrity though many of its expressions, including Academic Senate resolutions and Board of Trustees' policies on academic freedom and policies pertaining to students' rights and responsibilities, student conduct and the commitment to the free pursuit of knowledge.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.7

Continue the College's current policies and practices with regard to academic freedom, students' rights and responsibilities, and student conduct. Maintain a continuing commitment to the free pursuit of knowledge.

Standard II.A.7.a

Faculty distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views in a discipline. They present data and information fairly and objectively.

Response to Standard II.A.7.a

The Academic Senate adopted "Resolution on Academic Freedom—Faculty," 06-07-01, March 27, 2007, which acknowledges support for the principles of academic freedom, both inside and outside the classroom.

The resolution states that the faculty member has the "right to discuss in the classroom all issues, however controversial, that the Professor considers relevant to the subject. This right carries with it the responsibility to consider controversial issues objectively…the Professor has the responsibility to acknowledge the existence of, and to show respect for, other viewpoints, including opposing viewpoints." [232]

The resolution continues: "Outside the classroom, the Professor has the right as a private citizen to speak and act freely on controversial issues. This right carries with it the responsibility to be accurate, to exercise appropriate restraint, to show respect for the viewpoints of others, and to make every effort to indicate that he or she is not speaking for the College."

The resolution closely follows the statements of principles about academic freedom expressed by the Community College League of California and the language of the American Association of University Professors, which was adopted by the California Academic Senate. The College's Academic Senate also adopted a resolution on academic freedom for students: "Resolution on Academic Freedom—Students," 06-07-02, March 27, 2007, modeled after a similar policy recommended by the California College League of California.[233]

A proposed Board policy on academic freedom, derived from two Academic Senate resolutions, will be considered by the Board of Trustees in 2007-08.

[232] Academic Senate Resolutions
[233] Academic Senate Resolutions

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.7.a

The College looks to the integrity and professionalism of each faculty member to present information in the classroom fairly and objectively. The College recognizes, furthermore, a faculty member's right to speak as a private citizen outside the classroom on controversial issues, and that right carries the responsibility to be accurate, to exercise restraint, to show respect for the viewpoints of others, and to make every effort to indicate that he or she is not speaking for the College.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.7.a

The College will continue its policies and practices in the areas of academic freedom and faculty objectivity.

Standard II.A.7.b

The institution establishes and publishes clear expectations concerning student academic honesty and consequences for dishonesty.

Response to Standard II.A.7.b

As stated in the response to Standard II.A.7, page 101, the College Catalog and Student Handbook clearly define two acts of academic dishonesty, namely, cheating and plagiarism, and set forth the consequences to students of being found committing these acts. The section also enumerates specific examples of unacceptable student conduct, and describes the steps the College will take to fully investigate, review and act upon violations. The section describes the Complaint Procedure/Due Process and explains the procedures for filing a complaint pertaining to general conduct, as well as complaints pertaining to discrimination and sexual harassment.[234]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.A.7.b

The College has a policy governing student academic dishonesty, publishes the policy in the Catalog and Student Handbook, and outlines the consequences of being found committing identified acts of academic dishonesty.

Action Plan: Standard II.A.7.b

The College will continue with its current policies and practices in the area of published expectations of student academic honesty and consequences for dishonesty.

Standard II.A.7.c

Institutions that require conformity to specific codes of conduct of staff, faculty, administrators, or students, or that seek to instill specific beliefs or worldviews, give clear prior notice of such policies, including statement in the catalog and/or appropriate faculty or student handbooks.

[234] College Catalog, 2007-08, page 48, and Student Handbook/Financial Aid Handbook, 2007-08, page 56

Response to Standard II.A.7.c

While the College does not require conformity to a specific code of conduct, it demands "respect, honesty and fairness in its educational programs, professional interactions and community relations," as stated in the College Strategic Plan.[235]

Furthermore, Academic Senate Resolution, "Professional and Collegial Conduct of Faculty Members," 06-07-05, affirms that "all faculty members uphold the highest standards of professional and collegial conduct while teaching in the classroom and while conducting College business."[236] The resolution also supports the 1987 AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics.

Standard II.A.8

Institutions offering curricula offered in foreign locations to students other than U.S. nationals operate in conformity with standards and applicable Commission policies.

Response to Standard II.A.8

The College does not offer curricula in foreign locations.

Standard II.B: Student Support Services

The institution recruits and admits students who are able to benefit from its programs, consistent with its mission. Student support services address the identified needs of students and enhance a supportive learning environment. The entire student pathway through the institutional experience is characterized by a concern for student access, progress, learning and success. The institution systematically assesses student support services using student learning outcomes, faculty and staff input, and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of these services.

Response to Standard II.B

In keeping with its stated mission, the College provides "an exemplary learning environment that promotes student success, lifelong learning and community development."[237] It offers instructional programs and instructional support services to all students able to benefit from its programs. These programs are diverse; they include preparation for transfer, as well as professional and personal enrichment: the College offers certificates and degrees that prepare students for productive careers and for transfer to four-year institutions, and offers opportunities for personal and professional enrichment in credit and noncredit courses and programs. The College offers its courses in distance education and face-to-face modes to accommodate the life circumstances of its students, many of whom must balance the demands of family, work and school, and many of whom are pursuing their education while incarcerated.

[235] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values
[236] Academic Senate Resolutions
[237] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values

In light of the diversity of programs and opportunities available to prospective students, the College provides educational support services that evaluate students' needs, recommend appropriate educational pathways, encourage progress along those pathways, and provide appropriate assistance when it is needed to keep students on track.

The College has a well-defined matriculation process described in the College Catalog, Student Handbook and Matriculation Plan, and which is reviewed regularly at meetings of the Matriculation Committee, Distance Education Committee, Academic Senate, Curriculum Committee, Distance Education Committee, College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, and in program review.[238] These committees and organizations are staffed variously by teaching faculty, counseling faculty, staff and administrators—affording broad College input into the review and assessment of support services.

Here are examples how the College provides a supportive learning environment that encourages student success:

Outreach program: The College makes a concerted effort to reach out and make known its educational programs to the communities of Blythe and Needles and surrounding areas, including the incarcerated students at several California state correctional facilities, two of which are near Blythe. As part of its effort to attract students and to make them feel welcome, the College sponsors an annual Career Day in the Fall Semester. High school students are invited to visit the campus to attend seminars and instructional programs and to interact with the presenters, College faculty and staff.[239] The College also offers a Career Connection event in the Spring Semester in which employers from the community and surrounding areas present information regarding student employment opportunities. In addition, Disabled Students Programs and Services hosts an annual Spring Fest, inviting students with disabilities from local high schools to spend a day at the College to learn about programs, assistive technology services and accommodative services available to students with disabilities.

Access and admissions policies: Admissions and enrollment policies are published in the College Catalog and Student Handbook and describe matters of eligibility, residency, open enrollment, fees and factors that may limit enrollment, such as pre-requisites and co-requisites. The Matriculation Plan states as one of its goals that "Students, regardless of previous academic preparation and primary language, will find the admission process accessible." [240]

Orientation: Once admitted, new students are encouraged to attend an orientation session, take the assessment test and meet with a counselor or advisor. The orientation workshop, with presentations by College faculty and staff provides students with important information regarding the services, programs and courses available through the College. [241] New, returning and continuing students are encouraged to attend orientation. The dates of orientation sessions are published in the Schedule of Classes, which is provided to students at the time of admission. In addition, one-on-one

[238] College Catalog, 2007-08, pages 24 ff; see also Student Handbook/Financial Aid Handbook, 2007-08, pages 22-23; Matriculation Plan, 2005; Matriculation Committee Minutes; Academic Senate Minutes; Program Review Reports (for Student Services)
[239] Career Day Documents
[240] Matriculation Plan, 2005
[241] Student Handbook/Financial Aid Handbook, 2007-08, pages 13-14

orientations may be provided to the student during counseling sessions. Information is also presented through courses such as GES 101, Introduction to College Life, and GES 115, The Master Student.

Assessment and placement: To ensure proper class placement and promote academic success, students who plan to take courses requiring reading, mathematics and writing are directed to take an assessment test that measures those skills and recommends placement at specific course levels. Exceptions to this requirement apply to students who have already completed the required courses in English and mathematics.[242]

Counseling and student educational plans: Once students have attended orientation and completed the assessment test, they are scheduled to see a counselor to discuss their goals and formulate an educational plan. The educational plan represents a schedule of courses required of a particular degree or certificate program. The Student Handbook explains what an educational plan is, its value, and how to prepare one with the advice of a counselor.[243] The student educational plan is like a road map that guides students through their college careers, keeps them on course, and enhances the likelihood of success.

Financial aid: The financial aid system was developed to increase access to higher education. Financial aid intends to meet the gap between students' income and the overall cost of attending college. Upon successfully completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), students can apply for the following Federal financial aid: The Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant and Federal Work Study. California residents can also apply for the following: The Board of Governors' Fee Waiver, Cal-Grants, Extended Opportunities Programs and Services (EOPS) and CalWORKs. Many students receive assistance from a combination of the aforementioned programs. The Student Handbook provides descriptions of the major aid programs available at the College. Students are encouraged during orientation and registration to discuss their financial needs with a counselor or advisor, if applicable, so they may be directed to the appropriate financial aid program for consideration.[244]

Scholarships: There are many scholarship programs available to students at the College. Scholarships are awarded primarily on the basis of financial need and academic excellence. All students are encouraged to apply for scholarships. Students receive this information through handouts, flyers, mailings, or counselor advisement.

Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS): EOPS assists students at the College who are affected by language, social, and economic challenges by providing essential tools to successfully complete a two-year program and transfer to a four-year institution. EOPS encourages the enrollment and retention of students who have unfavorable factors such as low success with prior educational experiences. EOPS assists these students by providing an array of services described in the EOPS brochure.

Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE): Students who are at the time of acceptance into CARE are recipients of TANF and CalWORKs. Through CARE, eligible EOPS

[242] Student Handbook/Financial Aid Handbook, 2007-08, pages 14 ff
[243] Student Handbook/Financial Aid Handbook, 2007-08, pages 28-29; see also Student Education Plans
[244] Student Handbook/Financial Aid Handbook, 2007-08

students receive supplemental educational support services, such as counseling, advisement, classes, workshops, peer support, and networking activities. In addition, grants and allowances for child care, transportation, books and supplies are provided.

CalWORKs: CalWORKs is a program for parents receiving cash aid, attending college and working. CalWORKs can pay for childcare expenses for children up to 11 years of age, textbooks and required supplies for classes and job placement.

Academic progress follow-up procedures: While students are encouraged to stay in touch with their counselors during the semester, the College nonetheless has several systems in place to monitor students' academic progress. For example, any student receiving a grade of D or F by midterm is identified by his or her instructor and reported to the office of Admissions and Records. A deficiency letter is mailed to the student, instructing the student to make an appointment with the counseling staff or the student's instructor to discuss various possibilities for improvement.[245] Apart from withdrawing from the course, the student can attend tutoring sessions offered by the Learning Skills Center. The academic progress of students receiving financial aid, likewise, is followed by counseling faculty. When the grade of a student receiving financial aid falls below a C in any course, the counselor notifies the student and arranges for a meeting to plan ways to improve the student's academic performance.

The 2005 Noel-Levitz student satisfaction survey disclosed some student concern for early notification of academic performance. Despite limitations of the current management information system, every effort is being made to contact students with academic deficiencies in a timely manner. This is currently done by running reports before and during the registration periods and then reviewing and identifying those deficiencies by hand. Once the new management information system is implemented, the process will improve.

Tutoring: Tutoring services are available to any enrolled student and are provided to students at the Learning Skills Center. Tutoring covers work in virtually any course taught at the College. Students may be referred to tutoring by counseling faculty to remedy a grade deficiency, or they may refer themselves for assistance.

Writing lab: The writing lab is operated by the Language Arts and Communications division faculty, specifically by faculty members who teach English and reading. Students enrolled in developmental writing courses, namely, ENG 080, 081 and 082, are required to attend writing lab sections at least three hours per week. Students enrolled in other courses may also receive assistance in writing and research techniques at the writing lab.

Disabled Students Program and Services: DSPS provides support services to students with a verifiable physical, learning or psychological disability. The program emphasizes independence and self-reliance while providing necessary support to help students achieve their educational goals.

Transfer and Career Center: The Transfer and Career Center Director and counseling faculty provide academic advisement and scheduling guidance to students seeking to transfer to four-year institutions, or who request guidance about careers. The Center presents various workshops that advise students about the transfer requirements of the University of California, California State

[245] Student Academic Progress Follow-up Documents

University, and other institutions, and sponsors field trips throughout the school year to selected UC and CSU campuses.[246] As part of its effort to expand career guidance services and to address a student concern found in the 2005 Noel-Levitz survey, the College sponsored the Career Connection conference in Spring Semester 2007, designed to help students consider various career and educational options. Other services provided by the Center are training in resume writing, job interviewing and career exploration.

The Transfer and Career Center established an agreement in 2004 establishing the Dual Admissions Program with California State University, San Bernardino. The policy was renewed in 2007, and provides students with guaranteed admission, contingent upon completion of CSU-GE requirements.

Library: While library services are more fully described in the response to Standard II.C, the library deserves attention in the response to this standard as well, since it provides a vital support service to students and faculty, and is an important part of students' college experience. Library holdings consist of 19,000 books, videos and DVDs, as well as current journals and newspapers for reading and research. The library provides access to extensive online databases, and staff provides seminars for faculty and students on how to use them for research.

Student activities: Apart from academics, the College supports various programs offering students opportunities to develop leadership skills, prepare for civic responsibility, explore diverse cultures, and help build a strong sense of engagement with college life.[247] These include: ASB activities; student clubs, such as those that sponsor Women's History Month and the Multicultural Festival; student government; and outreach activities such as the Blythe Christmas Parade and the AVID Middle School Visit. The College supports College Hour on Tuesday, 11 a.m. to noon, to enable time for ASB and other organizations to meet; most classes and faculty and staff meetings are not held during this time.

GES 101 Introduction to College Life and GES 115 The Master Student: Either of these courses is required for all associate degrees offered by the College.[248] They help provide students with better understanding of College policies and processes, and provide students with guidance, early in their college careers, that enhance their chances for academic success. Topics covered by both courses include but are not limited to matriculation process of administration, orientation, assessment and advising, academic policies/procedures, written definitions of students rights and responsibilities, campus resources, programs and services, introduction to the California system of education, formulation of student educational goals, programs of study and career planning.

Student support services are regularly reviewed and assessed for effectiveness by counseling faculty, teaching faculty, staff and administrators, at meetings of the Matriculation Committee, Academic Senate, College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, and in program review. Here are a few examples of improvements that have been made as a result of these review processes.

[246] Transfer and Career Center Documents
[247] Student Activities Documents
[248] College Catalog, 2007-08, pages 61-62 and pages 67 ff

1. In Fall Semester 2007, the College reclassified a staff member of the Admissions and Records department, adding transcript evaluation to her new job duties.

2. In 2005, the course challenge procedure was clarified and implemented.[249]

3. In 2004, the grade change procedure was clarified and implemented.[250]

4. The August 22, 2005 Flex day resulted in several improvements in student support: a) placement of computers at registration windows enabling live access to class schedule information; b) more inclusion of counseling and teaching faculty in class schedule planning; c) better adherence to deadlines, such as due dates for progress reports and final grades; and d) revision of program review guidelines to reflect support and promotion of student learning outcomes.[251]

5. Development and measurement of student learning outcomes for all student support services functions was started n 2006-07.[252]

6. In 2006, a Probation/Dismissal Intervention program developed by counseling faculty has resulted in a reduction of dismissal notices.

Student learning outcomes have been developed by all departments providing support services for students: EOPS, Admissions and Records, Financial Aid, General Counseling, Transfer and Career, DSPS, Library, and Learning Skills Center. Of these departments, Financial Aid and Library previously implemented measures of student learning, and are conducting ongoing evaluations of the results based on previous SLO information. In addition, the Counseling department assessed student learning outcomes resulting from the Fall Semester 2007 student orientation program.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.B

The College strives to live up to the opening sentence of its Mission Statement, namely, to provide "an exemplary learning environment that promotes student success, lifelong learning and community development." It seeks to accomplish this goal with various services and activities that support students as they embark upon and proceed along in their college careers. The College's matriculation process is well-publicized in the College Catalog and Student Handbook, is supported by written procedures, and is periodically reviewed for effectiveness by various College committees, comprising counseling faculty, teaching faculty, staff and administrators. The student support departments have begun the process of writing student learning outcomes and measuring their results; more work needs to be done in measuring outcomes, assessing the results and taking action to improve services where needed.

The findings of the 2005 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey, moreover, disclosed several areas of student support services that require action. The College acknowledges these problems—

[249] Course Challenge Procedure
[250] Grade Change Procedure
[251] Flex Days and Institute Days, Agendas and Supporting Materials
[252] Student Learning Outcomes: Assessment Tools and Results

more timely notification to students of academic deficiencies; expand transfer and career advisement; and expand tutoring services at the prisons—and has taken steps to remedy them.

Action Plan: Standard II.B

The College, through its Student Services function, will continue implementing plans to measure student learning outcomes in the student support services area, and will assess results in order to bring about continuing improvements in services. The College will continue its efforts to resolve student services problems disclosed in the 2005 Noel-Levitz student survey.

Standard II.B.1

The institution assures the quality of student support services and demonstrates that these services, regardless of location or means of delivery, support student learning and enhance achievement of the mission of the institution.

Response to Standard II.B.1

As described in the response to Standard II.B., above, the College assures the quality of student services through a process of continuing assessment by counseling faculty, teaching faculty, staff and administrators. Assessments come in the form of discussions and actions in various committees, including the Matriculation Committee, Distance Education Committee, Academic Senate, and College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

Student support departments have just begun measuring student learning through systematic evaluation of their programs and services.

As for providing quality support services regardless of location or means of delivery, the College strives to ensure that all locations receive the levels of instructional support they need. All students enrolled at the following locations, or taking courses in distance education sections, receive the benefits of orientation, assessment and placement, counseling services, financial aid, educational plans, and follow-up on academic performance:

Distance education—community students: Counseling faculty maintains ongoing contact with community students through one-on-one meetings, telephone and email to ensure they receive levels of service comparable with those of all students.

Distance education—incarcerated students at Chuckawalla and Ironwood: Counseling faculty make periodic trips to the two major prisons (approximately 15 miles from the Blythe main campus) for registration, counseling, education plan review, and follow-up in case of academic deficiency.

Other prison locations: Counseling and other student support services are provided to students incarcerated at locations other than Chuckawalla and Ironwood by counselors on staff at the College and by prison proctors and counselors, specifically trained by College personnel. To address the need for counseling support in locations outside the district, the College created and filled a new counselor position. Beginning Fall Semester 2007 the counselor travels to each of the prison sites and provides counseling and other support services to inmates enrolled in Palo Verde College

courses. During the year, those services are supplemented by proctors and counselors employed in the education departments of each of the prison facilities; the proctors and counselors are fully trained by College personnel in orientation, counseling and advising, educational plan development, tutoring, and other support services.

Needles Center: The Director of the Needles Center, in addition to her administrative duties, provides counseling and matriculation services to students enrolled in classes there. Additionally, the College recently created a new counselor position whose job is to provide counseling services for students at Needles as well as at the prison sites served by the College.

Noncredit programs: Whether at the Blythe main campus or at the Needles Center, students enrolled in noncredit programs receive full matriculation services and support. The Director of the Needles Center and a newly-hired counselor provide support services to Needles students, including students enrolled in noncredit courses. Counseling at the Blythe main campus provides services to students enrolled in noncredit courses at the Spring Street campus.

Specialized instructional services: The College conducts a number of instructional programs in police, fire and hazardous materials handling in areas outside the district. The College's programs are operated with the approval of the community college districts served by these areas. Such programs are conducted under agreements requiring compliance with all requirements governing educational programs established by the California Government Code Title 5, California Education Code, and the College. While the College provides support services to students in these programs, it is evaluating the support needs for this student population and addressing them accordingly.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.B.1

The College effectively utilizes its counseling and staff resources to provide quality support services to students regardless of the mode of course delivery or the location of the courses: credit, noncredit, Blythe main campus, Needles Center, inmates at the Chuckawalla and Ironwood prisons, and inmates in other California locations. As for students taking courses through instructional services agreements, the College is reviewing the support needs for this student population.

Action Plan: Standard II.B.1

The College will continue its current practices in the area of providing quality support services regardless of the location or mode of course delivery, emphasizing the continuing efforts to resolve student services problems disclosed in the 2005 Noel-Levitz student survey (see response to Standard II.B, page 104). The College will evaluate the support needs of students enrolled in courses through instructional services agreements with the assistance of a newly-hired College counselor.

Standard II.B.2

The institution provides a catalog for its constituencies with precise, accurate, and current information concerning the following:

Response to Standard II.B.2

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, items listed below are in the College Catalog, 2007-08, on the pages indicated:

a. General Information,
Official Name, Address, Telephone Number, and website Address of the Institution page 1

i. Educational Mission, page 17
ii. Course, Program and Degree Offerings, pages 55-100
iii. Academic Calendar and Program Length, pages 66ff ; pages 239-240
iv. Academic Freedom Statement, not listed
v. Available Student Aid, pages 33-37
vi. Available Learning Resources, pages 27 and 29
vii. Names and Degrees of Administrators and Faculty, pages 8-12
viii. Names of Governing Board Members, page 5

b. Requirements

i. Admissions, pages 19-20
ii. Student Fees and Other Financial Obligations, pages 21-23
iii. Degree, Certificate, Graduation, pages 55-66

c. Major Policies Affecting Students

i. Academic Regulations, including Academic Honesty, pages 40-48
ii. Nondiscrimination, page 50
iii. Acceptance and Transfer of Credits, pages 20 and 30 and pages 56-58
iv. Grievance and Complaint Procedures, page 50
v. Sexual Harassment, pages 50-51
vi. Refund of Fees, page 21

d. Locations or Publications Where Other Policies May Be Found, non-discrimination, page 50; FERPA, page 52; matriculation policy, page 64; transfer information, page 63, etc.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.B.2

Except for the statement on academic freedom (which had not been adopted by the Board of Trustees at the time the 2007-08 Catalog was published), all items identified in this standard appear in the College Catalog.

Action Plan: Standard II.B.2

Although the terms of this standard are essentially met, the College seeks to improve Catalog organization and content continuously. The College will incorporate the statement on academic freedom in the 2008-09 Catalog.

Standard II.B.3

The institution researches and identifies the learning support needs of its student population and provides appropriate services and programs to address those needs.

Response to Standard II.B.3

Researching and identifying learning support needs of students is a continuing process. The College engages in ongoing discussions and research that examine student learning support needs and provides services and programs to address those needs. Here are some examples of what the College has done to assess learning support needs and the programs and services that were implemented to address those needs:

Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey findings: The College is systematically resolving student services problems disclosed in the 2005 Noel-Levitz engagement survey (see response to Standard I.B.3, page 49).[253] One problem directly affecting student services in particular—the need to improve transfer and career counseling practices—was addressed by: implementing the campus Transfer Day event;[254] implementing the Career Connection event;[255] increased training for all counseling faculty and advisors on transfer matters; and providing more information to the public about the College's transfer and career services.

Seminars in information competency: Results from a December 2004 student survey by the College Librarian of information competency indicated that about half of students surveyed didn't know how to access the online library catalog or periodical data bases. This resulted in the College Librarian implementing, in cooperation with faculty, a series of seminars for students on the subject of online library research.[256]

Impact of educational plans on persistence: A 2006 study of the impact of student education plans on persistence showed that students with education plans tended to stay enrolled in their chosen programs longer than those without plans. The survey resulted in greater emphasis in counseling interviews with students on the writing of education plans.[257]

Reading program: Analysis of trends in placement test results, together with consultation with faculty, indicated there was need for a program in remedial reading. The result was creation of a reading program in 2004-05 and the hiring of a reading specialist. In 2007-08, two of the four reading classes were expanded to include a lab, affording more class time for building reading skills.

Student orientation: In Fall Semester 2007 the Student Academic Support Services division increased the number of student orientation sessions and created more publicity about them, this in response to agreement among counseling faculty and staff that orientation plays a vital role in

[253] Noel-Levitz SSI and IPS Highlights
[254] Transfer and Career Center Documents
[255] Career Connection Documents
[256] Student Learning Outcomes: Assessment Tools and Results
[257] Institutional Research Studies

student academic success and that there was need for greater promotion of orientation. An assessment of learning outcomes was performed at the Fall Semester 2007 orientation.

Writing lab: As a result of discussions among faculty and program review studies showing needs to improve students' writing skills, the Language Arts and Communications division implemented a writing lab. Initially, the writing lab was intended for students enrolled concurrently in developmental English classes; however, lab services were subsequently expanded by offering this learning support service to all students.[258]

Career Connection: As part of its effort to expand career guidance services and to address a student concern found in the 2005 Noel-Levitz survey, the College sponsored the Career Connection conference in Spring Semester 2007, designed to present students with a wide variety of career and educational options.[259]

These are examples of some of the programs and services the College has initiated in response to research, studies, and discussions among counseling and teaching faculty about improving learning support services. The College places great importance on "creating an exemplary learning environment," as is expressed in the Mission Statement, and effective learning support programs and services are part of creating that environment.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.B.3

The College demonstrates a strong commitment to the continuing examination of student learning support needs and the implementation of programs and services that address those needs. As the College increases its activity in identifying and assessing student learning outcomes, particularly in the area of student support services, it expects to increase understanding of the effectiveness of learning support programs and acquire additional tools to improve them.

Action Plan: Standard II.B.3

The College will continue the process of researching student learning needs, and taking steps to address them.

Standard II.B.3.a

The institution assures equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students regardless of service location or delivery method.

Response to Standard II.B.3.a

The College is committed to providing equitable access to all of its students through comprehensive and reliable services regardless of service location or delivery method. As stated in the response to Standard II.B.1, page 110, all students enrolled at the following locations, or taking courses in

[258] Writing Lab Documents
[259] Career Connection Documents

distance education sections, receive the benefits of orientation, assessment and placement, counseling services, financial aid, educational plans, and follow-up on academic performance:

Distance education—community students: Counseling faculty maintains ongoing contact with community students through one-on-one meetings, telephone and email to ensure they receive levels of service comparable with those of all students.

Distance education—incarcerated students at Chuckawalla and Ironwood: Counseling faculty make regular visits each semester to the two major prisons (approximately 15 miles from the Blythe main campus) for registration, counseling, education plan review, and follow-up in case of academic deficiency.

Other prison locations: Counseling and other student support services are provided to students incarcerated at locations other than Chuckawalla and Ironwood by counseling faculty on staff at the College and by prison proctors and counselors, specifically trained by College personnel. To address the need for counseling support in locations outside the district, the College created and filled a new counselor position; beginning Fall Semester 2007 the counselor travels to each of the prison sites and provides counseling and other support services to inmates enrolled in Palo Verde College courses. During the year, those services are supplemented by proctors and counselors employed in the education departments of each of the prison facilities; the proctors and counselors are fully trained by College personnel in orientation, counseling and advising, educational plan development, tutoring, and other support services.

Needles Center: The Director of the Needles Center, in addition to her administrative duties, provides counseling and matriculation services to students enrolled in classes there. Additionally, the College recently hired a new counselor whose job is to provide counseling services for students at the Needles Center as well as at the prison sites served by the College.

Noncredit programs: Whether at the Blythe main campus or at the Needles Center, students enrolled in noncredit programs receive full matriculation services and support. The Director of the Needles Center and a newly-hired counselor provide support services to all Needles Center students, including students enrolled in noncredit courses. Counseling faculty at the Blythe main campus provide services to students enrolled in noncredit courses at the Spring Street campus.

Specialized instructional services: The College conducts a number of instructional programs in police, fire and hazardous materials handling in areas outside the district. The College's programs are operated with the approval of the community college districts served by these areas. Such programs are conducted under agreements requiring compliance with all requirements governing educational programs established by the California Government Code Title 5, California Education Code, and the College. While the College provides support services to students in these programs, it is evaluating the support needs for this student population and addressing them accordingly.

The College continually monitors the quality of its counseling and other support services through various means, including counselors' meetings and Matriculation Committee meetings. There, counseling faculty confer over what they are observing in terms of student learning needs at the various locations, namely, the main campus, Needles Center, the prison sites, and other areas where students receive instructional and learning support services from the College.

In Fall Semester 2007, the College implemented a revised evaluation system for non-teaching faculty. The procedure applies to counseling faculty, advisors, and other faculty members whose primary job assignment is in student support services. The non-teaching evaluation, like the teaching faculty evaluation, consists of the following components: peer evaluation; professional self-evaluation; student evaluation, administrative evaluation; and, if needed, remediation plan. The job performance evaluation process is reflective of the College's commitment to assessing the effectiveness of its student support services.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.B.3.a

The College believes that its student services support function is living up to the objectives of this standard. It monitors the quality of access to its programs through discussions among counseling faculty, advisors, other faculty, staff members and administrators. It has developed and implemented in the Fall Semester 2007 a performance evaluation system for counseling faculty and advisors, and others who are part of the student support effort.

Action Plan: Standard II.B.3.a

The College will continue its current practices in maintaining equitable access for all students to support services regardless of location or mode of delivery through its monitoring and performance evaluation processes.

Standard II.B.3.b

The institution provides an environment that encourages personal and civic responsibility, as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development for all its students.

Response to Standard II.B.3.b

The College, through its various services, offers students a well-rounded education that includes more than classrooms and textbooks. Student activities are coordinated by a full-time staff person who provides leadership and guidance to students in these programs. The activities offer a diverse range of opportunities from which students may choose and which help encourage their personal and civic responsibility, as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development. These opportunities are consistent with several of the College's objectives expressed in the Strategic Plan:[260]

1. "Increase student active participation in campus activities to help build a sense of belonging to the College community." (Initiative 3, Student Success, Objective 1);

2. "Encourage opportunities, such as internships, community service and exchange programs, providing students with a diverse learning experience." (Initiative 3, Student Success, Objective 7)

[260] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values

3. "Encourage participatory governance in College planning and decision-making by encouraging constituent representation on College committees and organizations." (Initiative 4, Organizational Effectiveness, Objective 3)

4. "Palo Verde College promotes the value of civic responsibility among students, faculty and staff." (*from* Statement of Values)

There are many activities in which students may participate and which help encourage personal and civic responsibility.[261] These include participation on constituent-based College committees and organizations, including serving as the ASB representative on the Board of Trustees; participation in ASB and student government; and participation in community outreach activities such as the Blythe Christmas Parade, Adopt-A-Family, and AVID.

Other activities that help promote intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development are Phi Theta Kappa, Discussion and Debate Club, Book Club, Desert Winds literary magazine, Palo Verde College Consort and the Astronomy Club.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.B.3.b

The College provides students with many opportunities to encourage personal responsibility. A full-time staff person provides leadership and guidance for these programs.

Action Plan: Standard II.B.3.b

The College will continue with its current programs in this area.

Standard II.B.3.c

The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates counseling and/or academic advising programs to support student development and success and prepares faculty and other personnel responsible for the advising function.

Response to Standard II.B.3.c

The College takes great care to ensure that its counseling and advising procedures are effective and that its staff is adequately prepared to provide quality advising services.

The Student Academic Support Services division is required, as are all instructional and non-instructional programs, to conduct a program review of its services every five years. The most recent program review in student services was in 2004.[262]

[261] Student Activities Documents
[262] Program Review Reports

Additionally, the 2005 Matriculation Plan is an extensive review of student support services with emphasis on each component of matriculation: admissions, orientation, assessment, counseling/advisement, follow up, coordination and training, research and evaluation, and pre-requisites, co-requisites, and advisories on recommended preparation. Each component is described and evaluated in terms of its adherence to applicable Title V guidelines and regulations.

In an effort to ensure counseling faculty are informed in current trends in academic advising, they are encouraged to attend at least three professional development conferences, workshops, or in-service programs each year.

The College implemented in Fall Semester 2007 a revised job performance evaluation procedure for non-teaching faculty. The procedure applies to counseling faculty, advisors, and other faculty members whose primary job assignment is in student support services. The non-teaching evaluation, like the teaching faculty evaluation, consists of the following components: peer evaluation; professional self-evaluation; student evaluation, administrative evaluation; and, if needed, remediation plan. The job performance evaluation process is reflective of the College's commitment to assessing the effectiveness of its student support services.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.B.3.c

The College continuously assesses the effectiveness of its student support programs through program review, by periodic examination of its matriculation services with preparation of the Matriculation Plan, through expectations that counseling faculty and advisors stay current in the field, and through job performance evaluations.

Action Plan: Standard II.B.3.c

The College will continue with its current practices in evaluating and continuously improving student support services.

Standard II.B.3.d

The institution designs and maintains appropriate programs, practices, and services that support and enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity.

Response to Standard II.B.3.d

That the College is supportive of programs and services that enhance students' understanding and appreciation of diversity is evident in its Statement of Vision: "Palo Verde College celebrates diversity in its students, in its faculty and staff, and in its community, as a quality that enriches and strengthens us all."[263]

The College lives up to this commitment in various ways. The Faculty and Staff Diversity Committee, an ad hoc committee comprising faculty, staff, administrators and students, is charged

[263] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values

with planning and sponsoring the annual Multicultural Festival on campus and for advising College personnel of opportunities, such as conferences and training, in the area of multicultural instruction and programs. The Multicultural Festival is a daylong tribute to diversity—within the College, in the local communities and throughout the world. Past events have featured ethnic-centered dance, food, booths and special presentations on various cultures, such as those of Thailand, Scotland, Germany, the Aztecs, Japan, and migrant families of the American Southwest.

The College's support of diversity is further evidenced in its support during the year of various programs and events:

1. Cinco de Mayo—Sponsored annually by the EOPS and ASB

2. Women's Conference—Sponsored annually by faculty, staff and administrators

3. Black History Month—Sponsored annually by EOPS and ASB

The College also supports the principles of diversity in its hiring practices and policies. Such support is evident in the formation of the EEO Committee and the drafting of an EEO plan, which is currently in process. As part of the current revision and upgrade of policies, the Board of Trustees will be reviewing the Commitment to Diversity policy by the end of the current academic year.[264] Other policies and procedures relevant to diversity in hiring are discussed more fully in the response to standard III.A.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.B.3.d

The College demonstrates its commitment to students with programs, practices and services that support diversity, as is evident not only in its stated policies and objectives, but as well in the programs and events it sponsors, including the Multicultural Festival, Cinco de Mayo, Women's Conference and Black History Month.

Action Plan: Standard II.B.3.d

The College will continue with its current practices and policies to support students' understanding and appreciation of diversity.

Standard II.B.3.e

The institution regularly evaluates admissions and placement instruments and practices to validate their effectiveness while minimizing biases.

Admissions and placement instruments and practices are continuously evaluated by the Matriculation Committee to ensure they are effective, accessible, meet the needs of students and are free of bias. The Matriculation Committee consists of key personnel associated with all aspects of student support services, including student representatives from the ASB; it is a critical forum for

[264] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 7100 Draft

the discussion and resolution of problems related to all aspects of the matriculation process, including admissions and placement procedures.

Admissions procedures and assessment and placement policies are described in the Student Handbook and College Catalog.[265]

The Matriculation Plan, adopted by the College in 2005, identifies the activities, goals and staffing for all components of matriculation, including admissions.[266] The following are the goals for the admissions component of the matriculation process and the College's commentary on the achievement of those goals:

1. All students, regardless of previous academic preparation and primary language, will find the admission process accessible. *Status:* The majority of non-English speaking students are Spanish speakers; the majority of counseling and advisement staff are bilingual (English and Spanish) and are able to assist virtually any non-English speaking student. Moreover, the results of the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey indicated the following item pertaining to admissions and registration among the College's top strengths: "The personnel involved in registration are helpful." (Item 005)

2. All records will be accurate and accessible. *Status*: The College is diligent in recording student information, maintaining it in safe and secure environments, and ensuring that student information is readily accessible to counseling faculty, advisors and other authorized College personnel to enable them to provide effective support services.

3. The admission component is expected to operate with a maximum of efficiency. *Status*: The admissions component is operating efficiently; moreover, with the acquisition, in June 2007, of a replacement management information system efficiency of the admissions component is expected to increase, particularly with the addition of on-line registration and data imaging.

4. Student history, assessments, and needs will determine the counseling services provided to new and continuing students. Priority registration will continue to be provided to DSPS and EOPS students. *Status*: The counseling and advisement of students is performed by a professionally-trained, experienced and informed counseling staff. Counseling is conducted on a one-on-one, confidential basis in which the student's academic history, assessment scores and other unique needs are taken into consideration in developing the student education plan, and in directing the student to appropriate support services.

5. Because the majority of non-English speaking students are Spanish speakers, Spanish speaking personnel and Spanish language admissions data forms are provided. *Status*: As stated in item 1 above, the majority of non-English speaking students are Spanish speakers; the majority of counseling and advisement staff are bilingual (English and Spanish) and are able to assist virtually any non-English speaking student. Admissions application forms are available in Spanish and in English.[267]

[265] Student Handbook/Financial Aid Handbook, 2007-08, page 49 and pages 14 ff ; College Catalog, 2007-08, pages 19 ff and page 25
[266] Matriculation Plan, 2005
[267] Admissions Documents

6. American Sign Language Interpreters and a TTY line are available for hearing impaired students for counseling and admissions information. *Status*: When such support services are requested, either by the student or counselor, or both, the DSPS Coordinator is able to provide ASL interpreters, TTY line, and other assistance for hearing impaired students.

7. Written instructions exempting students from matriculation services will continue to be provided in admissions forms, and other documents. *Status*: Instructions exempting students from matriculation services are provided on the College admissions application form.

8. Students exempt from the matriculation process will continue to be tracked. *Status*: Information for all students enrolling in College classes, whether or not they receive matriculation services, is recorded in the College's admissions and records system, enabling the academic progress of those students to be tracked by the College.

9. Implement on-line admissions system. *Status*: On-line registration is a goal that is expected to be achieved in the next two years with full implementation of the replacement management information system.

Assessment testing and placement procedures are described in both the College Catalog and Student Handbook.[268] The College recognizes that its placement exams must be reviewed and validated frequently to ensure that students are placed at the appropriate levels of English and mathematics, and whether they may be required to take courses in remedial reading. The Learning Skills Center, which administers the test to new students, conducts validation studies of the placement tests in cooperation with English and mathematics faculty members every four years, and adjusts cutoff scores where necessary.[269]

Admissions and placement policies and procedures are also evaluated in program review every five years. The program review report for student support services comprises these areas: matriculation, counseling, admissions and records, assessments, transfer and career center, financial aid, DSPS, EOPS, CalWORKS, and ASB. Of the recommendations listed by the 2004 Student Services Program Review report, two are particularly relevant to admissions and placement:[270]

"Continue to work with our Matriculation Committee to ensure that Title V requirements are met and that instructional faculty is aware of, and understands, the guidelines." (Recommendation 12)

"Continue to evaluate student needs and make referrals to appropriate student support service program areas." (Recommendation 14)

The goals resulting from program review are consistent with the Matriculation Plan goals: the College is serious in its commitment to assessing students' support service needs and endeavors to accomplish this task early in the student's educational career—at the point of admissions and placement.

[268] College Catalog, 2007-08, page 25; Student Handbook/Financial Aid Handbook, 2007-08, pages 14 ff
[269] Learning Skill Center Documents
[270] Program Review Reports (Student Services)

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.B.3.e

The College regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its admissions and placement policies and procedures. It is making progress in achieving the goals established for the admissions component of the Matriculation Plan. The one objective not yet achieved, namely, on-line admissions, is expected to be realized in two years with implementation of the new management information system.

Action Plan: Standard II.B.3.e

Continue the current practice of evaluating admissions and placement policies, and continue to achieve goals outlined in the Matriculation Plan.

Standard II.B.3.f

The institution maintains student records permanently, securely and confidentially, with provision for secure backup of all files, regardless of the form in which those files are maintained. The institution publishes and follows established policies for release of student records.

Response to Standard II.B.3.f

The College maintains all student records permanently, securely and confidentially, under the direction of the College Registrar and the Information Technology Director. The College adheres to the policies of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in establishing, maintaining and releasing student records. In cooperation with the College Registrar, the Informational Technology department continuously backs up student records information, and stores the data at various locations on campus. The College recently contracted with an off-campus company to image selected student enrollment records. This process will eventually link to the new management information system once it is fully operational. The College publishes College policies, which are based on FERPA rules, in the College Catalog and Student Handbook. Policies of the Board of Trustees pertaining to FERPA are incorporated by reference in these two publications.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.B.3.f

The College adheres to FERPA rules having to do with establishing, maintaining and releasing student records. It publishes summaries of College policies based on FERPA rules in the College Catalog and Student Handbook. The College Registrar maintains all student records permanently, securely and confidentially, with reliable electronic backups stored at various locations on campus. The College recently contracted with an off-campus company to begin the process of imaging selected student enrollment records that are in original paper form. The College recently acquired a new management information system and will be phasing the system in over the next two years. The College, through the Registrar and Information Technology departments, will be re-evaluating its records storage policies and procedures in light of the capabilities of the new system in this area.

Action Plan: Standard II.B.3.f

By virtue of its adherence to FERPA rules and guidelines, and in light of its data backup procedures, the College complies with this standard and will continue its current practices in this area. The College will be re-evaluating its records storage policies and procedures as the new management information system is phased in and becomes operational.

Standard II.B.4

The institution evaluates student support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. Evaluation of these services provides evidence that they contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes. The institution uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.

Response to Standard II.B.4

The College continuously evaluates the effectiveness of student support services through various means, including:

1. Meetings and opportunities for dialog and problem-solving: This would include meetings of the Matriculation Committee, Distance Education Committee, Academic Senate, Distance Education Committee, College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee. These committees and organizations are staffed by teaching faculty, counseling faculty, staff and administrators—affording broad College input into the review and assessment of support services.

2. Matriculation Plan preparation and follow-up: The 2005 Matriculation Plan is an extensive review of student support services with emphasis on each component of matriculation: admissions, orientation, assessment, counseling/advisement, follow up, coordination and training, research and evaluation, and pre-requisites, co-requisites, and advisories on recommended preparation. Each component is described and evaluated in terms of its adherence to applicable Title V guidelines and regulations. Here are some examples of specific goals established in the Matriculation Plan the achievement of which has resulted in improving student support services:

    a. Bilingual staff is in attendance at every orientation. (Orientation, #2)

    b. The Probation/Dismissal Intervention program developed by counseling faculty has resulted in a reduction of dismissal notices. (Follow-up, #4)

    c. In Fall Semester 2007, the College created a new position of Outreach and Events Coordinator, part of whose responsibility is to conduct research and evaluation (Research/evaluation, #7)

    d. In Fall Semester 2005, student services personnel participated in the Noel-Levitz student satisfaction survey and assisted in evaluating the results (Assessment, #4)

3. Learning outcomes assessment: This area of assessment of student services is in its beginning stages for the most part; however, several departments have made progress:

a. The College Librarian regularly administers to students pre- and post-tests of its information literacy seminars, conducted in cooperation with other faculty.

b. Financial aid personnel conduct assessments of student learning in the area of financial aid services before and after interview sessions with students.

c. Counseling faculty conduct pre- and post-test assessments of student learning in the areas of probation policies, degree and certificate requirements, and support services. The assessments are conducted during orientation for new students.

4. Program review: All College programs, instructional and non-instructional, are evaluated through the program review process every five years. The most recent program review by the student services area was in 2004. The recommendations resulting from the review and the progress made to date on those recommendations are as follows:

   a. Continue outreach efforts in Needles, especially targeting the Hispanic and Native American populations. *Progress:* A full-time academic dean with counseling experience is in place at the Needles Center; a full-time counselor was hired to serve the Needles Center and off-site locations delivering College courses.

   b. Inform the public of college instructional and student services programs to underrepresented populations. *Progress:* In Fall Semester 2007, the College created a new position of Outreach and Events Coordinator, whose job is to provide outreach services.

   c. Collect data to research our enrollment management needs. *Progress:* Student services staff evaluated the results of the 2005 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey. The Institutional Researcher-Academic compiled enrollment data and provided it to divisions for program review, and conducted various enrollment trend studies.[271]

   d. Continue special events and student activities to support student recruitment and enrollment. *Progress:* A full-time ASB student activities Coordinator is in place.

   e. Conduct faculty and staff training on culturally diverse and disability issues. *Progress:* The College sponsors several educational events on cultural diversity during the year: Cinco de Mayo, Women's Day, Black History Month, and Multicultural Festival. These programs provide programs that teach diversity topics. The Director of Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS) conducts presentations at Flex Day activities on programs having to do with students with disabilities. In addition, DSPS hosts an annual Spring Fest, inviting students with disabilities from local high schools to spend a day at the College to learn about programs, assistive technology services and accommodative services available to students with disabilities.

[271] Institutional Research Studies

f. Budget funds for transfer and career facilities, activities and services to students. *Progress*: The College has provided the Transfer and Career Center Director with a program budget.

g. Maintain sufficient counseling contact with our students at Spring Street, Needles and the prison sites. *Progress:* Implemented full-time counseling position in Fall Semester 2007 to provide counseling support at campus locations, including locations other than the Blythe main campus.

h. Continue efforts to put distance education in place. *Progress:* Counselor and advisors participate with teaching faculty on distance education committee to plan and implement program improvements.

i. Continue to move forward with providing technology for use in counseling and enrollment. *Progress:* Participated in the Enterprise Resource Plan committee, evaluating the College's need for a new management information system. Created access to CSU Mentor and provided some counseling faculty with laptops to increase their mobility.

j. Develop or adopt a new evaluation tool that can be used for non-teaching faculty. *Progress:* An evaluation instrument for counseling faculty and other non-teaching faculty was developed through the contract negotiation process, and implemented Fall Semester 2007.

k. Continue the process of reviewing SARS Reports in order to summarize our contacts with students. This will assist us in determining and supporting their academic needs. *Progress:* SARS data is being used to evaluate peak activity times to help assign counseling and advising staff more efficiently.

l. Continue to work with our Matriculation committee to ensure that Title V requirements are met and that instructional faculty is aware of, and understand the guidelines. *Progress:* The Matriculation Committee has at least one instructional faculty member, who, in turn, reports back to the Academic Senate on matters of Title V.

m. Explore different follow-up methods for students who are experiencing academic difficulties to see what works and what doesn't. *Progress:* The counseling faculty developed the Probation/Dismissal Intervention program and is applying to students in categorical programs as well as general counseling.

n. Continue to evaluate student needs and make referrals to appropriate student support service program areas. *Progress:* Staff continues to make effective referrals of students to needed services, and continues to improve.

o. Examine staffing needs in the counseling/advising area and add appropriate staff as needed: 1) the Student Academic Support Services Division (SASS) endorses and recommends the need for a Head Counselor/Director of Counseling who would be addressing counseling matters and act as a liaison for the counseling staff; 2)

Counselors are evaluating transcripts upon request. This process results in inconsistency of transcript evaluation. The SASS Division recommends that a Transcript Evaluator be designated and be part of the Admissions and Records Department. *Progress:* 1) The Vice-President of Student Services is exploring the feasibility of designating a Counselor/Director of Counseling; 2) In Fall Semester 2007 the College reclassified a staff member of the Admissions and Records department, adding transcript evaluation to her new job duties.

p. The SASS Division recommends that assessments/placement scores be added to the registration/advising module of Jenzabar as a guidance tool. *Progress:* The College decided to replace the Jenzabar system with Datatel and began implementing the new system Fall Semester 2007. Student assessment scores will be incorporated into the advising component of Datatel.

5. Categorical program assessment reports: The College, through its various support services departments, regularly prepares required reports, apart from program review, for the purposes of funding renewal, re-certification, program evaluation and, where applicable, site visitation. These programs include EOPS, DSPS, CalWORKS, Matriculation, Tech Prep, and Financial Aid.

6. Job performance evaluations: The College implemented in Fall Semester 2007 a revised job performance evaluation procedure for counseling and other non-teaching faculty. The procedure applies to counseling faculty, advisors, and other faculty members whose primary job assignment is in student support services. The non-teaching evaluation, like the teaching faculty evaluation, consists of the following components: peer evaluation; professional self-evaluation; student evaluation, administrative evaluation; and, if needed, remediation plan. The job performance evaluation process exemplifies the College's commitment to assessing the effectiveness of its student support services.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.B.4

The College has several processes in place that regularly evaluate the effectiveness of student support services: regular matriculation and counselors' meetings for discussion and problem-solving; Matriculation Plan preparation and follow-up; learning outcomes assessments; program review; categorical program assessment reports; and job performance evaluations for non-teaching faculty.

Action Plan: Standard II.B.4

The College will keep the various processes in place that regularly evaluate the effectiveness of student support services, emphasizing the ongoing assessment of student learning outcomes in all aspects of student services.

II.C Library and Learning Support Services

Library and other learning support services for students are sufficient to support the institution's instructional programs and intellectual, aesthetic, and cultural activities in whatever format and wherever they are offered. Such services include library services and collections, tutoring, learning

centers, computer laboratories, and learning technology development and training. The institution provides access and training to students so that library and other learning support services may be used effectively and efficiently. The institution systematically assesses these services using student learning outcomes, faculty input, and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of the services.

Response to Standard II.C

The College operates two major learning support centers: the library and the Learning Skills Center. Each provides unique services to students and faculty in support of the College's mission, namely, to provide "an exemplary learning environment with high quality educational programs and services."[272]

The Harry A. Faull Library, located on the second floor of the CS Building, is charged with providing various services associated with promoting an exemplary learning environment. Those services include: providing knowledgeable responses to requests for research assistance; providing research assistance and materials that support the curriculum of the College; encouraging and facilitating information competency among students regardless of their educational goals; providing instruction in the use of information resources; promoting the library as the focal point of quality information resources regardless of the format; protecting each individual's right to privacy with respect to information requests; acquiring and maintaining a viable library collection of books, electronic databases, and other materials; and ensuring a comfortable and safe learning environment with quiet areas for study, computer work, and conferencing.[273]

The Learning Skills Center, similarly, contributes to the College's learning environment, but with a focus different from the library's. The Learning Skills Center administers assessment tests in English, math and reading for all new students; conducts supplemental skills courses; provides tutoring services; serves as the central location for distributing course materials and for proctoring exams for community students enrolled in distance education class sections; and provides ample work stations for study, computer work, tutoring, and self-paced, individualized instruction. The Learning Skills Center's primary location is on the first floor of the CL Building in an open area adjacent to classrooms and faculty offices, affording students at the Blythe main campus the opportunity to utilize the services of the Center in close proximity to their classrooms and the faculty.[274]

Both the library and Learning Skills Center strive to make learning support services—including placement testing, tutoring, and research—accessible to all students, regardless of location or mode of instructional delivery.

Services at the Needles Center include a small computer lab-tutorial center, which will be expanded once the new facility is operational. The Spring Street center offers tutorials and supplemental instruction labs for the courses at that location.

[272] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values
[273] Program Review Reports (Library)
[274] Program Review Reports (Learning Skills Center)

A variety of academic services is available to incarcerated students through a memorandum of understanding by which educational proctors and inmate tutors provide services directly to inmate students. The College, through the library, provides support for student research, coordinating information through faculty and inmate clerks. Access to computer laboratories and tutors is limited due to the nature of the regulated environment for inmates.

Community students—students enrolled in distance education sections who are not inmates—report that they have sufficient access to library and learning resources. Tutors and staff provide one-on-one training as well as workshops to facilitate student use of services.

The library and the Learning Skills Center conduct systematic assessments of their services through program and periodic surveys of users, including faculty and students. The Librarian and Learning Skills Center Coordinator are full-time faculty members and, as such, participate in Academic Senate and other campus organizations and committees that bring them into discussions with other faculty, staff, students and administrators.

The Librarian conducts pre- and post-test assessments of learning resulting from information literacy workshops. The Librarian also surveys faculty and students about their satisfaction with library services.[275]

The Learning Skills Center Coordinator evaluates the impact of tutoring sessions on student academic performance, with special emphasis on students on probationary status. The Coordinator also conducts validation studies every four years of the instruments used to assess and place students in English, mathematics and reading.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.C

The College's two learning support services, the library and the Learning Skills Center, provide students with a broad range of learning assistance—research in the form of print and database resources, personal assistance in research and academic guidance, assessment testing for placement in English, math and reading courses, tutoring assistance, quiet places to work, and technology support in the form of computers and other learning technologies.

Tutoring assistance for incarcerated students at each of the prison locations is provided by proctors who are employed in the education department of the prison, or inmates with associate's or bachelor's degrees who work under the direction of the proctor. Tutoring support is managed by the Office of Instructional Services, under the direction of the Associate Dean of Distance Education and Noncredit Programs.

Action Plan: Standard II.C

The College will continue to provide learning support services to students through the library and the Learning Skills Center regardless of location and will continue to assess the effectiveness of these services and make changes and improvements in accordance with changes in students' learning support needs. With the variety of environments through which services are offered, the

[275] Library Documents

College will continue to evaluate new methodologies and technologies to expand and improve instructional support services.

Standard II.C.1

The institution supports the quality of its instructional programs by providing library and other learning support services that are sufficient in quantity, currency, depth and variety to facilitate educational offerings, regardless of location or means of delivery.

Response to Standard II.C.1

The College supports the quality of its instructional programs by providing both the library and the Learning Skills Center with sufficient resources to operate effectively and meet students' learning needs. The library maintains print and online database research resources and offers services that are current and sufficient in quantity, depth and variety to support learning programs offered by the College. Students enrolled at the Needles Center have access to all online research databases through the library page of the College Website.[276] For incarcerated students, who are restricted access to online services by prison rules and policies, the College provides research assistance, when requested, through library personnel via correspondence.[277]

The Librarian assesses the library collection on an ongoing basis by staying closely in touch with current curriculum, by reading class assignments and by discussing library practices and policies with other faculty and with students. As a member of the Curriculum Committee, Academic Senate and other campus organizations, the Librarian keeps apprised of issues pertaining to students' learning support needs. Although there is no formal collection development policy as yet, the Librarian utilizes library review journals such as *Library Journal*, *Booklist* and *Choice* to aid in collection development purchases.

The Learning Skills Center provides tutoring services, administers assessment tests that appropriately place students in College classes, tracks the academic progress of students referred for tutoring support, provides a point of distribution of materials for students enrolled in College distance education classes, and offers a supportive work environment in close proximity to classrooms and faculty offices.[278] Like the Librarian, the Learning Skills Center Coordinator participates in numerous campus organizations and committees and keeps current on curriculum trends and students' learning needs.

Tutoring services for incarcerated students at each of the prison locations are handled through the Office of Instructional Services, under the direction of the Associate Dean of Distance Education and Noncredit Programs. Tutors are usually proctors, who are employed in the education department of the prison, or inmates with associate's or bachelor's degrees who work under the direction of the proctor.

[276] College Website:www.paloverde.edu
[277] Library Documents
[278] Learning Skills Center Documents

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.C.1

The library and Learning Skills Center, each in its own way, are highly responsive to the learning needs of students and provides services that address those needs, regardless of location or method of delivery. Both departments are managed by full-time faculty members who participate in various campus organizations, such as the Curriculum Committee and Academic Senate, and keep apprised of trends in curriculum and academic programs in order to provide effective support to those programs.

Action Plan: Standard II.C.1

The College will continue providing academic support to students and continue evaluating and improving these services in step with changing conditions and student learning needs.

Standard II.C.1.a

Relying on appropriate expertise of faculty, including librarians and other learning support services professionals, the institution selects and maintains educational equipment and materials to support student learning and enhance the achievement of the mission of the institution.

Response to Standard II.C.1.a

Both the Librarian and Learning Skills Center Coordinator continuously evaluate equipment and educational materials needs for their respective operations, and they discuss such needs with staff, faculty, administrators and students. Both submit annual budget requests requiring them to justify their operating budgets and annual purchases.

The library provides storage and safekeeping space for most of the audio-visual equipment associated with learning support for the Blythe main campus. These include Computer/TV Monitor/media carts with the latest software installed, overhead projectors, visualizers, televisions and other equipment. The library also has numerous workstations with computers available to all students and other College personnel.

The Learning Skills Center, similarly, maintains an extensive library of materials in the form of tapes, DVDs and supplemental educational materials to provide for the tutoring needs of students.[279]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.C.1.a

The Librarian and Learning Skills Center Coordinator maintain ongoing contact with faculty and other learning support professionals in ensuring their respective departments are adequately meeting the learning needs of students.

[279] Learning Skills Center Documents

Action Plan: Standard II.C.1.

The College, through the library and Learning Skills Center, will continue its current practices in maintaining ongoing contact with faculty and other learning support professionals in the acquisition and use of educational support materials and equipment.

Standard II.C.1.b

The institution provides ongoing instruction for users of library and other learning support services so that students are able to develop skills in information competency.

Response to Standard II.C.1. b

Instruction enabling students to develop skills in information competency is handled by the Librarian and her staff and by the Learning Skills Center Coordinator. Such instruction is handled in various ways. Here are some examples:

Library staff and the Learning Skills Center Coordinator participate in student orientation and provide introductory training about library services and about the tutoring and learning support services available through the Learning Skills Center. Student orientation sessions are conducted at the Blythe main campus, Needles Center and Spring Street at the beginning of each semester.[280]

Library staff conducts workshops and mini seminars. During the semester, the Librarian and her staff arrange with faculty to conduct short, hands-on seminars for the benefit of students on the use of the library's online research services.[281]

Descriptions of library and Learning Skills Center services are provided in the College Catalog, Student Handbook, College Website, and other College publications.[282]

Library staff and Learning Skills Center Coordinator do presentations at Flex days. Such presentations deal with new and ongoing information competency services provided by these departments and are intended primarily for faculty and staff members.[283]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.C.1.b

The library and Learning Skills Center provide valuable learning support to students and faculty. Ongoing instruction of students and others in the use of their information competency services is conducted in various ways, including student orientations, workshops and mini seminars, publications, and Flex Day presentations.

[280] Orientation Documents
[281] Student Learning Outcomes: Tools for Measurement and Their Outcomes
[282] College Catalog, 2007-08; Student Handbook/Financial Aid Handbook, 2007-08; College Website: www.paloverde.edu; Learning Skills Center Documents; Library Documents
[283] Flex Days and Institute Days, Agendas and Supporting Materials

Action Plan: Standard II.C.1.b

The College, through its library and Learning Skills Center, will continue to provide ongoing instruction to students and others in information competency.

Standard II.C.1.c

The institution provides students and personnel responsible for student learning programs and services adequate access to the library and other learning support services, regardless of their location or means of delivery.

Response to Standard II.C.1.c

Both the library and Learning Skills Center strive to make their services accessible to students for all students, regardless of location. The library, for example, has extensive online databases providing virtually all students unlimited access to research materials. The Needles Center, while it does not yet have a print collection, nonetheless offers students access to the College's online research databases. Incarcerated students whose access to all online service is prohibited by prison rules and policies are assisted in their research requests by library personnel via correspondence.[284]

The Learning Skills Center strives to provide adequate access to services regardless of the means of course delivery. Community students enrolled in face-to-face as well as distance education classes are encouraged to utilize the Learning Skills Center for computer aided instruction and direct tutoring. At this time, online course offerings are limited, and the Learning Skills Center does not offer online tutoring.

Tutoring services at the Needles Center are available with a part-time faculty member. Tutoring services for incarcerated students at each of the prison locations are handled through the Office of Instructional Services, under the direction of the Associate Dean of Distance Education and Noncredit Programs. Tutors are usually proctors, who are employed in the education department of the prison, or inmates with associate's or bachelor's degrees who work under the direction of the proctor.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.C.1.c

The library and Learning Skills Center provide instructional services support for to all students, regardless of location or means of delivery of such instructional services. The library utilizes its online research database extensively, for students at the Blythe main campus, Spring Street and Needles Center. The library staff assists incarcerated students in library research via correspondence. Tutoring is available to all students, regardless of their location, including the Blythe main campus, Needles Center, Spring Street and prison locations.

As online courses increase in number, the Learning Skills Center will need to develop online tutoring and facilitate access for students to tutorials.

[284] Library Documents

Action Plan: Standard II.C.1.c

The College understands the importance of ensuring that support of instructional services is available to all students regardless of their location, or the means by which such services are delivered. The College will continue to evaluate the needs of all students and will continue to improve the quality and extent of learning support.

Standard II.C.1.d

The institution provides effective maintenance and security for its library and other learning support services.

Response to Standard II.C.1.d

The College has a major investment in its instructional support equipment and takes special care in that such assets are secure, well-maintained, and replaced when needed.

The library maintains a collection of some 19,000 books, videos and DVDs, as well as current journals and newspapers for reading and research. To protect the collection from theft, the entryway to the library has a security gate, and a student worker or College employee is on hand at the counter near the entryway during library hours.

The library provides storage and safekeeping space for most of the audio-visual equipment associated with learning support for the Blythe main campus. These include VCR/DVD/monitor carts, overhead projectors, and other kinds of equipment, which are stored in a secured area. The library also has numerous workstations with computers available to all students and other College personnel.

The Learning Skills Center has numerous workstations with computers available to all students and other College personnel. The workstations are located in an open area adjacent to classrooms and faculty offices. A counter area near the entryway to the computer workstations is staffed by student workers or College tutors during the hours the Learning Skills Center is open. The College also provides security personnel to the all College buildings after hours.

No student records are stored at the library. The library does retain records of student research requests; however, such requests are maintained in a secured area and are destroyed at the end of each semester.

The Learning Skills Center's database resides on the College's secure server, which is maintained by the College's Information Technology personnel.

All equipment on the campus, including equipment assigned to the library and Learning Skills Center, is maintained and serviced by the Information Technology department, some of whose staff is, coincidentally, housed in the library.

All College equipment is tagged and inventoried by the College Bookstore, and records are maintained in the Office of Administrative Services.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.C.1.d

The College has a significant investment in the equipment used to assist in instruction and is committed to keeping such equipment well-maintained and secure.

Action Plan: Standard II.C.1.d

The library and Learning Skills Center will continue their current practices in maintaining and securing instructional materials and equipment under their control.

Standard II.C.1.e

When the institution relies on or collaborates with other institutions or other sources for library and other learning support services for its instructional programs, it documents that formal agreements exist and that such resources and services are adequate for the institution's intended purposes, are easily accessible and utilized. The performance of these services is evaluated on a regular basis. The institution takes responsibility for and assures the reliability of all services provided either directly or through contractual arrangement.

Response to Standard II.C.1.e

All College contracts and agreements, including those involving the library and the Learning Skills Center, with external suppliers and vendors are documented and processed by the College's office of Administrative Services using purchase orders. The process requires that contracts or agreements be incorporated with the purchase order documents and maintained in the Administrative Services office. College departments, including the library and Learning Skills Center, may also maintain copies of such contracts and agreements.[285]

One of the contractual agreements in which the library participates is SIRCULS (San Bernardino Inyo Riverside Counties United Library Services), an interlibrary loan system consisting of other community colleges and public libraries in Riverside County. The system enables the College to more effectively meet student and faculty library requirements by facilitating the borrowing of books and materials from other libraries.

The library also contracts with the OCLC (Online Computer Library Center), a worldwide library cooperative, to provide cataloging services for its collection.

To enhance its collection, the library contracts with EBSCO to provide online research databases for College users.

The Librarian periodically reviews contractual agreements to ensure that the services provided are adequate for the College's intended purpose and are utilized.

[285] Library Documents; Learning Skills Center Documents

The Learning Skills Center subscribes, for student access, to a variety of online instructional programs for supplemental instruction. It purchases access to these services after faculty review and updates the products it offers at the request of faculty members. Other supplemental instructional material is purchased at the specific requests of faculty members. The Learning Skills Center strives to stay current in its offerings and to alert faculty members to new programs. Generally, no contractual arrangement is required for these subscriptions.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.C.1.e

All agreements and contracts, including those involving the library and Learning Skills Center, with external suppliers and vendors are documented and maintained in the office of Administrative Services.

Action Plan: Standard II.C.1.e

The College's library and Learning Skills Center will continue its practice of documenting, maintaining and periodically reviewing all contractual agreements.

Standard II.C.2

The institution evaluates library and other learning support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. Evaluation of these services provides evidence that they contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes. The institution uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.

Response to Standard II.C.2

The library and the Learning Skills Center conduct systematic assessments of their services. The assessments include program reviews, which are conducted by both operations every five years, and periodic surveys of users, including faculty and students.[286] Both the Librarian and Coordinator of the Learning Skills Center are full-time faculty members and, as such, participate in Academic Senate and other campus organizations and committees that bring them into discussions with other faculty, staff, students and administrators.

As for measuring and evaluating student learning outcomes, the Librarian conducts pre- and post-test assessments of learning resulting from information literacy workshops provided by library personnel for students in cooperation with faculty.[287] The Librarian also conducts periodic surveys of students and faculty that evaluate satisfaction with library services.[288]

Because many students are referred to the Learning Skills Center for tutoring assistance as a result of academic deficiencies, the Learning Skills Coordinator initially each semester ensures that adequate math and writing tutoring is available to meet student demand. Throughout the semester, the Coordinator identifies additional service requirements and strives to meet these needs promptly.

[286] Programs Review Reports (Library) (Learning Skills Center)
[287] Student Learning Outcomes: Assessment Tools and Results
[288] Library Documents

By evaluating student satisfaction with tutoring sessions, reviewing the impact of services on student academic performance, and by reviewing support services with faculty, the Learning Skills Center is able to provide evidence that the activities support student learning outcomes.[289]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard II.C.2

The library and Learning Skills Center effectively meet the needs of students and faculty by periodically reviewing the effectiveness of their respective services. The directors of both services conduct program reviews every five years, they are full-time faculty members who participate in Academic Senate and other faculty organizations, they have identified student learning outcomes, and they conduct periodic surveys among their clientele of the effectiveness of their services

Action Plan: Standard II.C.2

The Librarian and Learning Skills Center Coordinator will continue current practices in evaluating the effectiveness of their learning support services, will continue to measure and evaluate student learning outcomes, and will use the results of such evaluations to continuously improve services.

[289] Learning Skills Center Documents

Standard III
Resources

The institution effectively uses its human, physical, technology, and financial resources to achieve its broad educational services, including stated student learning outcomes, and to improve institutional effectiveness.

A. Human Resources

The institution employs qualified personnel to support student learning programs and services wherever offered and by whatever means delivered, and to improve institutional effectiveness. Personnel are treated equitably, are evaluated regularly and systematically, and are provided opportunities for professional development. Consistent with its mission, the institution demonstrates the commitment to the significant educational role played by persons of diverse backgrounds by making positive efforts to encourage such diversity. Human resource planning is integrated with institutional planning.

Response to Standard III.A: Human Resources

The College strives to hire faculty, staff and administrators who have superior qualifications and whose contributions will uphold the mission of the College, namely to provide "an exemplary learning environment with high quality educational programs and services."[290] As stated in its Statement of Values, furthermore, the College, "expects quality instruction and services, and applauds the achievement of its students, faculty and staff."[291]

Procedures governing the recruitment, hiring and evaluation of all personnel at the College are codified the CTA and CSEA association agreements with the College[292] and in policies established by the Board of Trustees,[293] and coordinated and facilitated by the Human Resources Department, under the direction of the Human Resources Manager and Vice President of Administrative Services.

Professional development opportunities are made available equitably through funding priorities of the Staff Development Committee, the CSEA Professional Growth Fund, as well as through the approved budgets of each of the College's divisions and departments.

Diversity is an important College value, as expressed in the Statement of Values: "Palo Verde College celebrates diversity in its students, in its faculty and staff, and in its community, as a quality that enriches and strengthens us all."[294] The College encourages diversity in its hiring policies and

[290] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values
[291] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values
[292] CTA-District Agreement, 2007-2010; CSEA-District Agreement 2005-08
[293] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 7262
[294] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values

procedures, such as in its Equal Employment Opportunity plan, which is currently under development. The College also encourages diversity in its various programs and services, such as courses and special events that teach about and celebrate diversity.

Human resources planning is incorporated into the College's Strategic Plan and is addressed in the form of priorities and values at various places in the Plan.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A Human Resources

The College, through its human resources department, seeks highly-qualified personnel to staff its positions and support its mission and purpose, adheres to established policies, offers staff development opportunities, encourages diversity, and incorporates human resources values and objectives into the Strategic Plan.

Action Plan: Standard III.A Human Resources

The College will continue on its present course in human resources management.

Standard III.A.1

The institution assures the integrity and quality of its programs and services by employing personnel who are qualified by appropriate education, training, and experience to provide and support these programs and services.

Response to Standard III.A.1

The College follows established procedures in recruiting and selecting personnel with superior credentials to carry out job duties required by the college. Each position, whether faculty, classified or administration, whether part-time or full-time, has a job description identifying some, or all, of following job features: nature of the assignment; examples of duties and responsibilities; minimum qualifications; preferred qualifications; special requirements; and salary range.[295]

The recruitment for applicants is handled in various ways, depending on the position. For faculty and administrative positions, notices are placed in the California Community College Registry, edjob.org, higheredjob.com, the various list serves of the ACHRO, and others.

Once a sufficient number of applications is received, as determined by the College's Equal Employment Opportunity Officer (who is also the Vice President of Administrative Services), a screening panel is assembled. The composition of the screening panel is consistent with current Board policy or the applicable collective bargaining agreement. Following the guidelines and qualifications specified in the job description, the panel screens applications and identifies those candidates demonstrating the best qualifications appropriate for the position.

Only candidates who meet, or exceed, the stated minimum qualifications required for the position are selected for interview.

[295] Human Resources Documents

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A.1

The College seeks only the most qualified individuals to staff its various functions. It accomplishes this by establishing clearly-stated minimum qualifications in all job descriptions, forming a screening and hiring panel whose composition is consistent with Board policy or with the applicable collective bargaining agreement, and by charging the panel with the responsibility to choose for interview only those candidates that meet or exceed the minimum qualifications established for the position.

Action Plan: Standard III.A.1

The College will continue with its current practice of recruiting and selecting only the most qualified applicants among those applicants that meet or exceed the stated minimum qualifications for the position.

Standard III.A.1.a

Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are clearly and publicly stated. Job descriptions are directly related to institutional mission and goals and accurately reflect position duties, responsibilities, and authority. Criteria for selection of faculty include knowledge of the subject matter or service to be performed (as determined by individuals with discipline expertise), effective teaching, scholarly, and potential to contribute to the mission of the institution. Institutional faculty play a significant role in selection of new faculty. Degrees held by faculty and administrators are from institutions accredited by recognized U.S. accrediting agencies. Degrees from non-U.S. institutions are recognized only if equivalence has been established.

Response to Standard III.A.1.a

Prior to beginning recruitment to fill a position, the job description for the position is reviewed by various campus organizations, where appropriate, to ensure it closely matches current and anticipated program needs. Faculty positions, for example, are reviewed by the academic division to which the candidate will be assigned as well as by the CTA, Academic Senate and College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee. Classified job descriptions are reviewed by the department to which the candidate will be assigned, as well as by the CSEA and College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

Once reviewed and approved by the appropriate constituencies, the job announcement and description are posted on the College website and advertised in various external publications, such as newspapers and professional journals.

The screening and hiring process, similarly, is conducted by a selection committee consisting of representatives from the hiring division or department, and representative from other College constituencies, including faculty, classified staff, administrators and students.

The selection of faculty is conducted by a selection committee of representatives of the College constituencies, including at least two faculty members, at least one of which represents the academic field or discipline for which the candidate is being considered. The selection committee

conducts screening of applications, selects candidates for interview, prepares interview questions, and conducts the interview. To help assess teaching effectiveness, the interview process includes having the candidate conduct a demonstration class. In some cases more than one interview may be required. The panel recommends the best candidate to the Superintendent/President, who also interviews the candidate.

Candidates seeking positions requiring specified levels of education and training must submit along with their application copies of transcripts proving they possess the required training and education. Candidates who accept offers of employment at the College must provide the College with official transcripts prior to beginning employment.

Candidates from non-U.S. institutions must provide proof of equivalency from a transcript evaluation agency acceptable to the College.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A.1.a

The College follows a systematic and effective process in recruiting and selecting applicants qualified to perform the jobs, whether faculty, staff or administrative, that support the College's mission and purpose.

Action Plan: Standard III.A.1.a

The College will continue it current practices in recruitment and selection of qualified candidates.

Standard III.A.1.b

The institution assures the effectiveness of its human resources by evaluating all personnel systematically and at stated intervals. The institution establishes written criteria for evaluating all personnel, including performance of assigned duties and participation in institutional responsibilities and other activities appropriate to their expertise. Evaluation processes seek to assess effectiveness of personnel and encourage improvement. Actions taken following evaluations are formal, timely, and documented.

Response to Standard III.A.1.b

The College has a systematic evaluation procedure for all personnel. The evaluation process for faculty members follows the Evaluation Procedure established through collective bargaining and is contained in the CTA-District Agreement, 2007-2010.[296] The faculty evaluation procedure is conducted by a peer evaluation committee consisting of two faculty members, as well as by the appropriate vice-president, that is, instructional services or student support services. The evaluation process includes a classroom observation and report by the peer faculty (or a peer observation in the case of non-teaching faculty members), the writing of the Professional Development Self-Disclosure Statement by the faculty member, evaluations by students, and an overall evaluation by the appropriate vice president. Remediation is provided for in the evaluation procedure, when needed.

[296] CTA-District Agreement, 2007-10

The evaluation procedure for classified staff is part of the CSEA-District Agreement, 2005-2008.[297]

Performance evaluation procedures for administrators and managers are incorporated into Board policy.[298]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A.1.b

Performance evaluations of all College employees are handled in a fair and systematic manner, facilitated by the Human Resources Manager. The objective of performance evaluations is to identify strengths and weaknesses and thereby help improve employee performance.

Action Plan: Standard III.A.1.b

The College will continue in its current practice in employee evaluations.

Standard III.A.1.c

Faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated learning outcomes have, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes.

Response to Standard III.A.1.c

The evaluation of faculty members' skill at achieving student learning outcomes is accomplished in at least three ways: through the formal peer and administrative evaluation process; through the process of faculty self-evaluation in achieving learning outcomes at the course, program/certificate and degree levels; and through program review.

As for the peer and administrative evaluation process, here are examples of peer evaluators' questions that address the instructor's skills at facilitating student progress in achieving learning outcomes: [299]

1. "Assists students in identifying solutions to problems or issues and takes appropriate action." (Peer Evaluation Report for Non-Teaching Faculty, Question #5)

2. "Provides relevant assistance to students in the pursuit of their academic or vocational goals." (Peer Evaluation Report for Non-Teaching Faculty, Question #7)

3. "Defines objectives for the class presentation." (Peer [Classroom] Observation Report, Question #1)

4. "Communicates ideas clearly and effectively." (Peer [Classroom] Observation Report, Question #4)

[297] CSEA-District Agreement, 2005-08
[298] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 7262, AP 7250-2 and 7262
[299] CTA-District Agreement, 2007-10

5. "Responds appropriately to students' questions and comments." (Peer [Classroom] Observation Report, Question #7)

Additionally, faculty members perform their own assessments of student learning through a systematic review of student learning outcomes using measures they themselves developed. To date, the faculty has identified learning outcomes at the course and degree levels and has begun implementing measures of those outcomes. The faculty is committed to assisting student learning, as is evidenced by several Academic Senate resolutions and learning assessments performed by particular academic divisions.[300] Examples of progress in the area of degree-level outcomes is evidenced by the work done by the Business division, Language Arts and Communications division, and the History, Social and Behavioral Sciences division. These examples are more fully described in the response to Standard II.A.1.c, page 69.

Program review, similarly, asks faculty, and others directly responsible for student progress in achieving learning, to evaluate their programs by, among other criteria, the extent to which they achieve student learning outcomes.[301]

For non-instructional programs, which include student support services such as counseling, library, and Learning Skills Center, respondents must address three questions dealing with the extent to which their programs help achieve student learning:

1. "Describe specific, documented accomplishments that support and facilitate the achievement and assessment of student learning outcomes, including measures employed to evaluate program effectiveness in achieving such outcomes."

2. "Outline new goals including an explanation how the program supports the achievement of student learning outcomes, and state timelines for completion, measures for evaluating achievement of such goals, and a process for implementing improvements."

3. "Describe specific professional development activities in which program members participate, and explain how such activities benefit or enhance the program and support and facilitate student learning outcomes."

For instructional programs, faculty must address, among other items, these two questions dealing with achievement of student learning outcomes:

1. "Describe the process by which the program identifies measures and evaluates student learning outcomes at the course, program and degree levels, and provide evidence that this process is being followed."

2. "Describe the process by which program improvements are made, and provide evidence that this process is being followed."

[300] Academic Senate Resolutions, "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes" 06-07-03, March 27, 2007
[301] Program Review Reports

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A.1.c

The College is mindful of the need to keep focused on helping students achieve student learning outcomes. It recognizes the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of teaching faculty and others responsible for student progress in achieving learning outcomes. The College supports three principal means to evaluate faculty effectiveness in achieving student learning: formal peer and administrative evaluations; faculty self-evaluation in achieving learning outcomes at the course, program/certificate and degree levels; and program review.

Action Plan: Standard III.A.1.c

The College will continue the present systems of formal evaluations and program review, and will continue to make progress in evaluating student learning at the course, program/certificate and degree levels in accordance with timelines established by the faculty and College.

Standard III.A.1.d

The institution upholds a written code of professional ethics for all of its personnel.

Response to Standard III.A.1.d

Among the College's Values, found in the preamble to the Strategic Plan, is the value of integrity and ethics: **"**Palo Verde College maintains the highest standards of ethics and integrity. The College consistently demands respect, honesty and fairness in its educational programs, professional interactions and community relations."[302] This statement, part of the Strategic Plan since it was adopted in 2002, serves as an ongoing reminder that the College expects the highest ethical performance of its employees.

The Board of Trustees adopted a Code of Ethics/Standards of Practices that applies to Board members.[303]

The College, through the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, moreover, is in the process of developing a more inclusive institutional code of ethics for all personnel as well as well as for the Board of Trustees.[304] This work is part of a larger, ongoing project of updating all policies and procedures consistent with recommendations of the Community College League of California, applicable rules of Title V, the California Education Code, accreditation standards, other federal and state regulations, as well as best practices of the California Community College system.[305]

[302] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values
[303] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2715
[304] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 3050 Draft
[305] Timeline for Completion of Updates and Revisions of Board of Trustees' Policies

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A.1.d

The College, through its statement of Values, demonstrates a clear commitment to integrity and ethics; the statement is publicized in the Catalog, website and Staff Handbook. Additionally, the College is developing an institutional code of ethics, applicable to all employees and the Board of Trustees, as part of a larger revision and update of College policies.

Action Plan: Standard III.A.1.d

The College will complete work on the institutional code of ethics, obtain approval by the Board of Trustees, and implement the code.

Standard III.A.2

The institution maintains a sufficient number of qualified faculty with full-time responsibility to the institution. The institution has a sufficient number of staff and administrators with appropriate preparation and experience to provide the administrative services necessary to support the institution's mission and purposes.

Response to Standard III.A.2

The College continuously evaluates staffing needs for faculty, classified personnel and administration to ensure there is a sufficient number of full-time personnel to support its mission and purposes. There are several processes by which the College assesses its personnel requirements. These processes are program review, specialized institutional research studies, discussions at the department and division levels, discussions in faculty and classified staff associations, and discussions and actions of the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

Program review is conducted every five years by all divisions and departments, instructional and non-instructional. The report affords the opportunity for program employees to summarize staffing adequacy and to justify requests for additional personnel or reclassification of existing personnel, when needed:

1. "Are current management and staff adequate to perform functions and responsibilities satisfactorily and to achieve program goals?" (Program Review Template for Non-Instructional Programs and Operations)

2. "Describe how effectively courses in the program are covered by: 1) Full-time faculty; 2) Part-time (adjunct) faculty." (Program Review Template for Instructional Programs)

Institutional research is also conducted in some cases where assessment is needed to clarify the need for new or reclassified positions.

Departments, divisions and employee association members meet regularly to discuss various issues, including staffing requirements. When requests for new or reclassified positions emerge, they are relayed to the appropriate vice-president—administrative services, student services or instructional services—for consideration. Position requests may be considered in the light of program review

and institutional research reports, if applicable. If it is the decision of the vice-president to recommend a new or reclassified position, that recommendation is brought forward to the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee for consideration.

The College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee consists of representatives of all College constituents—faculty, classified staff and administration. It is the key decision-making body of the College, and all recommendations regarding new and reclassified positions are considered by this committee. When the College/Council Strategic Planning Steering Committee recommends a new or reclassified position, that recommendation is brought to the Board of Trustees for approval. Board actions creating new or reclassified positions are sent to the Human Resources Manager for implementation.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A.2

The College has several systems in place that provide ongoing assessment of personnel staffing needs: program review, institutional research, discussions among divisions, departments and employee associations, and discussion and action by the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee. While these systems are highly effective in their own right, the College needs to develop broader policies governing the systematic review of workloads for all positions. The policy would help ensure that workload assessment is being conducted regularly in accordance with evolving College needs.

Action Plan: Standard III.A.2

The College will continue its current practices in assessing staffing needs, while developing policies that help govern assessment on a regular basis.

Standard III.A.3

The institution systematically develops personnel policies and procedures that are available for information and review. Such policies and procedures are equitably and consistently administered.

Response to Standard III.A.3

College personnel policies are administered equitably and consistently by the Human Resources Manager. As a member of the College's Administrative Council, the Human Resources Manager is independent from faculty and classified staff and is accountable directly to the Vice President of Administrative Services in the performance of her duties.

As for the development and review of personnel policies, there are various places in which personnel policies are available for information and review. These are: Staff Handbook, CTA-District Agreement, 2007-10, CSEA-Agreement, 2005-08 and College policies governing human resources administration.[306]

[306] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures

Current policies of the Board of Trustees are available for review in the College library.
The Staff Handbook is available to all employees in paper form and on the College website. The Handbook provides extensive policy information on various subjects, including general practices, collegial governance, sexual harassment, discrimination, staff development and safety.[307]

The CTA and CSEA agreements are included in the Staff Handbook and are posted on the College website. These contracts provide policy and procedural information on various topics pertaining to working conditions for these two groups of employees.

The College adheres to established policies governing human resources practices. Current policies are available for review in the College library. The College, moreover, is in the process of revising and updating all policies, including those governing human resources, to ensure consistency with standards recommended by the Community College League of California, applicable rules of Title V, the California Education Code, accreditation standards, other federal and state regulations, as well as best practices of the California Community College system.[308]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A.3

The College, through its human resources and other departments, makes available to employees for information and review policies and procedures governing human resources administration. Human resources policies are administered by the Human Resources Manager under the direction of the Vice-President of Administration.

Action Plan: Standard III.A.3

The College will continue its current practices in administering human resources policies equitably and consistently and in making such policies available to employees.

Standard III.A.3.a

The institution establishes and adheres to written policies ensuring fairness in all employment procedures.

Response to Standard III.A.3.a

The College has written policies that govern human resources administration. The policies ensure against unfairness in all employment procedures, including recruitment and selection, discrimination, sexual harassment, release of confidential information, performance evaluation and other areas.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A.3.a

The College seeks to be fair in all human relations procedures, as is evidenced by the availability of written procedures governing all aspects of human resources—recruitment and selection,

[307] Staff Handbook
[308] Timeline for Completion of Updates and Revisions of Board of Trustees' Policies

discrimination, sexual harassment, release of confidential information, performance evaluation and other areas. All current policies are available for review in the College library. Certain policies, such as those pertaining to discrimination and sexual harassment are published in the Staff Handbook and in other College publications.

The College, moreover, is in the process of revising and updating all policies, including those governing human resources, to ensure consistency with standards recommended by the Community College League of California, applicable rules of Title V, the California Education Code, accreditation standards, other federal and state regulations, as well as best practices of the California Community College system.

Action Plan: Standard III.A.3.a

The College will complete its review and update of all College policies, including policies governing human resources administration by the end of the current academic year.

Standard III.A.3.b

The institution makes provision for the security and confidentiality of personnel records. Each employee has access to his/her personnel records in accordance with law.

Response to Standard III.A.3.b

Personnel records for all College employees are maintained in a secure file under the control of the Human Resources Manager, Vice-President of Administrative Services and the Superintendent/President. Personnel records are considered confidential and are governed by the provision of Board Policy 4080, Release of Confidential Information, which states:

"The Superintendent/President or designee may release classification, salary, employment date and/or employment status of employees upon their request. All requests for confidential information such as home address, telephone number or information contained in personnel, medical or similar files shall not be release without the express written authorization of the employee involved. Written authorization shall be submitted to the Superintendent/President's office. The Superintendent/President's office shall administer the release of all confidential employee information."

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A.3.b

The College is respectful of the confidentiality of all employees' personnel and other information and has established policies governing the release of such information, in accordance with applicable federal and state laws, the California Education Code and best practices of the California Community College system.

Action Plan: Standard III.A.3.b

The College will continue its current practices in maintaining the security and confidentiality of employee personnel and other information.

Standard III.A.4

The institution demonstrates through policies and practices an appropriate understanding of and concern for issues of equity and diversity.

Response to Standard III.A.4

That the College is supportive of programs and services that enhance students' understanding and appreciation of diversity is evident in its Statement of Vision: "Palo Verde College celebrates diversity in its students, in its faculty and staff, and in its community, as a quality that enriches and strengthens us all."

The College lives up to this commitment in various ways. The Faculty and Staff Diversity Committee, an ad hoc committee comprising faculty, staff, administrators and students, is charged with planning and sponsoring the annual Multicultural Festival on campus and for advising College personnel of opportunities, such as conferences and training, in the area of multicultural instruction and programs. The Multicultural Festival is a daylong tribute to diversity—within the College, in the local communities and throughout the world. Past events have featured ethnic-centered dance, food, booths and special presentations on various cultures, such as those of Thailand, Scotland, Germany, the Aztecs, Japan, and migrant families of the American Southwest.

The College's support of diversity is further evidenced in its support during the year of various programs and events:

1. Cinco de Mayo—Sponsored annually by the EOPS and ASB

2. Women's Conference—Sponsored annually by faculty, staff and administrators

3. Black History Month—Sponsored annually by EOPS and ASB

The College also supports the principles of diversity in its hiring practices and policies. Such support is evident in the formation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory committee and the drafting of an EEO plan, which is currently in process. Job descriptions for each position list among the minimum qualification that candidates demonstrate "sensitivity to and understanding of the diverse academic, socioeconomic, cultural, disability, and ethnic backgrounds of community college students."

As part of the current revision and upgrade of policies, the Board of Trustees will be considering for adoption a Commitment to Diversity policy during 2007-08.[309]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A.4

The College recognizes diversity among its personnel, celebrates diversity in various annual programs, and supports diversity in its hiring practices and policies.

[309] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 7100 Draft

Action Plan: Standard III.A.4

The College will continue its current practices in demonstrating through policies and practices an appropriate understanding of and concern for issues of equity and diversity.

Standard III.A.4.a

The institution creates and maintains appropriate programs, practices, and services that support its diverse personnel.

Response to Standard III.A.4.a

As stated in the response to Standard III.A.4 above, the College recognizes the diversity of its personnel, as well as students, and promotes recognition of diversity through its programs and services. The College sponsors campus-wide, annual activities such as the Multicultural Festival, Cinco de Mayo, Women's Conference, and Black History Month. In each of these activities faculty, staff and administrators are directly involved, along with students, in planning and implementation.

The College recognizes, furthermore, the contributions its diverse personnel make to the success of the school and encourages collegial governance in its various committees and organizations. Committees and organizations whose membership is drawn from various constituencies—faculty, staff, administration, students—are referred to as "mutual agreement" committees. There are eight mutual agreement committees: Budget, College Council/Strategic Planning Steering, Distance Education, Facilities, Matriculation, Program Review, Staff Development, and Technology. These committees actively solicit the participation and views of its membership in the effective governance of the College.

Apart from celebrations of diversity and the organizations that encourage collegial governance, the College encourages personnel to take advantage of opportunities for educational advancement. The CSEA, for example, negotiated a College-paid professional development fund enabling classified personnel to pursue courses, certificates and degrees at the College or at other institutions. The College also administers a state-funded staff development fund for all College personnel. The fund is administered by the Staff Development Committee.

The College website includes an informational page on health and wellness issues that addresses the diverse lifestyles of the College's personnel; the page, which is provided and maintained by the College's health benefits insurance broker, Keenan and Associates, contains articles on health as well as links to various publications on health matters.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A.4.a

The College recognizes the importance and value of its faculty, staff and administration, and actively supports their diversity in various ways: celebrations, such as the Multicultural Festival; inclusion on various collegial governance committees and organizations; funding for staff development opportunities; and a website devoted to diverse health issues of interest to the College's personnel.

Action Plan: Standard III.A.4.a

The College will continue in its present course in supporting and maintaining programs, practices, and services that support its diverse personnel.

Standard III.A.4.b

The institution regularly assesses its record in employment equity and diversity consistent with its mission.

Response to Standard III.A.4.b

The College is committed to the terms of its Statement of Mission, Vision and Values, namely, that the College "celebrates diversity in its students, in its faculty and staff, and in its community, as a quality that enriches and strengthens us all."[310] The College uses advertising media, including electronic media, to ensure that qualified applicants from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities are reached and given the opportunity to apply. The list of potential interviewees is reviewed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer (also the Vice President of Administrative Services) and certified to ensure that a diverse pool of applicants has been assembled prior to beginning the screening process. If the list does not reflect a diverse pool, the position is re-advertised.

The College uses interview panels representative of campus constituencies to screen applicants and to interview all qualified candidates. The Equal Employment Opportunity Officer reviews and certifies the interview questions. Each candidate is asked the same questions by the hiring panel, which makes recommendations for hiring.

In Fall Semester 2004 the College was recognized by the California Community College Chancellor's Office as one of the California community colleges which had done the most to diversify its faculty during the past decade.

Here is the composition of the faculty, staff and administration by ethnicity, comparing Fall Semester 2002 and Fall Semester 2006.[311] This information is compared to the ethnicity composition of the College's student headcount as of Fall Semester 2006. Note that the sizable number of "Declined to state" among the student headcount makes the comparison with faculty, staff and administration somewhat inconclusive.

	Faculty, Staff, Administration					Student Headcount	
	Fall 2002	**%**		**Fall 2006**	**%**	**Fall 2006**	**%**
Asian	5	2.7%		7	3.4%	137	3.5%
Black	9	4.8%		7	3.4%	357	9.0%
Filipino		0.0%		1	0.5%	54	1.4%
Hispanic	50	26.7%		54	26.5%	1,094	27.6%
Pacific Islander		0.0%			0.0%	30	0.8%
Native American	3	1.6%		3	1.5%	76	1.9%
White	120	64.2%		132	64.7%	2,214	55.9%
TOTAL	187	100.0%		204	100.0%	3,962	100.0%
Declined to state						332	

[310] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values
[311] Data Mart, California Community College Chancellor's Office

The College regularly reviews its hiring practices and procedures to ensure fairness and to create a diverse, qualified work force.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A.4.b

The College regularly assesses its record in employment equity and diversity by reviewing applicant pools prior to interviewing, by selecting screening panels representative of College constituencies, and by periodically reviewing hiring trends, including trends in the hiring of personnel from under-represented groups.

Action Plan: Standard III.A.4.b

The College will continue to assess regularly its record in employment equity and diversity consistent with its mission.

Standard III.A.4.c

The institution subscribes to, advocates, and demonstrates integrity in the treatment of its administration, faculty, staff and students.

Response to Standard III.A.4.c

The College is committed to maintaining integrity in the treatment of its administration, faculty, staff and students. Two key areas are in discrimination and sexual harassment.[312] Policy established by the Board of Trustees explicitly prohibits harassment on the basis of sex and discrimination or harassment as to race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, or physical or mental disability. Policy established by the Board of Trustees, furthermore, provides for both informal and formal procedures for registering and resolving complaints on these matters.

Board of Trustees' policies regarding harassment and discrimination, including procedures for registering and resolving complaints for employees and students, are published in various College publications, including the Staff Handbook, Student Handbook, and the Catalog.[313]

Rights to privacy for students and employees are protected by the provisions of FERPA and Board Policy 4080, Release of Confidential Information.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A.4.c

The College strives to demonstrate integrity in the treatment of its administration, faculty, staff and students. It has clearly written and published policies dealing with discrimination, harassment, and

[312] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 4010 (Discrimination) and BP 4011 (Sexual Harassment)
[313] Staff Handbook; Student Handbook/Financial Aid Handbook, 2007-08; College Catalog, 2007-08;

rights to privacy. The policies include descriptions of the process registering and resolving complaints in these areas.

Action Plan: Standard III.A.4.c

The College will continue its commitment to the fair treatment of all employees and students.

Standard III.A.5

The institution provides all personnel with appropriate opportunities for continued professional development, consistent with the institutional mission and based on identified teaching and learning needs.

Response to Standard III.A.5

One of the College's values, that it "facilitates lifelong learning and encourages scholastic achievement"[314] applies not only to its students, but to its personnel as well. Faculty and staff have various avenues available to them to further their careers through professional development opportunities:

CSEA professional growth: The CSEA negotiated a District-paid professional development fund enabling classified personnel to pursue courses, certificates and degrees at the College or at other educational institutions. The program is administered by the Professional Growth Committee, a committee internal to the CSEA. Successful applicants receive approval in the form either of financial assistance or release time.[315]

Staff Development Committee: The College also administers a state-funded staff development fund for all College personnel. The fund is administered by the Staff Development Committee, which has established specific goals for the fund in addition to those set forth in the Board of Trustees' policy on staff development. As stated in Board of Trustees' policy, "Staff development monies will be used to enhance the College's mission, goals and objectives. Specific attention will be given to, but not limited to, the following goals:[316]

1. Attain instructional excellence.
2. Improve the delivery of student and employee services.
3. Respond accurately to the needs resulting from changing student populations.
4. Advance faculty and staff affirmative action.
5. Integrate faculty and staff development planning with District planning.

[314] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values
[315] CSEA-District Agreement, 2005-08
[316] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, Human Resources Development Plan BP 4090

6. Coordinate with curriculum development, flex days, shared governance and other AB 1725-generated activities.

The Staff Development Committee, furthermore, established additional goals for the fund. These goals are:[317]

1. Faculty and staff make improvements in the areas of greatest concern as indicated in the most recent Student Satisfaction Survey.

2. Educate and implement practices of retention and recruitment for staff and faculty.

3. Promote staff and faculty collaboration with colleagues performing similar responsibilities at other California Community Colleges to enhance job performance.

Division-funded professional development opportunities are also available to personnel through the funding priorities established by the divisions of which they are a member. Division and department budgets are prepared in the Spring Semester and considered for approval by the Budget Committee for implementation the following academic year.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A.5

The College provides several avenues for personnel to pursue employment advancement through professional development opportunities: CSEA professional growth for CSEA members; staff development opportunities for all College personnel; and division-funded professional development opportunities.

Action Plan: Standard III.A.1.5

The College will continue its current practices in providing professional development opportunities to its employees.

Standard III.A.5.a

The institution plans professional development activities to meet the needs of its personnel.

Response to Standard III.A.5.a

As stated in the response to Standard III.A.5, the College provides several avenues for personnel to pursue advancement through professional development. These avenues are CSEA-funded professional growth; staff development fund; and division- and department-funded opportunities. The planning and prioritization for funding such programs varies with the program. The CSEA Professional Growth Fund is intended exclusively for classified personnel seeking to enhance opportunities for employment growth. The Staff Development Committee adheres to the priorities established by Board of Trustees' policy, as well as additional priorities established by the Committee itself.

[317] Professional Development Committee, Minutes, April 18, 2007

Each division, in preparing its annual budget, also provides for professional development opportunities for its members along with division funding requests. The Budget Committee reviews such requests for appropriateness in funding amount, as well as consistency with the overall objectives of the College Vision, Mission and Values statement.[318]

The College sponsors Flex days and Institute days throughout the academic year as in-service training to meet the needs of all personnel. Flex days cover subjects pertaining to effective teaching and processes to enhance student learning and success. Institute days are College-wide meetings devoted to discussions about topics affecting the College as an institution of higher learning. Institute days have presented topics such as Strategic Plan update, discussion of the Noel-Levitz student survey results, and getting prepared for accreditation.

The College holds monthly Faculty-Staff meetings, which cover various topics of interest to all College personnel including, but not limited to changes in health insurance coverage, sexual harassment training, and CPR-First Aid.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A.5.a

The College does an effective job in planning, prioritizing and implementing professional development opportunities for its personnel through various avenues: CSEA professional growth; Staff Development Committee; divisional and department budgets; and Flex and Institute days.

Action Plan: Standard III.A.5.a

The College will continue with its current practices in professional development planning.

Standard III.A.5.b

With the assistance of the participants, the institution systematically evaluates professional development programs and uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.

Response to Standard III.A.5.b

The professional development programs discussed in the responses to the preceding three Standards are continuously evaluated for their effectiveness in assisting employees who seek professional advancement. The Staff Development Committee, for example, reviews the program to ensure that it remains consistent with the policies and intent of AB 1725. The CSEA Professional Growth Committee also reviews its funding procedures to ensure they are consistent with the intent of the program and to ensure that funds are used judiciously. The Flex day Committee, similarly, assesses the effectiveness of its programs to ensure they are beneficial to the participants as well as consistent with the objectives established for Flex days by the California Community College Chancellor's Office.

[318] Budget Procedure

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A.5.b

The College, through its programs, committees, and divisions, reviews its professional development programs to ensure such programs are effective for the participants, live up to the College's value of lifelong learning, and are consistent with the policies and intent for which such programs were established.

Action Plan: Standard III.A.5.b

The College will continue its practices in evaluating the effectiveness of its professional development programs.

Standard III.A.6

Human resource planning is integrated with institutional planning. The institution systematically assesses the effective use of human resources and uses the results of the evaluation as the basis for improvement.

Response to Standard III.A.6

Human resources planning is incorporated into the College's Strategic Plan and is addressed in various areas within the Plan:[319]

The objectives of Initiative 4 (Organizational Effectiveness), for example, relevant to human resources, are as follows:

1. "Provide new employees orientation that includes: a mentor, general orientation, specialized orientation by function, and follow-up orientation." (Objective 2)

2. "Adjunct faculty will be encouraged to attend a division meeting and orientation at least once per semester. Add adjunct faculty to the general and faculty email distribution lists." (Objective 4)

The statement of Values, similarly, contains several statements relevant to human resources priorities and values. These statements are:

1. "The College expects quality instruction and services, and applauds the achievement of its students, faculty and staff."

2. "Palo Verde College maintains the highest standards of ethics and integrity. The College consistently demands respect, honesty and fairness in its educational programs, professional interactions and community relations."

3. "Palo Verde College celebrates diversity in its students, in its faculty and staff, and in its community, as a quality that enriches and strengthens us all."

[319] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values

The College, through its various divisions and departments, through the program review process, and through the research and analysis conducted by the College/Council Strategic Planning Steering Committee, continuously reviews staffing requirements in all areas of College operations. The College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee produces an organizational chart annually and evaluates the utilization of personnel to effectively achieve the College's mission and goals.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.A.6

The College, through its Human Resources function, plans for the efficient utilization of personnel consistent with overall strategic planning and consistent with the College's mission. Human resources relies upon analysis performed by divisions and departments to justify new and reclassified positions, as well as the re-organization of existing positions. It looks to the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee for ratification of organizational changes that affect personnel.

Action Plan: Standard III.A.1.6

The College will continue its current practices in integrating human resources planning with overall College planning for the effective utilization of its personnel

Standard III.B: Physical Resources

Physical resources, which include facilities, equipment, land, and other assets, support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness. Physical resource planning is integrated with institutional planning.

Response to Standard III.B

The College recognizes that having a safe, clean, quiet and well-cared for campus is essential to achieving its mission, namely, to create "an exemplary learning environment with high quality educational programs and services."[320] In this regard the College's physical resources are of paramount importance. The College's commitment to providing an exemplary learning environment is evident in the maintenance of existing building and grounds, in the existence of organizations and committees such as the Security Task Force and the Facilities Committee,[321] and in the significant new building projects currently underway.

Responsibility for maintaining the College's building and grounds to support a quality learning environment rests with the Facilities and Operations department, a division of the Office of Administrative Services.

The Facilities and Operations department, under the supervision of the Facilities and Operations Director, has three essential functions:

[320] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values
[321] Both the Security Task Force and the Facilities Committee are composed of all College constituent groups. See the List of College Committees and Organizations, 2007-08

1. Maintain existing grounds and structures within the College district, including the Blythe main campus, Spring Street, the Child Development Center, and the Needles Center.

2. Oversee the operations of the campuses, including maintenance, repair and replacement of machinery and equipment.

3. Provide custodial services and oversee security.

4. Set up and take down equipment and materiel for special campus events, such as graduation, Board of Trustees' meetings, conferences, and other activities.

The College's concern for safety is also evident in the Security Task Force, an ad hoc committee consisting of all key campus constituencies.[322] The Security Task Force reviews safety concerns and complaints from College personnel and relays such information to the Facilities and Operations department for action.

Apart from normal Facilities and Operations activity, the College is in the midst of several major building projects. The Blythe main campus opened at its present mesa site in 2001, having relocated from downtown Blythe. The original campus in 2001 consisted of two buildings, the Classroom-Lab, or "CL" building and the Classroom-Services, or "CS" building. The third building at the present site is the Technology Building, which opened in 2007. Two other buildings, Physical Education and Performing and Cultural Arts, are expected to open in 2008 and 2009, respectively. The Needles Center will relocate from its current home at Needles High School to a renovated facility, the Claypool Building, in the summer of 2008.

Physical resource planning is integrated with College planning in several ways: the Facilities and Operations Director is part of the Administrative Council and regularly discusses issues pertaining to buildings and grounds and safety with other managers and administrators; the department conducts program review, enabling broad campus discussion of its project planning; the Facilities and Operations Director, in discussion with other managers and in relation to other College plans, updates annually the Deferred Maintenance Plan which is a five-year forecast of maintenance and repair projects.

Planning is underway by the Vice President of Instructional Services to expand existing academic programs and develop new programs in anticipation of the opening of the new facilities. The College looks to the expertise of many of its own faculty and staff to provide guidance in program development and construction features.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.B

The College takes great care to ensure that its physical facilities and equipment are well-maintained, that organizations and committees such as the Security Task Force and Facilities Committee are in place to permit College personnel to make known their concerns, that new facilities are being

[322] List of College Committees and Organizations, 2007-08

constructed to expand upon and improve academic programs, and that academic program planning is underway for the new facilities. The College also recognizes the importance of careful and thorough planning and utilizes the expertise of its faculty and staff in helping guide program and facilities development.

Action Plan: Standard III.B

The College will continue its current practices in the areas of maintaining existing buildings, grounds, and equipment, encouraging personnel recommendations on safety and maintenance issues, constructing new facilities and planning academic programs and support services for the new facilities.

Standard III.B.1

The institution provides safe and sufficient physical resources that support and assure the integrity and quality of its programs and services, regardless of location or means of delivery.

Response to Standard III.B.1

The College assures the safety and sufficiency of its physical resources that support its programs and services, regardless of location or means of delivery, as follows:

Blythe main campus: The Facilities and Operations department has a staff of seven full-time groundskeepers and maintenance personnel whose charge is to maintain a safe, clean and well-maintained campus environment supporting the quality and integrity of instructional activity at the Blythe main campus. Security during evening and weekends is provided by a private security company under contract with the College. To improve security the College is currently installing "blue light" safety phones and other security devices in the main campus parking lots.

Spring Street campus: The Facilities and Operations department provides cleaning, maintenance, lighting, signage and other services that support the instructional programs at the Spring Street campus. Security is provided by existing staff and a part-time employee. The College is currently installing better lighting facilities in the parking lot.

Needles Center: The Needles Center conducts instructional programs in three, modular buildings located at the Needles High School. A part-time employee and staff are assigned to provide maintenance and security services. The Needles Center will relocate from its current home at Needles High School to a renovated facility, the Claypool Building, in the summer of 2008.

Child Development Center: The maintenance and security of the Child Development Center is handled by staff and Facilities and Maintenance employees. The children's playground was recently upgraded to improve safety by building a sponge underlayment to the play area surface.

Specialized instructional services conducted: The College conducts a number of instructional programs in police, fire and hazardous materials handling in areas outside the district. The College's programs are operated with the approval of the community college districts served by these areas. Such programs are conducted under agreements requiring compliance with all regulations governing educational programs established by the California Government Code Title 5, California

Education Code, and the College.[323] The College's Occupational Education Manager personally inspects each facility at least once annually.

Distance education—correspondence: The majority of distance education courses are offered in a correspondence mode in which class materials are delivered between students and faculty members via daily courier (to and from incarcerated students) or through the facilities of the Learning Skills Center (for "community" students, i.e., students enrolled in distance sections who are not incarcerated).

Distance education—online: A small number course sections are offered online. This mode of course delivery is still in its early stage of development. The faculty members who teach these courses work cooperatively with the Information Technology department in managing the required equipment and software.

Interactive television courses: A handful of course sections are offered via interactive television between the Blythe main campus and the Needles Center. The facilities for interactive television program delivery consist of classrooms at both the Blythe main campus and the Needles Center and are managed by the Information Technology department.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.B.1

The College understands the importance of maintaining a safe, clean and well-maintained campus at all its locations supporting the quality and integrity of its instructional programs and support services. The College recognizes the importance of maintaining quality facilities for instructional delivery modes and at all locations and provides sufficient personnel and other support to achieve this objective.

Action Plan: Standard III.B.1

The College will continue its current practices in providing facilities that support the quality and integrity of its instructional programs and support services.

Standard III.B.1.a

The institution plans, builds, maintains, and upgrades or replaces its physical resources in a manner that assures effective utilization and the continuing quality necessary to support its programs and services.

Response to Standard III.B.1.a

With regard to its buildings and grounds, the College has an ongoing building, maintenance, upgrade and replacement program. The program is evidenced by the Deferred Maintenance Plan, which runs for 5-year periods, and is updated annually by the Facilities and Operations department Director.[324]

[323] Contractual Agreements: Samples and Templates
[324] Deferred Maintenance Plan

Here are examples of recent major upgrade and replacement projects:

1. Replace back-up batteries for use in emergencies (2006-07)
2. Construction of additional storage space (2006-07)
3. Repairs and upgrades of the Spring Street campus (2006-07)
4. Replacement of the chiller plant (to be completed in 2008)
5. Repairs and upgrades of the Child Development Center (2006-07)
6. Addition of student benches near the CL building
7. Re-landscape north side of CL and CS buildings (ongoing):

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.B.1.a

The College, through its Facilities and Operations department, has a systematic program, evidenced in the Deferred Maintenance Plan, in place to cover maintenance, upgrades and repair of its existing facilities.

Action Plan: Standard III.B.1.a

The College will continue its current policies and practices dealing with maintenance, upgrades, and repair of its existing facilities.

Standard III.B.1.b

The institution assures that physical resources at all locations where it offers courses, programs, and services are constructed and maintained to assure access, safety, security, and a healthful learning and working environment.

Response to Standard III.B.1.b

Access: All existing facilities—Blythe main campus, Needles Center, Child Development Center and the Spring Street campus—comply with access requirements of the ADA (Americans With Disabilities Requirements) and with recommendations by the College's Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) personnel. These facilities are also assessed for proper access by visual inspection of Facilities and Operations staff as well as other College personnel.

Safety: The Facilities and Operations department conducts regular safety inspections of its facilities at all locations. It ensures that emergency contact phone numbers and evacuation plans are posted

in classrooms and hallways. The College's insurance carrier, Keenan and Associates, also provides information regularly on improving the College's safety program.[325]

Security: A security officer is on patrol at the Blythe main campus every evening until 10 p.m. and remains on duty until the all persons have vacated the buildings. Security at the Needles Center is provided by a part-time employee and existing Needles Center staff. Security at the Child Development Center is handled by existing Center staff. Security at the Spring Street campus is provided by existing Spring Street staff and a part-time employee. Emergency phone numbers are posted in all classrooms, hallways, and other areas that are visible to persons occupying the buildings.

Healthful learning and working environment: The College seeks to maintain a campus that provides a healthful learning and working environment by inspecting facilities regularly for hazardous conditions, excessive noise, or other factors that would detract from a quiet and healthy learning environment. In addition to conducting its own inspections and walk-arounds, the Facilities and Operations department participates on the Security Task Force and Facilities Committee and is apprised of problems and adverse conditions in this manner, as well.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.B.1.b

The College, through the Facilities and Operations department, strives to assure access, safety, security, and a healthful learning and working environment at all its locations through regular inspections by its own staff, by acting on recommendations and advice by facilities occupants and through discussions and recommendations of the Facilities Committee, Security Task Force and other campus committees.

Action Plan: Standard III.B.1.b

The College will continue in its current practices of assuring access, safety, security and a healthful learning and working environment at all its locations.

Standard III.B.2

To assure feasibility and effectiveness of physical resources in supporting institutional programs and services, the institution plans and evaluates its facilities and equipment on a regular basis, taking utilization and other relevant data into account.

Response to Standard III.B.2

The College is diligent in planning and utilizing its facilities in a manner that represents an efficient use of space to support instructional programs and services. It engages in systematic, ongoing assessment of its facilities and their use.

Here are some examples of facilities modifications in response to changing campus needs:

[325] Keenan and Associates Documents

1. Installation of interactive TV equipment in two classrooms and the CL 101 auditorium to facilitate the delivery of instructional programs and Board of Trustees' meetings between the Blythe main campus and the Needles Center.

2. Conversion of a faculty office into a shared faculty office and Learning Skills Center-faculty support facility in the CL building.

3. Conversion of faculty office into a technology support office in the CL building.

4. Development of a reception area in the CS building.

5. Development of a student activity area in the CS building.

6. Conversion of a portion of library space into use by the students and personnel associated with the Disabled Student Program and Services department.

Planning and use of facilities is reviewed in various forums including the Administrative Council and the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

The Facilities and Operations department, moreover, plans and evaluates the College's facilities, and follows a maintenance schedule for equipment, such as grass mowers, trucks, vans, and carts. The department takes into account the utilization of facilities and equipment, as well as the results of inspections, in determining the extent of upgrade, repair and replacement required.

The department regularly undertakes upgrade projects such as carpet replacement, light fixtures replacement, painting, classroom projection system replacements, and landscape improvements in response to the intensive use and wear-and-tear of these facilities. The department also responds to recommended upgrades and replacements expressed by College personnel in the Administrative Council, College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, Security Task Force, Facilities Committee and other College organizations.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.B.2

While the College is satisfied with its efforts in planning for and evaluating its facilities for instructional and support purposes, it strives to improve these processes continuously. The College has a highly capable maintenance and facilities staff; it considers the recommendations of College personnel regarding facilities management through the various campus organizations and committees; and it responds to changing campus needs in it facilities.

Action Plan: Standard III.B.2

The College will continue with its current processes in planning for and evaluating facilities use, continuously seeking ways to improve those processes.

Standard III.B.2.a

Long-range capital plans support institutional improvement goals and reflect projections of the total cost of ownership of new facilities and equipment.

Response to Standard III.B.2.a

The College recognizes the tremendous capital investments it has in its buildings (current and projected), grounds, and equipment, and it has taken steps not only to protect these investments but to ensure that the full cost of ownership is budgeted. The College budget for facilities includes such items as maintenance, insurance, security, repair and replacement for existing buildings, and as well, for facilities currently under construction.

As stated earlier, in the response to Standard I.B.3, the College conducts ongoing, rigorous follow-up of existing programs and services to ensure their effectiveness. The College applies the same kind of evaluation to new programs and services planned for the new facilities. The College is focusing on developing systems for enrollment management, emphasizing forecasting and planning for growth, particularly at the Blythe main campus, the distance education program and the Needles Center.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.B.2.a

In the construction of new facilities the College takes into account the total cost of owning and operating those facilities. It also recognizes that it is essential to plan thoroughly for the programs and services that will be provided in the new facilities, and to account for the costs associated with those programs and services, as well. The organizations and committees for planning and evaluating the use of the new facilities are in place and effective. These include the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, Budget Committee, and Administrative Council.

Action Plan: Standard III.B.2.a

The College will continue with its current practices in planning and projecting the full cost of ownership of new facilities, including not only maintenance and operational costs but program delivery costs as well. To do an effective job in those cost projections, the College is integrating construction planning with instructional program and support planning. Such integrated planning is evident in the discussions and actions of the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, Budget Committee and Administrative Council.

Standard III.B.2.b

Physical resource planning is integrated with institutional planning. The institution systematically assesses the effective use of physical resources and uses the results of the evaluation as the basis for improvement.

Response to Standard III.B.2.b

Physical resource planning is integrated with College planning in several ways:

1. The Facilities and Operations Director is part of the Administrative Council and discusses issues pertaining to buildings and grounds and safety with managers and administrators from other departments regularly. These kinds of meeting forums enable facilities planning to be integrated with the planning of other College programs and projects.

2. The Facilities and Operations department develops a program review report, along with other departments of the Office of Administrative Services, every five years.[326] The report is reviewed by the Program Review Committee, as well as the Board of Trustees, in the context of other College programs and needs, affording the opportunity for broad recommendations that fit with other College objectives.

3. The Facilities and Operations Director updates annually the Deferred Maintenance Plan which projects maintenance and repair projects five years.[327] The document is a "rolling" five-year projection that the Director updates annually. As projects are completed or modified or as new ones emerge in response to needs in other areas, the Plan is changed accordingly.

4. Planning is underway to expand existing academic programs and develop new programs in anticipation of the opening of the new facilities. The College looks to the expertise of many of its own faculty and staff to provide guidance in program development and construction features. As it expands existing programs and develops new ones, the College is mindful, furthermore, of one its Strategic Plan elements, namely, "Conduct ongoing student needs assessments to help guide the College in planning courses, programs and support services for achievement and learning." Accordingly, the College continuously evaluates enrollment trends, changes in program requirements, job market changes and other factors that influence the College's educational program planning.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.B.2.b

The College strives to incorporate physical resources planning with other College plans. It does so in various ways: through participation in committees that facilitate the exchange of plans and ideas between physical planning and other planning; through program review, which is examined in the context of other College needs and programs; through the Deferred Maintenance Plan, which takes into account changing College needs; and through the ongoing assessment of needs and the impact of such needs on physical resources planning. The new buildings at the Blythe main campus and the Needles Center will broaden the range of the College's educational programs, and improve the quality and appropriateness of the facilities in which such programs are presented.

[326] Program Review Reports (Administrative Services/Facilities and Operations)
[327] Deferred Maintenance Plan

Action Plan: Standard III.B.2.b

The College will continue on its present course in integrating physical resource planning with other College planning, emphasizing expanding and emerging instructional and support needs in relation to the new facilities now under construction, and buildings projected to be constructed.

Standard III.C: Technology Resources

Technology resources are used to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness. Technology planning is integrated with institutional planning.

Response to Standard III.C

Because technology impacts virtually every aspect of College activity—student learning, student support services, MIS reporting, research, budgeting, and communications—the College is committed to maintaining effective technology resources. The College Strategic Plan includes Technology Support as a key initiative, whose goal is to "ensure that state-of-the art information technology and media are used by a highly-skilled college community."[328] The Information Technology (IT) department, a division of the office of Administrative Services and managed by the IT Director, carries the major share of responsibility for developing, maintaining and improving the College's technology and for helping the College achieve the Strategic Plan goal.

In learning and support services, the IT department is responsible for maintaining and upgrading computer and projector equipment and software in the classrooms, labs, library, and Learning Skills Center at the Blythe main campus, as well as at the Needles Center and the Spring Street campus. The IT department maintains the interactive television system which transmits courses between the Blythe main campus and the Needles Center. The department is also responsible for arranging for transmission of courses, as needed, from California State University, San Bernardino (Palm Desert campus). The College continues to make progress in making some computers available to students incarcerated at the two prisons located near Blythe, Ironwood and Chuckawalla. Incarcerated students are prohibited access by prison rules and policies to all online services.

In the area of institutional effectiveness, the IT department provides direct management of and technical support to the College's communications infrastructure, namely, the MIS, voice mail, telephone and email services. Support entails performing upgrades and repairs on existing equipment, replacing outdated equipment, and providing training and technical assistance to faculty, staff and students.

In 2007, the College authorized the purchase of a new management information system—Datatel—replacing another system that proved unsuitable to the College's requirements. The selection of the new system was coordinated by the IT Director and his staff, with the assistance of a College advisory committee and with the guidance of a consulting firm specializing in California community college management information systems.

[328] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values, Initiative 5, Technology and Support

Information technology planning is integrated with College planning in several ways: the IT Director is part of the Administrative Council and College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee and in this context regularly discusses issues pertaining to information technology with other administrators, faculty and staff; the department conducts program review, enabling broad campus discussion of its project planning with other College constituents; the IT Director, in discussion with other managers and in relation to other College plans, prepared the Technology Master Plan 2004-05; and a Technology Support section is incorporated into the College's Strategic Plan. The IT Director chairs the Technology Committee, a subcommittee to the Budget Committee and consisting of all College constituent groups.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.C

The College, through its IT department, provides effective support to instructional programs in the form of classroom technology, as well as support of online and interactive television. The department maintains the College's other technology support systems, including MIS reporting, voice mail, telephone, email, internet access and the Website. IT planning is integrated with campus planning through participation of the IT Director on several campus committees, through program review, through the Technology Master Plan, and through inclusion of a Technology Support section in the Strategic Plan. The IT department is committed to providing ongoing training and technical assistance to faculty, staff and students.

The IT Director acknowledges that update of the Technology Master Plan is overdue; however, because the College is in the midst of converting to Datatel—the IT Director and department staff are intensively involved in that project—the Plan update has been put on hold. Instead, the IT Director and staff, in conjunction with the Datatel project manager, are developing a training and implementation plan for the new system.[329] The training and implementation plan will be incorporated into the Technology Master Plan.

Action Plan: Standard III.C

The College will continue to maintain, through its IT department, current levels of technology support and training while implementing Datatel. Following basic implementation, the IT department will focus on training of College personnel—faculty, staff and administration—in using the new system, and on additional technology needs.

Standard III.C.1

The institution assures that any technology support it provides is designed to meet the needs of learning, teaching, college-wide communications, research, and operational systems.

Response to Standard III.C.1

Learning: The achievement of student learning is the key College objective, and it is where the IT department focuses its support. The department maintains the computers, software and projection systems located in all classrooms, the library, and the Learning Skills Center at the Blythe main

[329] Enterprise Resources Implementation Plan

campus. It provides technical support to the interactive television systems located at the Blythe main campus and the Needles Center. It supports the computer systems in the classrooms at the Spring Street campus, as well as the classroom computer systems at the Needles Center. The department also maintains a full-time staff member for the technology help desk, which provides training and technical assistance, to faculty, staff and students. While the IT department provides some technical support to faculty teaching courses online, the department recognizes more needs to be done to properly assess training requirements and to help faculty set objectives for online programs.

Teaching: Because teaching and learning go hand-in-glove, most of the support services provided to students to promote learning apply to teaching as well: On-the-spot training and technical assistance; maintenance and upgrade of classroom computers, projection systems, and office computers; software upgrades, interactive television, Website, library databases—these resources and services are all essential for teaching and are all supported by IT department staff.

College-wide communications: The IT department provides support to the College's electronic communications systems, namely, email (Outlook), voice mail, telephone and Website. The College has a full-time network technician and a position assigned full time to the technical support help desk. The College is facing technical communications problems resulting from its rural location: the absence of fiber optic cable services in the area will continue to cause periodic operational problems, such as internet interruptions and delays.

Research: Research studies to date have derived data from the existing system, CCCCO Data Mart, special studies such as Noel-Levitz, and from faculty members performing analyses of student learning outcomes in their classes.[330] With the implementation of Datatel during the next two years, which will involve training the College researchers in report preparation, it is expected that data for institutional research will more be comprehensive.

Operational systems: Datatel will greatly enhance the reporting accuracy and timeliness for campus reports required by the state Chancellor's Office. At the present time the College's budget and payroll reporting requirements are effectively handled through agreement with the Office of the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools. This arrangement is expected to continue after Datatel is fully in operation although the College will continue to explore options on the potential for data sharing between Datatel and the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.C.1d

The College's technology resources in the areas of teaching, learning, and communications are adequate to meet current needs of students and personnel. With the implementation of Datatel, however, all areas—teaching, learning, communications, research and operations—are expected to benefit significantly. The system will afford better opportunities for faculty-student communication through portal technology, will facilitate online teaching, improve opportunities for institutional research and greatly improve specialized MIS reporting to community college agencies such as the state Chancellor's Office.

[330] Institutional Research Studies; Student Learning Outcomes: Assessment Tools and Results

Action Plan: Standard III.C.1

The IT department will continue to provide sufficient levels of technology support for teaching, learning, communications, research and operations while working with key College personnel and with the Datatel project manager in implementing the new system. Full implementation of Datatel is expected to take two years.

Standard III.C.1.a

Technology services, professional support, facilities, hardware, and software are designed to enhance the operation and effectiveness of the institution.

Response to Standard III.C.1.a

The College, through the IT department, provides ongoing support to technology resources sufficient to enhance its operations and effectiveness. Here are some key examples evidencing such support:

Staffing: The IT department maintains a staff of 4 full-time personnel, 3 part-time technicians and aides and up to three students working part-time:

1 IT Director
1 IT Assistant Director
1 Web service/network specialist
1 Help desk technician/Network technician
1 Part-time aide
1 Part-time microcomputer repair person
1 Temporary, part-time help desk technician in Needles
1-3 Part-time student workers

While this level of staffing is adequate for current requirements, there will be need for an additional technician or programmer in the next year to assist College personnel in learning, implementing and maintaining Datatel.

Communications: The College functions effectively with its current telephone, voice mail, email, website and internet systems. Each of these systems is serviced by the IT department.

Hardware: The IT department systematically upgrades its servers, as well as computer hardware in classrooms and in faculty and staff offices. The department also installed this past year video camera equipment in the CL 101 auditorium enabling meetings, such as those of the Board of Trustees, to be transmitted between the Blythe main campus and the Needles Center. The technology is the same as that used for classes taught on interactive television between the Blythe main campus and the Needles Center.

Software: The College uses Microsoft products predominantly. As a member of the Foundation for California Community Colleges, the College enjoys substantial discounts in its equipment leasing agreements.

MIS reporting requirements: This is the area where there is the greatest need for an improved management information system. The current system, Jenzabar, is not sufficiently compatible with California community college reporting requirements, and as a result, is cumbersome, time-consuming and inefficient. Datatel, by contrast, is compatible with California requirements and is expected to greatly benefit College all operations, especially student records, financial aid, and state reporting. Datatel is also used by all the community colleges in Riverside County, where the College's Blythe main campus is located.

Financial reporting: The College uses the financial management system of the Office of the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools to process all its financial transactions and reporting, including budget, payroll, grants, and other special financial services. This arrangement is expected to continue after Datatel is fully in operation although the College will continue to explore options on the potential for data sharing between Datatel and the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.C.1.a

That the College's technology is designed to enhance its operations and effectiveness is evident in its staffing (which is sufficient to meet current needs), communications systems, ongoing hardware and software replacements and upgrades, MIS reporting (which works for the time being, but is greatly in need of the new system), and financial reporting. As Datatel is implemented and College personnel trained in its use, it is likely that an additional IT staff member will be needed.

Action Plan: Standard III.C.1.a

The IT department will maintain the services currently provided in the communications systems (telephone, voice mail, email, web site and internet). The College, through the IT department, will implement the conversion to Datatel starting with student records, financial aid, state reporting, and online services for students. The department will request an additional IT staff member whose principal function will be to support Datatel. The current arrangement with the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools is expected to continue after Datatel is fully in operation although the College will continue to explore options on the potential for data sharing between Datatel and the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools.

The IT department will implement a systematic process for evaluating equipment use and for scheduling replacements and upgrades (see response to Standard III.C.1.b, below.)

Standard III.C.1.b

The institution provides quality training in the effective application of its information technology to students and personnel.

Response to Standard III.C.1.b

One of the College's Strategic Plan objectives is to ensure that "state-of-the-art technology and media are used by a highly-skilled college community."[331] In striving to achieve that goal, the College wants to see its students and personnel well-trained in the technology available to them.

While the major training emphasis over the next two years will be in helping College personnel learn to use Datatel, other types of training continue to be offered, including:

Help-desk training: The department has one full-time help-desk technician/network technician at the Blythe main campus, a part-time help-desk technician at the Needles Center, and up to three student workers available to address on-the-spot questions from faculty, staff and students on technology use. The staff member has an office in the CL building near classrooms and faculty offices, and is accessible in person, by email, office phone and cell phone. The department's web service/network specialist also is available by telephone or in person to assist with technology problems.

Student access: The IT department will provide training to students on matters pertaining to access to Datatel.

Flex day/faculty-staff meeting training: From time to time, in response to stated needs, the College uses Flex days and faculty-staff meetings as opportunities to provide training in specialized topics such as Grade Pro, Microsoft Exchange, Outlook, information literacy, website navigation and similar subjects with technology emphasis.

Classroom instruction: The College, through its Business Division, offers a large number of courses in computer information science (CIS) courses providing instruction in computers, programming and software programs. Such classes are open to everyone—regular students, faculty, staff, as well as the general public.

Staff development: As discussed in the response to Standard III.A.5, page 152, funded professional development opportunities for College personnel are available through the Staff Development Committee, the CSEA Professional Growth Fund, as well as through the approved budgets of each of the College's divisions and departments. Technology course work and training are certainly among the priorities of these programs.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.C.1.b

The College's IT department is focusing its training on ensuring that the Datatel system is implemented properly. In fulfilling a key objective of the Strategic Plan, training opportunities in technology will continue to be made available to the College's students and personnel through the help-desk staff, at Flex days and faculty-staff meetings, in classroom instruction and through staff development funding priorities.

[331] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values, Initiative 5:Technology Support

Action Plan: Standard III.C.1.b

The College will proceed with campus-wide training in the Datatel system while maintaining other training services, programs and opportunities, such as the help-desk, Flex days and faculty-staff meetings, classroom instruction and priorities of the various staff development programs.

Standard III.C.1.c

The institution systematically plans, acquires, maintains, and upgrades or replaces technology infrastructure and equipment to meet institutional needs.

Response to Standard III.C.1.c

Recognizing that keeping current in technology is a major challenge, the IT department's practice of replacing aging and out-of-date equipment and software with upgraded technology meets College needs as they emerge. Instructional and non-instructional divisions and departments enjoy the use of up-to-date and efficient equipment and software.

The building projects underway have provided the College with significant resources with which to obtain up-to-date equipment and technology. The IT department, moreover, looks to the College's budgeting process to help supplement College technology needs, as well.

A formal process governing technology evaluation and replacement, however, is needed to ensure: the lowest cost of ownership of technology assets, the effective deployment of technology assets throughout the College, and the staged retirement of aging assets. The Technology Master Plan, Goal #9, states that the College shall: "Provide technology equipment to meet the needs of Palo Verde College." The Plan outlines three strategies to achieve this goal:[332]

1. Establish and keep current baseline standards for technology purchases.

2. Coordinate the purchase and distribution of technology order to maximize return on equipment investment and simplify support issues.

3. Develop plans for the systematic addition and replacement of technology equipment.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.C.1.c

To date, the College has not implemented a formal process to evaluate and replace equipment. The IT department needs to continue its processes in replacing aging equipment, but it needs to do so in accordance with a plan that will ensure the lowest cost of ownership, the efficient deployment and use of assets in response to College needs, and the staged retirement of aging assets.

[332] Technology Master Plan, 2004-05, Goal #9

Action Plan: Standard III.C.1.c

The IT department will develop a plan for the systematic addition and replacement of technology equipment.

Standard III.C.1.d

The distribution and utilization of technology resources support the development, maintenance, and enhancement of its programs and services.

Response to Standard III.C.1.d

The IT department provides valuable services to the College in the form of technology equipment and software purchases and upgrades, the distribution of technology consistent with College needs, maintenance and repair of technology assets and training and technical assistance to faculty, staff and students.

The IT Director, as a member of the Administrative Council and College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, moreover, discusses issues pertaining to campus technology with managers and administrators from other departments regularly. From these contacts and on advice from his staff and others, the IT Director implements the distribution and utilization of technology resources to optimize benefits to the College's programs and services.

While the IT department provides vital technology support to the College, the effectiveness of its services would be enhanced by more involvement in an important, but under-utilized committee, namely, the Technology Committee. The Technology Committee, a subcommittee of the Budget Committee, is charged with planning for technology (administrative and instructional), library resources, and information services.[333] It consists of representatives of all the College's constituents and, as such, provides a "grass roots" perspective of technology uses and needs on an everyday basis. The Technology Committee could be put to work, for example, in updating the Technology Master Plan or implementing one of its recommendations, such as developing an "annual review process to continually assess the current and future needs of technology" at the College.[334] As a subcommittee of the Budget Committee, the Technology Committee's recommendations have a direct link to budget prioritizing and decision-making.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.C.1.d

The College is well-served in its technology requirements by the staff of the IT department. The department's effectiveness would be enhanced, moreover, by greater involvement in the Technology Committee. Such involvement would provide the IT department with an important perspective of College technology needs and uses, would provide a work group to update the Technology Master Plan, and would better integrate the planning of two important campus functions: budgeting and technology.

[333] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2510; List of College Committees and Organizations, 2007-08
[334] Technology Master Plan, 2004-05, Goal #7, Strategy 7.5

Action Plan: Standard III.C.1.d

The IT department will continue its current services to the College; moreover, it will increase its involvement with the Technology Committee. The Technology Committee will assist the IT department in planning and implementing the effective distribution and utilization of technology resources for the College.

Standard III.C.2

Technology planning is integrated with institutional planning. The institution systematically assesses the effective use of technology resources and uses the results of evaluation as the basis for improvement.

Response to Standard III.C.2

The IT department demonstrated the effective integration of technology planning with other College planning during 2006-07 in the process leading to the purchase of a replacement management information system for the College. With authorization from the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, the IT department formed the Enterprise Resources Planning (ERP) committee, representing key College constituent groups. The ERP was charged with reviewing current and anticipated MIS requirements and deciding on the acquisition of a new system. The ERP engaged the assistance of a consulting firm which guided the ERP members through the process of evaluating the College's requirements, preparing an RFP, evaluating proposals and selecting the right product, which turned out to be Datatel.

Planning is now underway to implement the Datatel system and to train College personnel. In its initial phase, training and implementation calls for the creation of core teams charged with creating "business process maps" of their respective functions.[335] Outlining business processes and incorporating them into the Datatel implementation plan is an example of the College's commitment to integrated planning.

Technology planning is integrated with College planning in other ways:

1. The IT Director is part of the Administrative Council and College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee and discusses issues pertaining to technology with managers and administrators from other departments regularly. These kinds of meeting forums enable technology planning to be integrated with the planning of other College programs and projects.[336]

2. The IT department develops a program review report, along with other departments of the Office of Administrative Services, every five years. The report is reviewed by the Program Review Committee, as well as the Board of Trustees, in the context of other

[335] Enterprise Resources Training and Implementation Plan
[336] List of College Committees and Organizations, 2007-08

College programs and needs, affording the opportunity for broad recommendations that fit with other College objectives.[337]

3. The Technology Master Plan 2004-05, while it is in need of updating, nonetheless is integrated with the Strategic Plan, matching College strategic objectives with the objectives of the IT department.[338]

4. A Technology Support section is incorporated into the Strategic Plan.[339]

The IT department assesses the effective use of technology resources as a result of contact with faculty, staff and other administrators in various campus committees and organizations, as noted above. As noted in the response to Standard III.C.1.d, furthermore, the IT department's effectiveness would be enhanced by greater involvement in the Technology Committee, a subcommittee of the Budget Committee. Such involvement would provide the IT department with an important perspective on College technology needs and uses, would provide a work group to update the Technology Master Plan, and would better integrate the planning of two important campus functions: budgeting and technology.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.C.2

The IT department demonstrated effective integration of planning in the process leading up to the purchase of the new management information system. It is continuing the practice of integrated planning in the Datatel implementation phase by having the core users develop business process maps of their respective College functions. The process maps will be incorporated into the Datatel implementation plan. The IT department also integrates technology planning through involvement on key College committees, through program review, and through the inclusion of the Technology Support section in the Strategic Plan.

The IT department needs to increase its participation in the Technology Committee, a subcommittee of the Budget Committee, as a way of further integrating technology with other College constituents and with the Budget Committee.

Action Plan: Standard III.C.2

The IT department will proceed with the Datatel training and implementation plan, continue its participation in College committees, and increase its involvement in the Technology Committee as part of the department's integrated planning efforts.

Standard III.D: Financial Resources

Financial resources are sufficient to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness. The distribution of resources supports the development, maintenance, and enhancement of programs and services. The institution plans and manages its

[337] Program Review Reports
[338] Technology Master Plan, 2004-05
[339] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values, Initiative 5

financial affairs with integrity and in a manner that ensures financial stability. The level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of both short-term and long-term financial solvency. Financial resources planning is integrated with institutional planning.

Response to Standard III.D Financial Resources

The financial resources of the College are managed by the office of Administrative Services under the general direction of the Vice President of Administrative Services. The functions of the office of Administrative Services all relate to the effective delivery and support of student learning programs, and they include the management of: [340]

1. All College financial services, including budget, payroll, purchasing, accounts receivable, accounts payable and cash accounts

2. Special accounts, including ASB and other campus organizations

3. Palo Verde College Foundation donations, scholarship payouts, and financial reporting

4. Annual independent audit prepared by a reputable CPA firm

5. Periodic financial reporting to all College divisions and departments, including categorical programs, and reporting to appropriate state and federal agencies, as required

6. Human resources, through the Human Resources manager, including health, retirement, and related employee financial services

7. Information technology, through the Information Technology manager, including purchasing of equipment, software and upgrades

8. Physical resources, through the Facilities and Operations Director, including maintenance, repair, upgrade and purchasing

9. Bookstore, through the Bookstore manager

10. Food services, under contract with an independent food service vendor

The office of the Vice President of Administrative Services manages the annual budget process through the Budget Committee, a mutual agreement committee consisting of all College constituent groups.[341] The process ensures that all divisions and departments have the opportunity to propose budgets annually for their respective areas, have a fair and open hearing on their proposals, defend their proposals and receive timely decisions on their proposals. Budget proposals for new personnel and equipment are reviewed by the Budget Committee for consistency with the Strategic Plan.[342]

[340] Program Review Reports (Administrative Services)
[341] List of College Organizations and Committees, 2007-08; Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2510
[342] Budget Procedure

The office of the Vice-President of Administrative Services manages the College budget, once it is approved, in a fiscally prudent and conservative manner to ensure that all programs and services are adequately funded. Financial transactions are handled expeditiously and fund balances are maintained in a fiscally responsible manner to ensure financial stability. While the Chancellor's office requires a 5% fund balance in its unrestricted general fund, for example, the College maintains a minimum of 7%.[343]

To ensure both short-term and long-term solvency, the College uses Tax Revenue Anticipation Notes (TRANS). The TRANS program enables the College to meet continuing monthly obligations during times of state funding delays.[344] The College used TRANS on two occasions, both of which were necessary to cover obligations in summer months during which state funding was delayed due to budget debates in the California Legislature.

In light of the building construction projects underway, the College in 2006-07 took measures to protect its short- and long-term financial stability by issuing Certificates of Participation (COPS).[345] COPS are designed to help the College meet payment demands by the various contractors associated with ongoing construction projects, while awaiting reimbursement for these expenditures by the State of California.

The College's economic position is closely tied to that of the State of California. The College receives funding through state apportionments and from local property taxes. These two sources with enrollment fees make up the College's general apportionment, the school's main support.[346]

The College's financial planning is integrated with other College planning in various ways: its decisions are consistent with College goals expressed in the Strategic Plan[347]; budget planning and decisions are developed by the Budget Committee in conjunction with the plans of all divisions and departments; the Vice President of Administrative Services is a member of the Administrative Council and College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, and in this context regularly discusses issues pertaining to budget with other administrators, faculty and staff;[348]and the office of Administrative Services conducts program review, enabling broad campus discussion with other College constituents of its planning and operations.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.D

The College's financial resources have an impact on every department and division of the College, and on all of its personnel. Its effective and conservative operation is essential to maintain the programs and services provided by the College in the delivery of student learning and the services that support learning. For this reason, the College takes necessary steps to ensure that budget decisions are made with representation from all constituent groups, that student learning and supportive services are the key objective of all budget decisions, that steps are taken to ensure the financial solvency of the College, and that budget planning is integrated with other College plans.

[343] Independent Audit Reports
[344] TRANS Documents; Independent Audit Reports
[345] COPS Documents; Independent Audit Reports
[346] Independent Audit Reports, Year ending June 30, 2006, p. 13
[347] Budget Procedure
[348] List of College Organizations and Committees, 2007-08

Action Plan: Standard III.D

The College will continue with its current budgetary practices, with emphasis on ongoing review and self-evaluation in order to continuously improve.

Standard III.D.1

The institution relies upon its mission and goals as the foundation for financial planning.

Response to Standard III.D.1

The mission of the College is to foster student learning and success: "Palo Verde College provides an exemplary learning environment that promotes student success, lifelong learning, and community development. Our goal is to create better futures for our students and our communities."[349]

Toward these ends the College strives, through its financial planning process, to maintain a financially stable, safe, effective and efficient working and learning environment, as follows:

Maintains the financial stability of the College: The College maintains a balanced budget consistently. In 2004, the College fell below the required minimum only in the restricted funds area. The College took immediate action to ensure that in subsequent years it achieved, and exceeded, the required fund balance.[350]

Maintains compliance with all state and federal agencies: The College's compliance with federal and state rules and regulations is evidenced in findings of the annual independent audits.[351]

Issues timely and accurate financial reporting internally and externally: The College is timely in all its reporting requirements, including requirements set for the by the Chancellor's office. The office of Administrative Services also provides monthly expenditure reports to all division chairs and program managers.[352]

Supports qualified faculty, staff and administration through effective human resources practices: Payroll, overload compensation, expense reimbursement and other special pay arrangements are processed in a timely and accurate manner. (See the response to Standard III.A for further detail on human resources services.)

Provides learning and instructional support through expeditious purchasing procedures: Purchasing is conducted in a timely and accurate manner for all College departments.

Supports state-of-the-art technology: Responsibility for technology rests with the Information Technology department, a division of the Office of Administrative Services, which is responsible

[349] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values
[350] Independent Audit Reports
[351] Independent Audit Reports
[352] Financial Reports

for classroom technology, online and interactive television, MIS reporting, voice mail, telephone, email, and the Website. (See the response to Standard III.C for further detail on technology resources.)

Adheres to the practice of collegial governance*:* The budget approval process calls for approval of all division and department budget proposals by the Budget Committee, a mutual agreement committee that has representation from all College constituencies.

Supports a safe and clean campus environment that is conducive to learning*:* Responsibility for maintaining a safe, clean, quiet and well-cared for campus rests with the Facilities and Operations department, a division of the office of the Administrative Services.

These aforementioned objectives are, in summary, the key objectives established by the office of Administrative Services in its most recent program review report, in 2006.[353]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.D.1

The office of Administrative Services, in carrying out its responsibility as the College's principal financial planner, looks to the College's mission as the foundation for financial planning. With its focus on student learning and success, the office of Administrative Services allocates financial resources to help sustain a College environment that is: financially stable; that complies with the rules and regulations of federal and state agencies; that is clean and well-cared for; that supports programs with state-of-the-art technology; whose payroll is accurate and timely; which provides program managers and division chairs with timely financial reports; and which encourages collegial participation in its budgeting process.

Action Plan: Standard III.D.1

The office of Administrative Services will continue in its reliance on the College's mission as the foundation for financial planning.

Standard III.D.1.a

Financial planning is integrated with and supports all institutional planning.

Response to Standard III.D.1.a

The College's key planning document is the Strategic Plan. Originally developed and implemented in 2002, the Strategic Plan has since been revised three times—in collegial governance forums—as new priorities emerge or as goals are achieved.

Financial planning is integrated with the Strategic Plan in these ways: through the budget process; by developing financial resources to support College plans; and by upholding the mission of the College.

[353] Program Review Reports (Administrative Services)

Financial planning is also integrated with institutional planning through the program review process and through the participation of the Vice-President of Administrative Services in key College committees and organizations.

Budget process: Each year, during the Spring Semester, the Budget Committee, chaired by the Vice President of Administrative Services, reviews budget proposals from College divisions and departments for the upcoming academic year. As part of the review process, budget proposals are required to justify new personnel and equipment in terms of specific Strategic Plan initiatives and objectives.[354] Budget proposals are also evaluated in terms of the appropriateness of proposed spending to the effectiveness of its services in serving students.

Financial resources to support College plans: Such plans may be the creation of new employee positions, acquisition of equipment, construction of facilities, or the allocation of funds as a result of collective bargaining agreements. For example, to help the College meet payment demands by the various contractors associated with the building construction currently underway at the new campus while awaiting reimbursement for these expenditures by the State of California, the College issued Certificates of Participation (COPS), a low-interest, long-term loan. Proceeds from the COPS were also use to pay for the new management information system, which the College acquired after a year-long review of its MIS requirements.

Uphold the mission of the College: As stated in the response to Standard III.D.1, above, the office of Administrative Services looks to the College's mission as the foundation for financial planning. With its focus on student learning and success, the office of Administrative Services allocates financial resources to help sustain "an exemplary learning environment that promotes student success, lifelong learning, and community development."[355]

Program review: The College requires the office of Administrative Services (as well as all divisions and departments) to conduct program review every five years. The most recent program review by the office of Administrative Services was in October 2006. The report is reviewed by the Program Review Committee, a mutual agreement committee consisting of all College constituents, and is adopted by the Board of Trustees. The program review process, which requires examination of the financial planning process by other College constituents, assures that financial planning is integrated with other College planning.

Participation on the key planning committees: The Vice President of Administrative Services, as a member of the Administrative Council and College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, moreover, discusses issues pertaining to financial planning with managers and administrators from other departments regularly.[356] These kinds of meeting forums enable financial planning to be integrated with the planning of other College programs and projects

[354] Budget Procedure
[355] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values
[356] List of College Committees and Organizations, 2007-08

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.D.1.a

The College strives to integrate financial planning with other College plans. It does so through the actions of the office of Administrative Services, which include managing the annual budget process; securing financial resources to support College plans; upholding the College mission; conducting program review; and participating on key planning committees.

Action Plan: Standard III.D.1.a

The College will continue its current practices in integrating financial planning with other College plans.

Standard III.D.1.b

Institutional planning reflects realistic assessment of financial resource availability, development of financial resources, partnerships, and expenditure requirements.

Response to Standard III.D.1.b

Persons involved in institutional planning look continuously to the availability of financial resources to fund current and anticipated programs and projects. Information as to the availability of financial resources comes primarily from the office of Administrative Services, which produces the annual budget, audited financial statements, monthly financial reports for program managers and division chairs, monthly cash flow analyses for administrators and the Board of Trustees, and funding forecasts provided by the California Community College Chancellor's Office.

These reports provide realistic assessments of the College's financial resources and obligations, enabling all personnel with responsibility for budgeting the opportunity to make informed decisions.

The Vice President of Administrative Services chairs the Budget Committee, a mutual agreement committee consisting of all College constituents. At Budget Committee meetings the Vice President of Administrative Services and her staff keep members apprised of local and statewide developments affecting the College's budget, such as budget obligations, funding forecasts, cash flow reports, new budget requirements, changes in programs and other subjects. The Budget Committee members, in turn, keep their constituents informed as to financial issues affecting the College.

During the Spring Semester, when College divisions and departments propose their budgets for the following academic year, the Budget Committee evaluates each proposal to ensure it represents, among other things, a realistic assessment of expenditures. The Committee may adjust budget proposals to bring them in line with actual, anticipated costs.

The Vice President of Administrative Services is also a member of the Administrative Council and College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee. These committees provide forums to discuss issues pertaining to financial planning with managers and administrators from other departments regularly.

Two examples that demonstrate prudent and realistic planning on the part of the College are the use of Certificates of Participation (COPS) and Tax Revenue Anticipation Notes (TRANS).[357] COPS are designed to help the College meet payment demands by the various contractors associated with the current construction projects, while awaiting reimbursement for these expenditures by the State of California. The TRANS program enables the College to meet continuing monthly obligations during times of state funding delays, such as has occurred during budget debates in the California Legislature. The COPS and TRANS programs were widely discussed at the College—in the Budget Committee, College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, Board of Trustees, and at Faculty-Staff meetings.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.D.1.b

The College's overall planning process is closely linked to its financial planning process; personnel involved in College planning have available to them a realistic assessment of the College's financial resources and obligations. College planners are continuously apprised by the office of Administrative Services of local and statewide developments affecting the College's budget, such as budget obligations, funding forecasts, cash flow reports, new budget requirements and changes in programs.

Action Plan: Standard III.D.1.b

The office of Administrative Services will continue its current practices in ensuring that College plans are informed by realistic assessments of College financial resources and expenditures.

Standard III.D.1.c

When making short-range financial plans, the institution considers its long-range financial priorities to assure financial stability. The institution clearly identifies and plans for payment of liabilities and future obligations.

Response to Standard III.D.1.c

As part of its financial planning procedures, the College looks beyond the immediate year's forecast, and plans multi-year budget projections to ensure that funds will be available to meet future obligations.[358] Here are some examples of long-term obligations the College has incorporated into its financial planning and budgets:

Early retirement payable: In 2002, several personnel retired and, as part of their severance, the College agreed to pay them a total of $1.3 million for a period of five years. The College included that obligation into its annual budget and this year has completed that program.

[357] COPS Documents; TRANS Documents
[358] Financial Forecasts

GASB 43 and 45: The College completed the required actuarial study of retiree health liabilities and has incorporated the recommended cost projections into the annual budget. [359]

Civil litigation: The College sets aside funds in annual budget to cover attorneys' fees associated with current litigation matters.

Payback of funds misappropriated by a third-party: In 2003-04, the College discovered that a third-party contractor had reported student enrollment inappropriately over the preceding two years.[360] The College reported the matter to the Chancellor's office, and following an investigation, the College terminated its agreement with the third party and agreed to make restitution with the state by repaying the amount of misappropriated funds. This amounted to a total of $1.7 million which the College agreed to repay over a period of five years. Re-payment will be completed in 2009. The College has also taken legal action against the third party to reclaim its losses.

Chiller plant replacement: It was determined in 2005 that the campus chiller plant (which provides air conditioning to the campus) was not operating effectively and needed to be replaced. The College set aside funds from reserves and acquired the new chiller plant.

Certificates of Participation (COPS): In light of the building construction projects underway, the College in 2006-07 took measures to protect its short- and long-term financial stability by issuing Certificates of Participation (COPS). COPS are designed to help the College meet payment demands by the various contractors associated with the construction projects, while awaiting reimbursement for these expenditures by the State of California. COPS proceeds are also being used to acquire the management information system.

Tax Revenue Anticipation Notes (TRANS): To ensure both short-term and long-term solvency, the College uses Tax Revenue Anticipation Notes (TRANS). The TRANS program enables the College to meet continuing monthly obligations during times of state funding delays.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.D.1.c

In planning for the year's upcoming budget projections, the College takes into account long-term obligations and plans accordingly.

Action Plan: Standard III.D.1.c

The College will continue its practice in making provisions for long-term obligations in its financial planning.

Standard III.D.1.d

The institution clearly defines and follows its guidelines and processes for financial planning and budget.

[359] Actuarial Study of Retiree Health Liabilities
[360] Funds Repayment Documents

Response to Standard III.D.1.d

The Vice President of Administrative Services coordinates financial planning and the preparation of the College budget each year and follows established, publicized procedures. The annual budget cycle for the College is as follows:

1. June: Notification to the College by the Chancellor's office of estimated funding for the upcoming academic year.

2. February: Budget process for the College begins. The office of Administrative Services provides College constituents with the budget procedure package, which consists of budget forms and a timeline for submission of proposals.

3. April-May: Budget Committee meets over a period of several weeks to review proposals of constituents.

4. June: The office of Administrative Services prepares the Tentative Budget for review and approval by the Board of Trustees in open session.

5. August: The College receives confirmation from the Chancellor's office of actual funding for the College's current academic year.

6. September: The office of Administrative Services prepares the final budget for the current year and provides it to the Board of Trustees for review and approval.

7. Monthly: The office of Administrative Services distributes reports to all division chairs, program managers, administrators and department heads.

8. November-January: The independent auditor's report on the previous year's financial statements and report on compliance requirements is completed and presented to the Board of Trustees.

Other factors have an impact on the preparation of the budget. These may include the results of collective bargaining agreements, changes in requirements and funding levels of categorical programs, changes in Chancellor's office financial reporting requirements, and others. The office of Administrative Services is highly responsive to changes such as these and makes appropriate adjustments in the budget processes.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.D.1d

The College, through the office of Administrative Services, follows a systematic and publicized process for the preparation of the annual budget. The office of Administrative Services works primarily through the Budget Committee to inform constituents about the budget and to complete the budget process. The budget procedure works well, for the most part; however, the proposal forms need to be modified so that the Budget Committee can compare the previous year's budgeted-and-actual expenses for each department with the department's proposal for the upcoming year. This change would enable the Budget Committee to evaluate more effectively how each department is using its appropriations and help the committee make more informed budget recommendations.

The office of Administrative Services plans to revise the proposal forms once the Datatel management information system is installed and operating.

The salary schedules of all constituent organizations are published on the College website. Copies of the College budget, tentative and adopted versions, and the independent auditor's reports are available at the College library for general review.

Action Plan: Standard III.D.1.d

The College will continue its current practices the budget preparation process. It will examine the budget proposal forms and, once the Datatel system is in place and operating, revise them to permit comparison with the previous years budgeted-and-actual expenditures. The office of Administrative Services will continue to make available the College budget, tentative and adopted versions, available for general review at the College library.

Standard III.D.2

To assure the financial integrity of the institution and responsible use of financial resources, the financial management system has appropriate control mechanisms and widely disseminates dependable and timely information for sound financial decision making.

Response to Standard III.D.2

The office of Administrative Services ensures the financial integrity of the College by employing effective control mechanisms. These mechanisms are:

Annual independent audits: The annual independent audit helps ensure the financial integrity of the College and verify its responsible use of financial resources. The audit assesses the College's compliance with federal and state rules and regulations, the propriety of revenues and expenditures, and the adequacy of financial accounting and internal controls.[361]

Accounting transactions performed by agreement with the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools: It has long been the practice of the College to employ the services of the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools to assist with the College's payroll, financial reporting, purchasing and other financial transactions. The rationale behind this practice is that of economies of scale: it is more cost effective to have the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools perform these transactions (which it performs for other community colleges, as well) than for the College to perform them itself. The implementation of Datatel, while it will provide for some local transactions, will not affect how other transactions, such as payroll, are being handled.

Monthly financial reports to departments and divisions: In an effort to keep division chairs, department heads and program managers informed about the financial status of their areas of responsibility, the office of Administrative Services distributes to them financial status reports each month. Administrative Services staff is available to answer questions that may arise concerning the reports.

[361] Independent Audit Reports

Review and oversight of financial management by the Budget Committee, College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, Administrative Council and Board of Trustees: The financial management of the College, while handled primarily by the office of Administrative Services, is reviewed by other College committees and organizations. These additional review and oversight provisions help ensure the responsible use of financial resources. The Budget Committee, for example, reviews the College budget periodically throughout the year, as does the Board of Trustees.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.D.2

The College employs several mechanisms which help protect its integrity and help ensure the responsible use of its financial resources. These mechanisms are the annual audit; the involvement of a highly reputable external public agency skilled in school finance (the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools) in the handling of certain transactions; periodic internal audits; the distribution of monthly financial statements to divisions and departments; and the review and oversight of College finances by various campus organizations and committees.

Action Plan: Standard III.D.2

The mechanisms currently in place are sufficient to ensure the integrity of the College and the responsible use of its financial resources.

Standard III.D.2.a

Financial documents, including the budget and independent audit, reflect appropriate allocation and use of financial resources to support student learning programs and services. Institutional responses to external audit findings are comprehensive, timely, and communicated appropriately.

Response to Standard III.D.2.a

The budget and the findings of the independent auditor verified that the College is allocating appropriate financial resources to support student learning programs and services. These findings note, for example, that:

1. The College's allocation of salaries for classroom instructors is equal to or in excess of 50 percent of the districts current expense for education in accordance with Section 84362 of the Education Code.

2. State allocations spent for matriculation-related expenditures do not exceed 25 percent of the total funds spent for matriculation efforts in accordance with the Seymour-Campbell Matriculation Act of 1986

Review of the College's independent audits pertaining to the status of prior year findings and questioned costs indicates that the College has consistently resolved all prior year findings.[362]

[362] Independent Audit Reports

Action Plan: Standard III.D.2.a

The College will continue its current practices in allocating resources to learning programs and services in accordance with standards established by the Education Code and other state mandates.

Standard III.D.2.b

Appropriate financial information is provided throughout the institution.

Response to Standard III.D.2.b

The office of Administrative Services makes available appropriate financial information to College personnel frequently and systematically. Financial reports to the campus are timely and of sufficient scope and detail to support planning and decision-making. Here are some of the principal ways the campus is provided financial information:

Monthly financial statements to division chairs, program managers and department heads: In an effort to keep division chairs, department heads and program managers informed about the financial status of their areas of responsibility, the office of Administrative Services distributes to them financial status reports each month. Administrative Services staff members are available to answer questions about the reports or to offer technical assistance.

Faculty-Staff meetings and Flex Days: From time to time, the office of Administrative Services presents financial status reports to the entire campus at Faculty-Staff meetings and specialized training during Flex Days. Examples of topics include: the status of state funding and its implications for the College; how to complete a purchase order request; how to develop a division budget; and a presentation on the Certificates of Participation (COPS) program.

Budget Committee and other committees and organizations: College financial information, while handled primarily by the office of Administrative Services, is reviewed by other College constituents. These additional review and oversight provisions help ensure the responsible use of financial resources and keep College personnel informed of the College's financial condition. The Budget Committee, Administrative Council, and College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, for example, review the College budget periodically throughout the year.

Reports to the Board of Trustees: Each month, the Vice-President of Administrative Services or her staff presents a financial report to the Board of Trustees. The report includes a presentation of check warrants for Board review and approval, a cash flow analysis, and after the end of each fiscal year, an independent auditor's report.

Access to the College budget: The College publishes on the website salary schedules of each of the bargaining units. The College budget, tentative and adopted versions, is available for general review in the College library.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.D.2.b

The College strives systematically to keep its personnel informed about the College's financial condition. It informs program managers, division chairs and department heads frequently of the financial status of their programs and areas to enable them to plan effectively and to make decisions. The Vice-President of Administrative Services reports monthly to the Board of Trustees and periodically to the entire campus during Faculty-Staff meetings. Various College organizations and committees provide oversight of the College's financial systems and reports. Program managers, division chairs and department heads receive monthly financial status reports for their respective areas.

With the implementation over the next two years of the new management information system, namely, Datatel, the frequency and scope of financial reporting to campus personnel is expected to increase significantly. Program managers, for example, are expected to be able to access financial information about their areas directly through their own office computers using portal technology. Division chairs, similarly, will be able to retrieve financial reports about their areas. For now, each month the College provides paper copies of financial information; with Datatel, much of the same information will be available online.

Action Plan: Standard III.D.2.b

The College will continue its current practice of providing timely and appropriate financial information to College personnel. Once Datatel is operating, the College is expected to provide, at a minimum, the same kind of information it currently provides, using online portal technology.

Standard III.D.2.c

The institution has sufficient cash flow and reserves to maintain stability, strategies for appropriate risk management, and realistic plans to meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences.

Response to Standard III.D.2.c

Stability: In light of the building construction projects underway, the College in 2006-07 took measures to protect its short- and long-term financial stability by issuing Certificates of Participation (COPS). COPS are designed to help the College meet payment demands by the various contractors associated with ongoing construction projects while awaiting reimbursement for these expenditures by the State of California. To ensure both short-term and long-term stability, the College uses Tax Revenue Anticipation Notes (TRANS). The TRANS program enables the College to meet currents obligations during times of state funding delays.

Reserves: In the unrestricted general fund, the College maintains reserves in excess of required minimums: 7% vs. the required 5%.[363]

[363] Independent Audit Reports

Risk management: The College carries sufficient insurance to cover liability, property loss and other protections. The policy is managed by Keenan and Associates.[364]

Financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences: The College maintains an unrestricted general fund reserve of 7%, vs. the recommended 5 %.

Access to cash: Approximately 96% of the College's cash and cash equivalents is on deposit with the Riverside County Treasurer's Office. The Statement of Cash Flows, available in the independent auditor's reports, provides detail as to the sources and uses of cash, and the net increase of cash.[365]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.D.2.c

The College has taken reasonable steps to ensure its financial stability, particularly with regard to unforeseen occurrences, such as delays in state funding or reimbursement. The College maintains adequate liability and replacement insurance coverage consistent with state requirements, and maintains adequate cash flow as evidenced in the independent audit reports.

Action Plan: Standard III.D.2.c

The College will continue its current practices in maintaining stable cash flow, adequate insurance coverage, and adequate preparation for unforeseen occurrences.

Standard III.D.2.d

The institution practices effective oversight of finances, including management of financial aid, grants, externally funded programs, contractual relationships, auxiliary organizations or foundations, and institutional investments and assets.

Response to Standard III.D.2.d

The College, through the office of Administrative Services, Budget Committee, program review process, and independent audit practices effective oversight of the finances of all programs. The College, moreover, maintains a variety of grant, auxiliary, financial aid and contractual programs and services in support of students and the College's learning environment. Here are examples of some of the key entities with a description of how the College oversees their operations and finances:

Financial aid: The College's various student financial aid programs are managed by the Financial Aid Officer, under the general direction of the Vice President of Student Services. The program is reviewed and is audited independently each year as part of the College's annual audit. Annual financial compliance reports are also required throughout the year. The Financial Aid Officer prepares a program review report every five years. The Financial Aid office submits an operating budget annually for review and approval by the Budget Committee.

[364] Insurance Documents
[365] Independent Audit Reports

Title 5 Hispanic Serving Institutions grant: From 2000 to 2005, the College managed a U.S. Department of Agriculture Hispanic Serving Institutions federal grant to assist in developing learning communities.[366] The program manager received monthly budget reports from the office of Administrative Services, submitted periodic progress reports to the funding agency, and submitted a final report. The grant was reviewed and audited independently each year as part of the College's annual audit.

EOPS, CalWORKS: The manager for these programs receives monthly financial statements for these student support programs. The manager also submits periodic reports to the funding agencies for these programs, and conducts program review for these programs every five years. These programs are subject to oversight by the Vice-President of Student Services.

Contractual relationships: The College uses the services of consultants, adjunct instructors and other specialists. The services provided by these contractors are reviewed and evaluated by the College department or division responsible for procuring the services. For example, architectural consultants are evaluated by the Superintendent/President; adjunct instructors are evaluated by the Vice President of Instructional Services; food services are provided by a private company under contract with the College and are evaluated by the Vice President of Administrative Services.

Palo Verde College Foundation: The Palo Verde College Foundation, while an independent legal entity established to provide scholarships and other financial support to Palo Verde College students. The Foundation is governed by a Board of Directors whose president is the Superintendent President of the College. Financial oversight of the Foundation is handled by the office of Administrative Services, the Foundation Board of Directors, and the College Board of Trustees. The Foundation is audited by an independent auditor as part of the College's annual audit.

Associated Student Body (ASB): The ASB is an official College organization whose purpose is to promote student academic progress primarily through student advocacy, fundraising, and collegial governance. ASB finances, including funds generated through fundraising, are managed by the office of Administrative Services.

Bookstore: The Bookstore is managed by the bookstore manager and one staff member, both of whom are full-time employees of the College. Bookstore operations and finances are evaluated by the Vice-President of Administrative Services. The bookstore submits an operating budget annually for review and approval by the Budget Committee. Bookstore finances are audited annually as part of the College's independent audit.

Child Development Center: The Child Development Center is managed by a Site Supervisor/Teacher and staff, all of whom are employees of the College. Child Development Center operations and finances are evaluated by the Vice-President of Instructional Services. The Child Development Center submits an operating budget annually for review and approval by the Budget Committee. The financial statements of the Child Development Center are examined by an independent auditor along with the financial statements of the College.

[366] Title 5 Hispanic Serving Institutions Grant

The College does not invest in marketable securities. It maintains the majority of its cash on deposit in the Riverside County Treasury.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.D.2.d

The College is thorough in its oversight of the operations and finances of all financial resources, including various campus organizations and functions. Each of the programs described above is managed day-to-day by a program manager or supervisor, with oversight at the level of a vice-president or the Superintendent/President; each receives monthly budget reports; each produces a program review report every five years; and each is reviewed annually by independent audit.

Action Plan: Standard III.D.2.d

The College will continue its current practices in providing continuous, responsible oversight of the various grant, externally-funded, auxiliary and fund-raising programs and services described in the standard.

Standard III.D.2.e

All financial resources, including those from auxiliary activities, fund-raising efforts, and grants are used with integrity in a manner consistent with the mission and goals of the institution.

Response to Standard III.D.2.e

As noted in the response to Standard III.D.2.d, the College is thorough in its oversight of the use of all financial resources, including the various grant, externally-funded, auxiliary and fund-raising programs and services described in the standard. In doing so, the College continuously strives to uphold the integrity of these programs in a manner consistent with the College's mission and values: "Palo Verde College maintains the highest standards of ethics and integrity. The College consistently demands respect, honesty and fairness in its educational programs, professional interactions and community relations."[367]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.D.2.e

The College utilizes various mechanisms that provide oversight of the use of financial resources and that help ensure those financial resources are used with integrity. The mechanisms are: day-to-day management by a program manager or supervisor, with oversight at the level of a vice-president or the superintendent/president; monthly budget reports for key programs; program review report every five years; and review annually by independent audit.

Action Plan: Standard III.D.2.e

The College will continue its current practice of providing oversight of the use of financial resources to help ensure that such resources are used effectively and with integrity.

[367] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values

Standard III.D.2.f

Contractual agreements with external entities are consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, governed by institutional policies, and contain appropriate provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution.

Response to Standard III.D.2.f

The College maintains contractual agreements with various external parties in order to enhance the quality and extent of its educational services. The College expects each of its contractors to perform according to the terms of the agreement, but as well, in a manner which is consistent with the College's mission and goals and which maintains the integrity of the College. The College incorporates into its contractual agreements, therefore, appropriate legal provisions designed to achieve these objectives.[368]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.D.2.f

The College, through provisions incorporated into its various contracts and agreements with external entities, strives consistently to uphold its mission and goals as well as its integrity. The College recognizes that external contractors provide services which the College itself is either unable to provide, or which would be inefficient for the College to provide.

Action Plan: Standard III.D.2.f

The College will continue its practice in incorporating in its contracts and agreements appropriate provisions designed to uphold its mission and goals and to maintain its integrity.

Standard III.D.2.g

The institution regularly evaluates its financial management processes, and the results of the evaluation are used to improve financial management systems.

Response to Standard III.D.2.g

There are three principal ways by which the College evaluates its financial management processes: program review, specifically by the office of Administrative Services; recommendations resulting from the annual independent audit; and recommendations from the Budget Committee and other key committees and organizations.

Program review process: Every five years all divisions and departments are required to conduct program review, a self-assessment of the department's effectiveness. Program review asks the

[368] Contractual Agreements: Samples and Templates

department, among other things, to set goals that will help it improve its services. The office of Administrative Services is responsible for many services and programs, but its key *financial* responsibility is preparing the budget for the College, handling financial transactions such as payroll and purchasing, and preparing budget reports for other divisions and departments. In its most recent program review report, in October 2006, the office of Administrative Services outlined several recent accomplishments that helped improve its services, and identified other areas where improvement is needed.[369]

Annual independent audit: Each independent audit report contains a Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs in which the auditor recommends changes in accounting and financial management procedures that will improve the accuracy and reliability of the College's financial statements. Each audit report also includes a follow-up on action taken by the College to resolve findings of prior years. The College systematically follows up on prior years' recommendations and has made changes that subsequently proved acceptable to the auditors.[370]

Recommendations on financial management by the Budget Committee, College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, and Administrative Council: The financial management of the College, while handled primarily by the office of Administrative Services, is reviewed by other College committees and organizations in the course of day-to-day business, and by virtue of the fact that the Vice-President of Administrative Services is a member of these committees. These additional review and oversight opportunities invite ideas and suggestions from other College personnel as to improving financial management practices.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard III.D.2.g

The College's financial management practices are continuously reviewed through program review, the annual independent audit and various campus committees and organizations. Some examples of recommended changes in financial management resulting from these review processes are:

1. Examine the budget proposal forms and, once the Datatel system is in place and operating, revise them to permit comparison with the previous years budgeted-and-actual expenditures. (Budget Committee recommendation, 2007)

2. Closely review all financial transactions to ensure the proper revenue and expenditure recognition in the appropriate accounting year. (Independent audit report, 2005; resolved according to independent audit report, 2006)

3. Provide better cross-training of staff and written financial management procedures. (Program review, 2006; implemented department cross-training in payroll, accounts payable and insurance, 2007)

[369] Program Review Reports (Administrative Services)
[370] Independent Audit Reports

Action Plan: Standard III.D.2.*g*

The College will continue to review its financial management practices through various means, including program review, independent audit and the recommendations of other College personnel expressed in the context of campus committees and organizations.

Standard IV
Leadership and Governance

The institution recognizes and utilizes the contributions of leadership throughout the organization for continuous improvement of the institution. Governance roles are designed to facilitate decisions that support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness, while acknowledging the designated responsibilities of the governing board and the chief administrator.

Standard IV.A: Decision-Making Roles and Processes

The institution recognizes that ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization enables the institution to identify institutional values, set and achieve goals, learn, and improve.

Response to Standard IV.A: Decision-Making Roles and Processes

That the College values ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization is evident in various ways: the various initiatives of the Strategic Plan; the institutional code of ethics; job performance evaluation criteria; and organizational and committee structures that encourage collegial governance. The College recognizes that ethical and effective leadership enable the College to identify values, set and achieve goals and make improvements.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.A

As will be seen in the discussions to follow, the College places a high value on ethical and effective leadership—not only among the College's managerial and administrative personnel, but throughout the organization. College personnel are encouraged to participate collegially in the shaping the College's future. Moreover, the College expects its leadership, at the managerial and administrative levels, to perform according to high standards of ethics and competency, to make the right decisions, to help set direction for the College, and to achieve results.

The College and its personnel perform ethically and effectively. The systems that facilitate these actions are in place and are, for the most part, working well. The Board of Trustees, Superintendent/President and administrators are encouraged, moreover, to formulate annual goals with broad collegial participation, to publicize those goals, to evaluate progress in achieving them, and to recommend improvements.

Action Plan: Standard IV.A

The College will continuously improve ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization. The Board of Trustees, Superintendent/President and administrators are encouraged to formulate their annual goals with broad collegial participation.

Standard IV.A.1

Institutional leaders create an environment for empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence. They encourage staff, faculty, administrators, and students, no matter what their official titles, to take initiative in improving the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved. When ideas for improvement have policy or significant institution-wide implications, systematic participative processes are used to assure effective discussion, planning and implementation.

Response to Standard IV.A.1

An environment of empowerment, innovation and excellence exists at the College, and that environment is not only promoted by College leadership, but is evident in College policies and practices:

Strategic Plan: The initiatives and values expressed in the Strategic Plan reflect the College's commitment to empowerment, innovation and excellence:[371]

1. "Palo Verde College is committed to excellence. The College expects quality instruction and services, and applauds the achievement of its students, faculty and staff." (Statement of Values)

2. "Palo Verde College supports and encourages creativity and innovation in teaching, course and program development and student learning support services." (Statement of Values).

3. "Create an environment in which people have a sense of belonging and an understanding of the campus culture." (Initiative 4: Organizational Effectiveness)

4. "Encourage participatory governance in College planning and decision-making by encouraging constituent representation on College committees and organizations." (Initiative 4: Organizational Effectiveness, Objective 3)

Institutional code of ethics: The College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee recently approved various revisions to Board of Trustees' policies, which will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval in late 2007 or early 2008. Among the new policies is an "Institutional Code of Ethics," which states, in part:

"Each Trustee, officer and employee of Palo Verde College shall…Welcome and encourage the active involvement of students, employees and citizens of the District with respect to reviewing and recommending policy." [372]

Job performance evaluation criteria: All College personnel are evaluated periodically as to their job performance. Among the criteria to assess employee performance is the extent to which the employee (in the case of managers and administrators) encourages collegial participation, and (in

[371] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values
[372] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 3050 Draft

the case of faculty members) participates in College organizations, committees and activities. Here are examples of questions from administrator and faculty evaluation procedures:[373]

1. "Encourages people to excel." (Administrative/Management/Confidential Evaluation, #1)

2. "Leads and motivates staff to accomplish program goals." (Administrative/Management /Confidential Evaluation, #11)

3. "Is able to motivate people." (Administrative/Management/Confidential Evaluation, #34)

4. "Helps create a climate of support for innovation, new approaches and new ideas." (Administrative /Management Staff Survey, #3)

5. "Participates in activities on campus, including committee and task force involvement, not including Flex Days, Career Day, or Institute Day." (Professional Development Self-Disclosure Statement, Teaching and Non-Teaching Faculty, # 3)

Organizational and committee structures that encourage collegial governance: The College recognizes the contributions its diverse personnel make to the success of the school and encourages collegial governance in its various committees and organizations. Committees and organizations whose membership is drawn from various constituencies—faculty, staff, administration, students—are referred to as "mutual agreement" committees. There are eight mutual agreement committees: Budget, College Council/Strategic Planning Steering, Distance Education, Facilities, Matriculation, Program Review, Staff Development, and Technology.[374] These committees actively solicit the participation and views of its membership in the effective governance of the College.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.A.1

The College demonstrates the commitment to empowerment, innovation, and excellence and demonstrates its commitment to participative processes. These commitments are evidenced in the College's Strategic Plan and values, in its institutional code of ethics, in the criteria by which it evaluates job performance and in its organizational and committee structure which encourages collegial governance. Administrators, faculty, staff and students need to continue to encourage College-wide participation among their constituencies in decision-making processes.

Action Plan: Standard IV.A.1

College leadership—including administrators, faculty, staff and students—will continue efforts to encourage collegial participation of all constituencies in College decisions.

[373] CTA-District Agreement, 2007-10 (Faculty Evaluation Procedure); Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures (Administrator Evaluation Procedure), BP 7262, AP 7262, AP 7250-2

[374] List of College Committees and Organizations; Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2510 (Collegial Governance: Participation in Local Decision Making)

Standard IV.A.2

The institution establishes and implements a written policy providing for faculty, staff, administrator, and student participation in decision-making processes. The policy specifies the manner in which individuals bring forward ideas from their constituencies and work together on appropriate policy, planning, and special purpose bodies.

Response to Standard IV.A.2

The College policy providing for faculty, staff, and student participation in the decision-making process is Board Policy 2510, Collegial Governance: Participation in Local Decision Making, adopted by the Board of Trustees.[375]

The policy states that while the Board of Trustees is the ultimate decision-maker in those areas assigned to it by state and federal laws and regulations, it is committed to ensuring that appropriate members of the College community participate in developing policies and administrative procedures. The following members of the College community shall participate in the decision-making process: Academic Senate, staff, and students.

Additionally, Administrative Procedure 2510, Collegial Governance: Participation in Local Decision Making, adopted by the Board of Trustees, identifies the College committees and organizations and, for each, describes its charge, membership and manner of reporting.[376]

Collegial governance is also supported in the College Strategic Plan in the form of an initiative and in the form of the collegial governance chart.[377]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.A.2

The College, through its Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, adequately addresses this standard, namely, providing written documentation calling for the participation of faculty, administrators, staff and students in the decision-making process. Collegial governance is also identified as an initiative in the Strategic Plan.

Action Plan: Standard IV.A.2

The College will continue its implementation of written policies on collegial governance and principles.

Standard IV.A.2.a

Faculty and administrators have a substantive and clearly defined role in institutional governance and exercise a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning, and budget that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise. Students and staff also have established mechanisms or organizations for providing input into institutional decisions.

[375] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2510
[376] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2510
[377] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values; Collegial Governance Chart

Response to Standard IV.A.2.a

As stated above in the response to Standards IV.A. 1 and IV.A. 2, all key constituent groups—faculty members, administrators, staff and students—have clearly defined roles in the participative governance process. These roles are spelled out in several College documents, including:

1. Board Policy 2510, Collegial Governance: Participation in Local Decision Making, which acknowledges the Board of Trustees' responsibility in encouraging the participation of faculty, staff and students in decision-making.[378]

2. Administrative Procedure 2510, Collegial Governance: Participation in Local Decision Making, which describes College committees and organizations and identifies for each its charge, membership and manner of reporting.[379]

3. Strategic Plan, in which Initiative 4, Organizational Effectiveness, states as its goal: "To create an institutional environment in which people have a sense of belonging and an understanding of the campus culture." The initiative also states as one of its objectives that the College will "review and update the collegial governance chart annually."[380]

Collegial governance is implemented not only in the College committees and organizations referenced above, but also in less formal ways through participation in Flex Days, Institute Days, Faculty-Staff meetings and other venues where participation and dialogue are encouraged.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.A.2.a

The College provides for clearly defined roles of faculty, administrators, staff and students in participative governance. These roles are expressed formally in Board of Trustees' policies and the Strategic Plan, and informally by encouraging campus-wide participation in Flex Days, Institute Days and Faculty-Staff meetings.

Action Plan: Standard IV.A.2.a

The College will continue to support clearly defined roles of faculty, administrators, staff and students in participative governance.

Standard IV.A.2.b

The institution relies on faculty, its academic senate or other appropriate faculty structures, the curriculum committee, and academic administrators for recommendations about student learning programs and services.

[378] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2510
[379] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2510
[380] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values

Response to Standard IV.A.2.b

As stated in the response to Standard II.A.2.a, faculty members play a central role in maintaining the academic quality of courses and programs. Part of that role includes identifying desired competency levels and learning outcomes, and assessing student progress towards achieving those outcomes. Here are the various ways this is accomplished:

Division review: Prepared by individual faculty members, each new, revised and updated outline is reviewed by the division in which the course is taught. Courses are reviewed for several characteristics, including need, appropriateness for the college level, rigor of learning outcomes, currency of the subject, pre-requisites, recommended textbook, teaching methods, evaluation methods, and assigned work. Once approved, the course is recommended for review by the Curriculum Committee and subsequently by the Board of Trustees.[381]

Division faculty members have also taken responsibility for identifying and measuring student learning outcomes at the levels of certificates and degrees. Academic Senate resolution, "Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," Resolution No 06-07-03, March 27, 2007, identifies the divisions to which degree-level learning outcomes are assigned.[382]

Curriculum Committee review: Subsequent to division approval, all courses are reviewed by the Curriculum Committee, consisting of representatives from each academic and vocational division, a representative from the Associated Student Body, the Librarian, Registrar, and Articulation Officer.[383] The Curriculum Committee is co-chaired by the Vice President of Instructional Services and a faculty member. The Curriculum Committee examines each course for the same qualities the division does, but from a broader, College-wide perspective. The Curriculum Committee may approve a course, approve it with modifications or disapprove it and send it back to the sponsoring division for rework.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.A.2.b

The College, through its leadership, relies on faculty and faculty organizations such as divisions, Academic Senate and Curriculum Committee for recommendations about student learning programs and services.

Action Plan: Standard IV.A.2.b

The College will continue its current practice in relying on faculty and faculty organizations for recommendations on student learning programs and services.

Standard IV.A.3

Through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution. These

[381] Curriculum Committee Handbook
[382] Academic Senate Resolutions
[383] Curriculum Committee Handbook; List of College Organizations and Committees, 2007-08

processes facilitate discussion of ideas and effective communication among the institution's constituencies.

Response to Standard IV.A.3

In addition to the participative governance structures and processes described above in the responses to Standards IV.A.1, IV.A.2, and IV.A.2.a, the College also provides for open discussion and communication of ideas among constituent groups at meetings of the Board of Trustees.[384] Early in the agenda of every meeting is a segment devoted to reports and discussion from the faculty association (CTA); staff association (CSEA); Academic Senate, and Associated Student Body. A segment of each meeting agenda is also set aside for comments from citizens. These opportunities bring members of the Board of Trustees into discussions with representatives of constituent groups and the general public; they provide the occasions for Board members, constituent groups, and the public to discuss issues openly and for the good of the College.

The Board of Trustees includes a student representative in addition to the seven members elected at large—five from Blythe, two from Needles.[385]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.A.3

There are effective governance policies and procedures in place such that the College can live up to its Strategic Plan initiative, namely, to "encourage participatory governance in College planning and decision-making by encouraging constituent representation on College committees and organizations."[386] The principles of collegial governance are spelled out in Board of Trustees' policy and the Strategic Plan and are put into practice in various College venues: committee and organization meetings; Flex Days, Institute Days, and Faculty-Staff meetings; and at public meetings of the Board of Trustees.

Action Plan: Standard IV.A.3

The College will continue its support of established governance structures, processes, and practices that enable the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students to work together for the good of the College.

Standard IV.A.4

The institution advocates and demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies. It agrees to comply with Accrediting Commission standards, policies, and guidelines, and Commission requirements for public disclosure, self study and other reports, team visits, and prior approval of substantive changes. The institution moves expeditiously to respond to recommendations made by the Commission.

[384] Board of Trustees' Agendas and Minutes
[385] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2010 and 2015
[386] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values, Initiative 4, Objective 3

Response to Standard IV.A.4

The College is committed to the ongoing assessment and evaluation of its programs, practices and services to achieve continuous improvement. This commitment is evident in virtually every College activity: program review; job performance evaluations; updating of the Strategic Plan; improving the budget review process; continuous assessment of student learning; evaluation of supportive services; and using data more effectively in decision-making.

The same commitment is evident in the College's efforts to achieve and exceed standards of accreditation by external agencies. In addition to working with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (Commission), the College works cooperatively with the accrediting agencies of specific programs, including nursing, administration of justice and alcohol and drug studies.[387]

That the College complies with accreditation standards, policies and guidelines, and Commission requirements for public disclosure, self-study and other reports, team visits, and prior approval of substantive changes is evident by a review of College history. Since the start of the current accreditation cycle in 2002, the College has participated diligently in the accreditation process. In response to the Commission recommendations, the College prepared and submitted a Progress Report in 2004 and received members of the original team for a re-visit. In 2005, the College submitted a Focused Midterm Report, which was subsequently accepted by the Commission. The College has submitted other reports to the Commission in a timely manner. The College has worked diligently to resolve the issues raised in the 2002 accreditation report.[388]

The preparation of the present Self-Study and the arranging for the team visit is part of the College's long history of compliance with accreditation requirements.

Three College personnel—the Superintendent/President, Vice-President of Administrative Services and Accreditation Liaison Officer—have participated during the past few years in accreditation team visits to other California community colleges.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.A.4

The College's history demonstrates that it has complied with the procedures, standards, policies and guidelines of external accrediting agencies—the Commission, as well as agencies that accredit specific College programs.

Action Plan: Standard IV.A.4

The College will continue its practice of complying with accreditation procedures, standards, policies and guidelines established by external accrediting agencies.

[387] Accreditation Documents
[388] Accreditation Documents

Standard IV.A.5

The role of leadership and the institution's governance and decision-making structures and processes are regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness. The institution widely communicates the results of these evaluations.

Response to Standard IV.A.5

The College recognizes that effective leadership is closely tied with the College's governance and decision-making structures and processes. Without effective leadership, governance would lack focus and direction. To maintain the effectiveness and integrity of its governance structures and processes, the College regularly evaluates organizational leadership in tandem with governance, and it does so in various ways. These include: program review process; accreditation process; administrator job performance evaluation; student and staff survey (Noel-Levitz); annual update of the collegial governance chart; and periodic update of the Strategic Plan.

Program review process: In 2006-07 the College implemented a revised program review system for all programs—instructional and non-instructional and published it as the Program Review Guide. The system provides more rigorous measures of performance, including support of student learning, achievement of prior goals, and consistency with the College mission. The process ensures that College programs are evaluated regularly, that improvements are implemented, that programs improve and that the process is widely discussed. The timely and successful revision of the program review process by all College constituents, furthermore, reflects the strength of the College's governance and decision-making processes.[389]

Accreditation process: Implementing accreditation standards and recommendations—and evaluating progress—is an ongoing College-wide activity. The key governance organization is the Accreditation Team, consisting of approximately twenty-five representatives from all constituent groups and chaired by the Accreditation Liaison Officer. The Accreditation Liaison Officer is a member of the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee to which he reports on accreditation matters. The document that evaluates the College in relation to accreditation standards and establishes action plans to achieve them is the Self-Study. Because the accreditation process touches virtually every function of the College—learning programs and student support services; collegial participation and governance; program and service effectiveness; planning; and leadership—and because it is an ongoing process, it is among the College's most comprehensive and effective evaluation systems. All reports relevant to accreditation—Progress Report, Focused Midterm Report, and the Self-Study—are made available to College constituents in the College library and on its website, and are widely discussed in various College venues.[390]

Development of administrator job evaluation procedures: The College developed and implemented a formal administrative and management evaluation procedure in 2005. The procedure, although it has been implemented, will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees in 2007-08.[391] In order to preserve confidentiality, the results individual evaluations are, of course, not disseminated; however, the process is a matter of public knowledge and includes a survey of faculty members and

[389] Program Review Guide
[390] Accreditation Documents; Accreditation Team, Agendas and Reports
[391] Timeline for Completion of Update and Revision of Board of Trustees' Policies

subordinates regarding each administrator's job performance. The development of administrator job evaluation procedures reflects the College's commitment to ensure effective leadership in the governance process and to invite the participation of faculty and staff in the process.[392]

Student and staff survey (Noel-Levitz): In Fall Semester 2005, the College administered the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) and Institutional Priorities Survey (IPS), student engagement surveys produced by Noel-Levitz, Inc. The College had conducted the surveys twice before—in 2000 and 1995. Data from the 2005 survey was tabulated and developed into a series of interpretive analyses and recommended actions to address the problems revealed in the survey results. The reports were presented to the College community during the October 2006 Institute day and published on the College website. The Institute day participants engaged in problem-solving sessions to develop ways to address those problems.[393] The College plans to conduct a follow-up Noel-Levitz survey in 2010.

Annual update and revision of the collegial governance chart: The collegial governance chart shows the functional relationships among the various campus organizations and committees. As required by Strategic Plan, the chart is updated each year by the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee to reflect changes, if any, in the collegial governance processes. Collegial governance policy is incorporated into Board of Trustees' policies and is amended as needed to reflect changes made by the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

Periodic update of the Strategic Plan: The most recent update of the Strategic Plan added three new features, designed to improve the leadership and governance processes, to each of the plan objectives: a) the identification of departments or areas responsible for completing the objective; b) a timeline for completion of the objective; and c) evidence demonstrating completion of the objective.[394] The Strategic Plan was approved by the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee in March 2007, and subsequently reviewed and adopted by the College community on Institute Day, September 4, 2007.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.A.5

The College strives to ensure that its leadership and governance processes are effective. Evidence that the College regularly assesses these areas is in the revision and implementation of the program review process; the ongoing accreditation process; the development and implementation of administrator performance evaluations; periodic student and staff Noel-Levitz surveys; annual update of the collegial governance chart; and periodic update of the Strategic Plan.

Action Plan: Standard IV.A.5

The College will continue its current practices in reviewing and evaluating leadership and governance processes, and where necessary, implementing improvements.

[392] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 7262, AP 7262, AP 7250-2
[393] Noel-Levitz SSI and IPS—Highlights; see also details on Noel-Levitz findings in the response to Standard I.B.3.
[394] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values

Standard IV.B: Board and Administrative Organization

In addition to the leadership of individuals and constituencies, institutions recognize the designated responsibilities of the governing board for setting policies and of the chief administrator for the effective operation of the institution. Multi-college districts/systems clearly define the organizational roles of the district/system and the colleges.

Response to Standard IV.B: Board and Administrative Organization

The College is governed by the Board of Trustees, which derives its authority from Section 70902 of the Education Code of the State of California. The Board of Trustees is subject to the provisions of the Constitution of the State of California, the Education Code and the Government Code of the State of California, the rules and regulations of Title 5, California Code of Regulations, its own policies, and the expressed will of the electorate.[395]

The principal responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are setting, and periodically reviewing, policies governing the College,[396] and selecting, appointing and evaluating the Superintendent/President.[397]

The Board of Trustees delegates to the Superintendent/President the executive responsibility for administering the policies adopted by the Board and executing all decisions of the Board requiring administrative action.[398]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B

The College recognizes the Board of Trustees as the governing board for the College, responsible for setting policy for the College and for selecting and evaluating the Superintendent/President. These authorities and responsibilities are described in Board of Trustees' Policy and Administrative Procedures.[399]

The College is a single-college district; therefore, the organizational role of the district is identical to that of the College.

Action Plan: Standard IV.B

The College achieves this standard and will continue its current practices in recognizing the authorities and designated responsibilities of the Board of Trustees.

Standard IV.B.1

The institution has a governing board that is responsible for establishing policies to assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial

[395] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2429-PVC
[396] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2429-PVC
[397] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2431 and 2435; AP 2431 and 2435
[398] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2430
[399] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures

stability of the institution. The governing board adheres to a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the chief administrative officer for the college or the district/system.

Response to Standard IV.B.1

The Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing policies to assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services: The Board of Trustees, in carrying out this responsibility, "consults collegially" with the Academic Senate on matters of "academic and professional matters."[400] Academic and professional matters are identified in Title 5 as the eleven policy development and implementation areas that are the responsibility of the Academic Senate.[401] The practice of collegial consultation is supported in administrative procedure: "In issues related to academic and professional matters, the Board will rely primarily on the Academic Senate."[402]

In carrying out its responsibilities and in the spirit of collegial consultation, the Board of Trustees reviews and adopts all new and modified curricula, certificate programs, degree requirements, and program review procedures and reports.[403]

The Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing policies to assure the financial stability of the institution: Upon recommendation of the Superintendent/President, the Board of Trustees reviews and approves a wide range of matters relating to the College's financial operations and stability. These matters include, but are not limited to, review and approval of:[404]

1. Accounting systems and procedures that provide an accurate and timely financial picture of the College and its departments

2. Monthly cash flow reports

3. Check warrants

4. Tentative and final College budget

5. Hiring and compensation level of full-time employees

6. Contracts with outside agencies, organizations and individuals, including consultants, contractors, auditors and adjunct faculty (above a specified dollar amount)

7. Major purchases (above a specified dollar amount)

8. Conference and professional development activity requiring out-of-state travel

9. Receipt of grant funds

[400] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2510 and AP 2429-PVC
[401] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2510
[402] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2510
[403] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2429-PVC; Board of Trustees' Agendas and Minutes
[404] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2429-PVC; Board of Trustees' Agendas and Minutes

10. Annual independent audit

The Board of Trustees has a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the Superintendent/President: The policies for selecting and evaluating the Superintendent/President in place and fully implemented.[405]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B.1

The roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees for establishing policies to assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services; to assure the financial stability of the institution; and to select and evaluate the Superintendent/President are established and in effect in Board Policies and Administrative Procedures.

Action Plan: Standard IV.B.1

The College meets this standard and will continue its current practices in recognizing the role and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees in the areas addressed in the standard.

Standard IV.B.1.a

The governing board is an independent policy-making body that reflects the public interest in board activities and decisions. Once the board reaches a decision, it acts as a whole. It advocates for and defends the institution and protects it from undue influence or pressure.

Response to Standard IV.B.1.a

The College, through the Board of Trustees and implementation of its policies and administrative procedures, fulfills this standard, as follows:

Independent policy-making body: To ensure that the Board of Trustees acts as an independent body, free of influence or economic interest in its decisions, members are required to file a conflict of interest statement in accordance with the provisions of Government Code of the State of California and restated in policy of the Board of Trustees.[406] Members also must adhere to the provisions of the Board-adopted Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice, which state, in part, that each member will "resist every temptation and outside pressure to use my position as a community college board member to benefit either myself or any other individual or agency apart from the welfare of the Palo Verde Community College District."[407]

Reflects the public interest: Each member of the Board of Trustees is required to adhere to the provisions of the Board-adopted Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice, which state, in part: "I am committed to serve the needs of the citizens of the District…I am responsible to all citizens of the District, and not solely to those who elected me. The authority delegated to me by the voters must

[405] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2431, BP 2435, AP 2429-PVC, AP 2431 and AP 2435
[406] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2710 and AP 2710-1
[407] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2715

be exercised with as much care and concern for the least influential as for the most influential member of the community."[408]

Acts as a whole—Once the Board of Trustees votes, it is required by the Board-adopted Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice to act as a whole to uphold that decision: "It is my further responsibility to…base my personal decisions upon all available facts in each situation, vote by honest conviction in every case unswayed by partisan bias, and abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the Board."[409]

Defends the College and protects it from undue influence or pressure: This requirement is part of the Board-adopted Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice, which states, in part, that each member will "resist every temptation and outside pressure to use my position as a community college board member to benefit either myself or any other individual or agency apart from the welfare of the Palo Verde Community College District."[410]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B.1.a

Policies are in place and implemented to ensure the Board of Trustees is an independent policy-making body; acts in the public interest; acts as a whole once it reaches a decision; and advocates for and defends the College and protects it from undue influence or pressure.

Action Plan: Standard IV.B.1.a

The College meets this standard and will continue its current practices in supporting the responsibilities and actions of the Board of Trustees in the areas addressed in the standard.

Standard IV.B.1.b

The governing board establishes policies consistent with the mission statement to ensure the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them.

Response to Standard IV.B.1.b

The Board of Trustees adopted the College Mission Statement as part of its policies[411] and strives to uphold its principles with regard to:

The quality, integrity and improvement of student learning programs and services: As stated in the response to Standard IV.B. 1, the Board of Trustees, in carrying out this responsibility in a manner consistent with the Mission Statement and the principle of collegial governance, "consults collegially" with the Academic Senate on matters of "academic and professional matters."[412] Academic and professional matters are identified in Title 5 as the eleven policy development and

[408] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2715
[409] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2715
[410] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2715
[411] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 1200
[412] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2510

implementation areas that are the responsibility of the Academic Senate.[413] The practice of collegial consultation is supported in administrative procedure: "In issues related to academic and professional matters, the Board will rely primarily on the Academic Senate."[414]

In carrying out its responsibilities and in the spirit of collegial consultation, the Board of Trustees reviews and adopts all new and modified curricula, certificate programs, degree requirements, and program review procedures and reports.[415]

The resources necessary to support student learning programs and services: The Board of Trustees acts reasonably, upon recommendation of the Superintendent/President, in approving items that support student learning programs and services consistent with the College Mission Statement and Board policy,[416] including, but not limited to:

1. The College annual budget

2. New positions, including faculty, counseling, administrative and support positions

3. Receipt of grant funds related to student learning programs and services

4. Purchase of goods and services related to student learning and support services (above a specified dollar amount)

5. Conference and professional development activity requiring out-of-state travel

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B.1.b

The Board of Trustees in its policy-making role adheres to the College Mission Statement by supporting student learning programs and providing them with sufficient resources to perform effectively.

Action Plan: Standard IV.B.1.b

The College meets this standard and will continue its current practices in supporting the Board of Trustees policy-making and resource-allocation roles vis-à-vis student learning programs.

Standard IV.B.1.c

The governing board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity.

[413] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2510
[414] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2510
[415] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2429-PVC; Board of Trustees' Agendas and Minutes
[416] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2429-PVC and Board of Trustees' Agendas and Minutes

Response to Standard IV.B.1.c

Educational quality: As stated in the responses to Standard IV.B.1 and IV.B.1.b, above, the Board of Trustees, in carrying out this responsibility, "consults collegially" with the Academic Senate on matters of "academic and professional matters."[417] Academic and professional matters are identified in Title 5 as the eleven policy development and implementation areas that are the responsibility of the Academic Senate.[418] The practice of collegial consultation is supported in administrative procedure: "In issues related to academic and professional matters, the Board will rely primarily on the Academic Senate."[419]

In carrying out its responsibilities and in the spirit of collegial consultation, the Board of Trustees reviews and adopts all new and modified curricula, certificate programs, degree requirements, and program review procedures and reports.[420]

Legal matters: Board policy authorizes the Board of Trustees to retain legal counsel on matters pertaining to the College and Board action and responsibilities.[421] The Board of Trustees is authorized, moreover, to "determine the policies that will govern the operation of the District and to review them periodically [and to] require and consider reports from the Superintendent/President concerning the programs and conditions of the college."[422] The authorization includes all polices and matters coming before the College, including legal matters.

Financial integrity: The Board of Trustees is authorized to "provide for the establishment of the necessary procedures to assure proper accounting of receipts and disbursements of District funds, those of student organizations, and other funds under the supervision of the District [and to] provide for the annual audit of all funds of the District, student organizations, and other funds under the supervision of the District."[423]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B.1.c

The Board of Trustees, reflecting the authority given it by California Education Code, has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity.

Action Plan: Standard IV.B.1.c

The College meets this standard and will continue its current practices in supporting the Board of Trustees' responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity.

[417] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative, AP 2510
[418] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2510
[419] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2510
[420] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures; Board of Trustees' Agendas and Minutes
[421] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2612-PVC
[422] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2429-PVC
[423] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2429-PVC

Standard IV.B.1.d

The institution or the governing board publishes the board bylaws and policies specifying the board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures.

Response to Standard IV.B.1.d

Board bylaws establish the rules and regulations adopted by the Board of Trustees for its internal governance. The Board bylaws are incorporated into the Board's overall Policies and Administrative Procedures. The College, through the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee is currently in the process of revising and updating Board of Trustees' policies. At present, the policies relating to Board internal governance have been reviewed and approved both by the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee and the Board of Trustees.[424] As Board policies are revised and updated, they are posted on the College website. Board policies not yet reviewed and updated remain in effect and are available for review in the College library.

Board size: Board policy specifies the size and membership of the Board, which consists of a student representative in addition to the seven members elected at large—five from Blythe, two from Needles.[425]

Duties and responsibilities: The duties and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees reflect the authorities granted by California Education Code and are incorporated in Board Policies and Administrative Procedures.[426]

Structure: The organizational structure of the Board of Trustees as to size, membership, committees and related matters is described in Board policy.[427]

Operating procedures: Operating procedures cover a vast array of issues, including but not limited to vacancies, term limits, closed sessions, quorum and voting, agendas, and decorum are addressed variously in Board Policies and Administrative Procedures.[428]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B.1.d

All College policies are currently being reviewed for revision and update. Revised Board bylaws, which describe the Board's internal governance, have been incorporated into Board policies and are published on the College website. Policies not yet reviewed for revision and update are available in the College library.

Action Plan: Standard IV.B.1.d

The College meets this standard and will continue its current practices in publishing Board bylaws and other policies.

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[424] Timeline for Completion of Updates and Revisions Board of Trustees' Policies
[425] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2010 and 2015
[426] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2429-PVC and AP 2429-PVC
[427] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures; BP 2010 and 2015
[428] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures; see, for example BP 2110, 2130, 2315, 2330, 2340 and 2355

Standard IV.B.1.e

The governing board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. The board regularly evaluates its policies and practices and revises them as necessary.

Response to Standard IV.B.1.e

An examination of its agendas and minutes demonstrates the Board of Trustees conscientiously follows the rules and procedures established in its bylaws and policies.[429]

Board policies and procedures are currently in the process of being updated and revised in accordance with one of the Board's authorities, namely, "to determine the policies that govern the operation of the District and to review them periodically."[430]

The College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee has taken the lead in this project and is following closely in form and content the community college board policies recommended by the Community College League of California, as well as applicable federal and state regulations, California Education Code, accreditation standards and best practices of the California Community College system. According to the project timeline, the updates and revisions are expected to be completed by the end of the current academic year.[431]

Once the current round of revisions is completed, regular policy review is expected to continue. According to the Superintendent/President, "Once the new [policy] manual is complete it will be important to put in place a process to continually update it."[432]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B.1.e

The College recognizes the importance of regularly reviewing and updating its policies. Prior to the current round of revisions, policy review was accomplished primarily when needed. The College recognizes, further, that it needs to make policy review and revision a regular and systematic College practice.

Action Plan: Standard IV.B.1.e

The College will complete the current revision of College policies, and then implement a process to continually update them.

Standard IV.B.1.f

The governing board has a program for board development and new member orientation. It has a mechanism for providing for continuity of board membership and staggered terms of office.

[429] Board of Trustees' Agendas and Minutes
[430] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, AP 2429-PVC
[431] Timeline for Completion of Updates and Revisions of Board of Trustees' Policies
[432] Superintendent/President Proposed Goals for 2007-08

Response to Standard IV.B.1.f

New member orientation and Board member development: According to Board policy, the Board of Trustees "is committed to its ongoing development as a board and to a trustee education program."[433] The policy further states that the "Superintendent/President and the Board shall assist each new member-elect to understand the Board's functions, policies and procedures before he or she assumes office. Such assistance shall include, but shall not be limited to, Board study sessions and providing written materials and invitations to attend Board meetings, conferences and other activities that foster trustee education with the Superintendent/President."[434]

The two newest members of the Board have committed themselves to attend the new member orientation in January 2008 sponsored by the Community College League of California (League).

Board chairs regularly participate in the League's Board Chair workshops. Five of the current Board members regularly participate in League events. Since the 2002 accreditation team visit, the Board has held two retreats focusing on Board development. Once retreat focused on the Board's ethics policy. The second retreat dealt with the revision of the Board's bylaws, based the League's recommendations.

College administration provides an orientation for candidates seeking election to seats on the Board. In that workshop, the Superintendent/President and each of the Vice-Presidents outline areas of responsibility, challenges and achievements. Budget and other organizational materials are provided to the candidates. If a new member is seated, administrative staff undertakes another, more detailed training session.

Board continuity and staggered terms of office: The continuity of the Board is achieved by having staggered terms: "Elections shall be held every two years, in odd-numbered years. Terms of trustees are staggered so that, as nearly as practical, one half of the trustees shall be elected at each trustee election."[435] Provisions for unexpected vacancies are addressed in Board policy.[436]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B.1.f

The Board of Trustees has an effective professional development and new-member orientation. Board members attend training and workshop sessions offered through the Association of Community College Trustees and the Community College League of California.

Action Plan: Standard IV.B.1.f

The Board of Trustees has effective programs of new-member orientation and professional development and will maintain these practices.

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[433] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2740
[434] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2740
[435] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2100; see also AP 2100
[436] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2110 and AP 2110

Standard IV.B.1.g

The governing board's self-evaluation processes for assessing board performance are clearly defined, implemented, and published in its policies or bylaws.

Response to Standard IV.B.1.g

Board self-evaluation: The members of the Board of Trustees evaluate their own performance once each year, in accordance with Board policy.[437] The members develop their own evaluation instruments and review a summary of the results at a Board session scheduled for that purpose. In its most recent self-evaluation, in 2006-07, the Board assessed its performance according to the following guidelines:[438]

1. Policies, Guidance, and Decision-Making
2. Relationships with the Superintendent
3. Board-Employee Relationships
4. Relationships with the Educational Program/Students
5. Board/Community Relationships
6. Business and Financial management
7. Professional Development of the Board

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B.1.g

The Board of Trustees is committed to the practice of self-assessment as part of the process of improving performance, as is evidenced in Board policy and by the self-evaluation instruments.

Action Plan: Standard IV.B.1.g

The Board of Trustees will continue its annual practice of self-evaluation as part of the overall process of improving performance.

Standard IV.B.1.h

The governing board has a code of ethics that includes a clearly defined policy for dealing with behavior that violates its code.

Response to Standard IV.B.1.h

Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice: To ensure that the Board of Trustees acts as an independent body, free of influence or economic interest in its decisions, members are required to file a conflict of interest statement in accordance with the provisions of Government

[437] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2745; see also AP 2429-PVC
[438] Board of Trustees' Self-Evaluation, 2006-07

Code of the State of California and restated in policy of the Board of Trustees.[439] Members also must adhere to the provisions of the Board-adopted Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice, which states, in part, that each member will "resist every temptation and outside pressure to use [his or her] position as a community college board member to benefit either [himself or herself] or any other individual or agency apart from the welfare of the Palo Verde Community College District."[440]

Board policy contains provisions for dealing with behavior that violates this code—as well as the Conflict of Interest Code[441]—namely, that the violator shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.[442]

Institutional Code of Ethics: The College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee recently approved various revisions to Board of Trustees policies, which will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval in 2008, including an Institutional Code of Ethics.[443] The Institutional Code of Ethics is more inclusive than the Code of Ethics/Standard of Practices, in that the Code applies to all College personnel.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B.1.h

The College demands ethical behavior of its Trustees as well as all members of the College community and has provided adequately for it in its policies, as well as in its Strategic Plan and Values: "Palo Verde College maintains the highest standards of ethics and integrity. The College consistently demands respect, honesty and fairness in its educational programs, professional interactions and community relations."[444]

Action Plan: Standard IV.B.1.h

The College will continue its practices in the area of ethics as they apply to the members of the Board of Trustees and to the College community.

Standard IV.B.1.i

The governing board is informed about and involved in the accrediting process.

Response to Standard IV.B.1.i

The Board of Trustees has been kept informed about and involved in the accrediting process throughout the current accreditation cycle, which started in 2002:

Self-study/Reaffirmation: Approved by the Board of Trustees, January 2002

Progress Report: Approved by the Board of Trustees, April 2004

[439] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2710 and AP 2710-1
[440] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2715
[441] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2710
[442] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2715; see also BP 3050 Draft
[443] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures BP 3050 Draft
[444] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values

Focused Midterm Report: Approved by the Board of Trustees, February 2005

Superintendent/President goals: The Superintendent/President stated to the Board of Trustees that one of his Proposed 2007-08 Goals is to "successfully complete accreditation." He acknowledged that "preparation for [the accreditation] visit has been going on continuously since the last team visit in 2002 and has been going on in earnest for the past 18 months. Obviously, our accreditation is our most valuable asset."[445]

Monthly reports to the Board of Trustees by the Accreditation Liaison Officer: During the past year, the Accreditation Liaison Officer presented a series of accreditation progress reports to the Board of Trustees. Some of the topics were:

"Three Examples of Learning Assessment Instruments and Assessment Results," March 27, 2007
"What Accreditors Look for in a Community College's Board of Trustees," April 24, 2007
"Progress on the 2002 Accreditation Team Recommendations," May 22, 2007
"Plan for Developing and Implementing Measures of Student Learning Outcomes," July 24, 2007

The Board of Trustees reviewed and approved the current Self-Study report December 11, 2007.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B.1.i

The Superintendent/President, Accreditation Liaison Officer and other College personnel have been diligent in keeping the Board of Trustees fully informed of and involved in the accreditation process.

Action Plan: Standard IV.B.1.i

The College will continue its current practices in keeping the Board of Trustees informed of and involved in accreditation processes.

Standard IV.B.1.j

The governing board has the responsibility for selecting and evaluating the district/system chief administrator (most often known as the chancellor) in a multi-college district/system or the college chief administrator (most often known as the president) in the case of a single college. The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to him/her to implement and administer board policies without board interference and hold him/her accountable for the operation of the district/system or college, respectively. In multi-college districts/systems, the governing board establishes a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the presidents of the colleges.

[445] Superintendent/President Proposed Goals for 2007-08

Response to Standard IV.B.1.j

Selecting and evaluating the Superintendent/President: Provisions for the Board of Trustees to select and evaluate the Superintendent/President are described in Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures.[446]

Delegates responsibility and holds accountable: The Board of Trustees is authorized by Board policy to delegate certain powers and duties to the Superintendent/President and to hold the Superintendent/President responsible for executing such powers and duties even if he, in turn, delegates those powers and duties: "The Board of Trustees delegates to the Superintendent/President the executive responsibility for administering the policies adopted by the Board and executing all decisions of the Board requiring action…The Superintendent/President may delegate any powers and duties entrusted to him or her by the Board including the administration of colleges and centers, but will be specifically responsible to the Board for the execution of such delegated powers and duties."[447]

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B.1.j

The Board of Trustees is consistent in carrying out the responsibilities of selecting and evaluating the Superintendent/President. The Board of Trustees delegates to the Superintendent/President executive responsibility for administering policies adopted by the Board and holds him accountable for carrying out that responsibility even if he delegates any part of that responsibility to others.

Action Plan: Standard IV.B.1.j

The College will continue its current practices in supporting the Board of Trustees in their authority to select and evaluate the Superintendent/President, to delegate certain powers and duties to the Superintendent/President and to hold him accountable for the administration of those powers and duties.

Standard IV.B.2

The president has primary responsibility for the quality of the institution he/she leads. He/she provides effective leadership in planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness.

Response to Standard IV.B.2

The President/Superintendent, by virtue of his leadership, management skills, knowledge and experience in college administration and character, is responsible for establishing and maintaining the highest level of quality for the College as an institution of higher learning. His ongoing job responsibilities include:[448]

[446] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2431 and 2435 and AP 2431 and 2435
[447] Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Procedures, BP 2430 and AP 2430
[448] Superintendent/President Job Description; see also Program Review Reports (Office of the Superintendent/President)

1. Chief advisor to the Board of Trustees on policy matters and decisions pertaining to the effective management and operation of the College.

2. Chair of the Administrative Council, consisting of the vice-presidents, deans, and program managers, providing managerial support and direction to the College's administrators.

3. Chair of the College/Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, consisting of representatives of all constituent organizations—faculty, staff, administrators and students. The Committee is charged with reviewing issues of concern to the College community and assigning those concerns to the appropriate constituent organization to develop recommendations. The Administrative Council and College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee are also responsible for reviewing and approving agendas of the Board of Trustees and frequently have joint meetings to accomplish this task.

4. Secretary to the Palo Verde College Foundation, which provides scholarship and other support to the students of the College. In this role, the Superintendent/President provides administrative support and informed guidance to the Foundation, while serving as its liaison with the Board of Trustees and the College.

5. Acts as the key representative of the College in community organizations and functions, including serving as a member of the Blythe Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

6. Serves as the representative of the College for appropriate state, regional and federal agencies and organizations.

7. Supervisor of the office of the Superintendent/President, which consists of an administrative staff, the Administrative Assistant and the Executive Secretary, and two managers:

    a. Director, Small Business Economic Development Center/Institutional Researcher—External

    b. Public Information Officer, a part-time position

8. Plans and presides at Faculty-Staff meetings, monthly gatherings of all faculty, staff and administrators for a one-hour meeting devoted to discussion to topics of interest and concern to the College community, such as the budget, construction projects, accreditation progress, and reports from College departments and organizations.

The Superintendent/President also provides leadership to the College by ensuring Board policies are reviewed and updated to maintain consistency with the College's mission and to maintain compliance with state and federal policies and standards in higher education. He coordinates with College constituencies to provide for collegial governance of the College, works cooperatively with

constituent organizations in evaluating the effectiveness of the College's processes and structures and provides leadership to the College in meeting or exceeding standards of accreditation.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B.2

The Superintendent/President is the key leader of the College and its chief representative. He is given the authority by the Board of Trustees to administer policies in its behalf, and as such is entrusted with upholding the mission and ensuring the educational quality of the College. He promotes collegial participation, and encourages his immediate subordinates to do the same.

Action Plan: Standard IV.B.2

The College will continue its current practices in supporting the Superintendent/President as the key leader of the College, whose responsibilities include upholding the College mission, administering policies on behalf of the Board of Trustee, and ensuring the quality of the College and its programs and services.

Standard IV.B.2.a

The president plans, oversees, and evaluates an administrative structure organized and staffed to reflect the institution's purposes, size, and complexity. He/she delegates authority to administrators and others consistent with their responsibilities, as appropriate.

Response to Standard IV.B.2.a

The Superintendent/President's immediate subordinates responsible for managing the operations of the college are the three Vice Presidents: Administrative Services, Instructional Services and Student Services. Through these key persons the Superintendent/President oversees the operations of the College. The administrative structure is simple but effective, and demonstrates the Superintendent/President's skills in delegating authority. He invests in each of the vice presidents the authority and provides them the staff and financial resources to carry out his or her responsibilities effectively:

The Vice-President of Administrative Services is responsible for preparing and administering the College's budget and financial transactions and oversees Informational Technology, Human Resources, Facilities and Operations and the College bookstore. She supervises a managerial and administrative support staff adequate to carry out the responsibilities of her office. She chairs the Budget Committee, a mutual agreement committee responsible for reviewing, modifying where necessary and approving division and department budget proposals annually. She is responsible for carrying out budgetary and financial authority delegated to her by the Superintendent/President, as well as state and federal rules and procedures governing college finances.

The Vice-President of Instructional Services oversees teaching faculty and academic matters, the Needles Center, Distance Education programs, the Spring Street campus, and the Child Development Center. He co-chairs the Curriculum Committee. He supervises three academic deans—LVN program, Needles Center and Distance Education and Noncredit Programs—hires and evaluates full-time and adjunct teaching faculty, and administers educational policy delegated to

him by the Superintendent/President. He is also responsible for administering California Education Code rules and procedures governing academic matters.

The Vice-President of Student Services oversees counseling, financial aid, admissions and records, EOPS, DSPS and Associated Student Body activities. She supervises several program managers, counseling faculty and administrative support staff. She chairs several committees, including the Matriculation Committee, and is responsible for carrying out College policies delegated to her by the Superintendent/President, as well as California Education Code and other state and federal policies governing the wide range of student services provided by her office.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B.2.a

The Superintendent/President has assembled a team of vice presidents who know their jobs and who understand the duties and responsibilities with which the Superintendent/President has charged them. The Superintendent/President is an effective delegator. He invests the three vice presidents with sufficient authority and resources to administer College programs and services effectively.

Action Plan: Standard IV.B.2.a

The Superintendent/President has assembled an effective management team and delegates to the team members appropriately in a manner that meets this standard.

Standard IV.B.2.b

The president guides institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment by the following:

Establishing a collegial process that sets values, goals, and priorities;

Ensuring that evaluation and planning rely on high quality research and analysis on external and internal conditions;

Ensuring that educational planning is integrated with resource planning and distribution to achieve student learning outcomes; and

Establishing procedures to evaluate overall institutional planning and implementation efforts

Response to Standard IV.B.2.b

The Superintendent/President guides the College in a process of ongoing improvement of its teaching and learning environment, as follows:

1. Establishing a collegial process that sets values, goals, and priorities: The Superintendent/President sets a positive tone encouraging collegial participation in College policy discussions and decisions in support of the Mission, namely, to provide "an exemplary learning environment that promotes student success, lifelong learning and

community development."[449] He recognizes that sustaining an exemplary learning environment requires that all College constituents are empowered to participate collegially in formulating College policies. The Superintendent/President has established collegial processes in various venues: as advisor to the Board of Trustees on academic matters; as chair of the College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee and the Administrative Council; as chair of Faculty-Staff meetings; and in his delegation of authority to his vice presidents.

2. Ensuring that evaluation and planning rely on high quality research and analysis on external and internal conditions: The Superintendent/President's support of institutional research is evidenced in his creation of "internal" and "external" research functions. Internal research is the responsibility of a faculty member who also serves and the Accreditation Liaison Officer. External research is the responsibility of an administrator who is the Director of the Small Business Economic Development Center. Under the supervision of the Superintendent/President, external research efforts are currently focusing on a community needs assessment of the College's educational programs. The internal researcher, under the direction of the Vice President of Instructional Services, is concentrating on working with faculty members in identifying and measuring student learning outcomes.

3. Ensuring that educational planning is integrated with resource planning and distribution to achieve student learning outcomes: The Superintendent/President ensures through his executive actions and powers of delegation that educational planning is integrated with resource planning, whether they are financial, human or facilities resources. Budget planning affecting learning programs is developed by the divisions and proposed to the Budget Committee each year. The Budget Committee is chaired by the Vice President of Administrative Services acting under the authority of the Superintendent/President. As for human resources, the Superintendent/President recognizes that staff diversity is an important asset for the College and actively encourages it in faculty and staff recruitment and selection. He also places high value in rigorous job performance evaluations that recognize superior performance and that provide for remediation. As for facilities resources, the Superintendent/President has directed the Vice President of Instructional Services to develop educational programs in physical education and the performing arts in preparation for two buildings under construction.

4. Establishing procedures to evaluate overall institutional planning and implementation efforts: The President/Superintendent actively promotes regular and comprehensive evaluations of College policies and practices, as evidenced by his involvement in the update of the Strategic Plan and the ongoing Board policy updates and revisions. He supports policies and programs of continuous improvement in all programs and services, evidenced by his strong advocacy of program review, institutional research, and the accreditation process.

[449] Strategic Plan and Statement of Vision, Mission and Values

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B.2.b

The Superintendent/President demonstrates strong commitment and support of collegial participation, research as the basis for planning and decision-making, the integration of educational planning with resource planning, and the practice of ongoing evaluation of programs and services to achieve continuous improvement.

While the Superintendent/President actively supports these important College values and practices and frequently commends the work of others, he would strengthen his effectiveness by discussing collegially within the College community his annual goals. There would be at least two benefits: the College community would derive the satisfaction of having participated collegially in goal-setting at the highest administrative level of the College; and the Board of Trustees would have the assurance that the goals of the Superintendent/President are grounded in a broad-based assessment of College needs.

Action Plan: Standard IV.B.2.b

The Superintendent/President, by virtue of his active support of collegial governance, research, integrating educational planning with resource planning, and ongoing evaluation as the basis for making improvements, enables the College to achieve this standard. Beyond the requirements of the standard, moreover, the Superintendent/President will consider formulating his annual goals in the context of broad-based, collegial participation by the College's constituents.

Standard IV.B.2.c

The president assures the implementation of statutes, regulations, and governing board policies and assures that institutional practices are consistent with institutional mission and policies.

Response to Standard IV.B.2.c

The Superintendent/President assures the implementation statutes, regulations and Board policies several ways:

1. By staying informed of changes and new statewide developments that have an impact on the College: As a participant in statewide professional associations and organizations, including the Community College League of California, the Superintendent/President stays informed of new and anticipated regulatory and policy developments that might affect the College. He relays back to the Board of Trustees and to College personnel news of such developments and what impact they might have on the College.

2. By maintaining ongoing contact with faculty and staff: The Superintendent/President is highly accessible to the Board, faculty, staff and administration at various types of meeting venues, formal and informal. Such venues include formal meetings of the Board of Trustees, College Council/Strategic Planning Steering Committee, Faculty-Staff and Flex and Institute Days; they may also include informal meetings over lunch in the Den or while walking to a meeting or a class. These venues provide opportunities for the Superintendent/President to

discuss candidly matters facing the College and to ensure that College processes are consistent with its mission and policies.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B.2.c

The Superintendent/President, by virtue of his managerial practices and style, assures the implementation of statewide and College policies and regulations. He is highly accessible to members of the Board of Trustees, administrators, faculty, staff and students. He keeps current with statewide rules and policies that might have impact on the College, and he conveys these observations to the Board of Trustees and College personnel. He participates in various kinds of meeting venues, formal and informal, that enable him to assure the College is consistent with its mission and policies.

Action Plan: Standard IV.B.2.c

The College, through the Superintendent/President, follows practices that assure the implementation of policies and regulations required of the College by the Board of Trustees and by statewide policies and regulations. His practices ensure that the College meets this standard.

Standard IV.B.2.d

The president effectively controls budget and expenditures.

Response to Standard IV.B.2.d

The Superintendent/President controls the budget and expenditures as follows:

1. Each year, the Superintendent/President reviews the tentative budget with the Vice-President of Administrative Services to ensure anticipated projected revenue is consistent with Chancellor's office projections for the College and that planned expenditures are within revenue limits. He makes adjustments in the tentative budget and final budget, as needed, to ensure that it is fiscally sound and that expenditures are in line with the College mission.

2. The Superintendent/President reviews monthly budget reports and confers with the Vice-President of Administrative Services. Periodically throughout the month, and prior to each Board meeting, the Superintendent/President reviews the cash flow statement and other budget reports produced by the office of Administrative Services. He notes any expenditures that appear to be out of line and reviews fund balances to make sure they are in compliance with state requirements and College budget policy.

3. During contract negotiations with the College's two associations, CSEA and CTA, the Superintendent/President, as chief negotiator for the College, reviews with the Vice-President of Administrative Services all contract items that have potential financial impact on the College. He takes into account all other ongoing and anticipated financial obligations of the College, as well as its projected revenue, prior to committing to further contract obligations.

4. All purchase orders, travel requests, contracts, and other agreements involving expenditures must receive approval by the Superintendent/President.

5. The Superintendent/President reviews the independent auditor's annual report with the Vice-President of Administrative services, and where applicable, other administrators and staff. He reviews auditor's recommendations and ensures, through the Vice-President of Administrative Services, that all recommendations are implemented to the satisfaction of the auditor.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B.2.d

The Superintendent/President does an effective job in controlling the budget and expenditures. The tentative and final budget must first receive his approval prior to implementation. He confers regularly with the Vice-President of Administrative Services on budget matters and reviews monthly cash flow and other reports. He represents the College in contract negotiations and is responsible all contract items that have potential financial impact on the College. He approves purchase orders, travel requests and other monetary agreements. He reviews the auditor's annual report and ensures that the College implements the auditor's recommendations.

Action Plan: Standard IV.B.2.d

The Superintendent/President's effective control of the budget and expenditures enables the College to meet this standard.

Standard IV.B.2.e

The president works and communicates effectively with the communities served by the institution.

Response to Standard IV.B.2.e

The Superintendent/President is active in the Blythe community formally and informally. He is a member of the Board of Directors and Past President of the Blythe Area Chamber of Commerce. He is an active member of the Blythe Rotary Club. Informally, the Superintendent/President works closely with the administration of the Palo Verde Unified School District and the City of Blythe, as well as with elected officials from both. Moreover, the Superintendent/President is widely known and involved with community affairs and maintains close ties with the local newspaper.

The Superintendent/President's involvement with the other community in the district, namely, Needles, is hampered by distance—Needles is 95 miles from Blythe. Despite the distance, he has been a regular participant and presenter at Chamber of Commerce and service club meetings in Needles. The College expects its Director of the Needles Center to be the College's primary contact with the Needles community. This role has been supplemented in recent years by the Director of the Small Business Economic Development Center, who maintains an office in Needles and who has been actively involved in economic development activities in the community. He is involvement includes regular participation as a member of the Board of Directors of the Needles Chamber of Commerce.

College Self-Evaluation: Standard IV.B.2.e

The Superintendent/President is active in the Blythe community as an active service club member and as a board member of the chamber of commerce. Because of the distance from Blythe to Needles it is not feasible for him to participate regularly in Needles' community events, although he has been a guest speaker at Chamber of Commerce and service club meetings. He has delegated responsibility for representing the College to the Director of the Needles Center and to the Director of the Small Business Development Center.

The Superintendent/President is encouraged to produce one or more publications, such as the "President's Letter," which would be a personalized statement from the Superintendent/President about College activities and which would be directed to the College as well as to the communities it serves.

Action Plan: Standard IV.B.2.e

The Superintendent/President will continue his work in the communities of Blythe and Needles—including having other administrators represent him, especially in Needles—and will consider developing one or more personalized publications for the College and its communities.

Standards IV.B.3.a through IV.B.3.g deal with multi-college districts and do not pertain to Palo Verde College, which consists of one college in Blythe and a center in Needles.

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