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# EVALUATION REPORT

**MiraCosta College  
One Barnard Drive  
Oceanside, CA 92056**

A Confidential Report Prepared for the  
Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited  
MiraCosta College  
March 1- 4, 2010

**Dr. Andreea M. Serban, Team Chair  
Superintendent/President, Santa Barbara City College**

## **MiraCosta College Accreditation Team Roster**

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## Summary of the Evaluation Report

**INSTITUTION:** MiraCosta College

**DATES OF VISIT:** March 1- 4, 2010

**TEAM CHAIR:** Andreea M. Serban, Ph.D.  
Superintendent/President  
Santa Barbara City College

MiraCosta College received reaffirmation of accreditation in June 2004, and the succeeding years have brought some growth in enrollment, institutional turmoil, and significant changes in college leadership. In March 2007, the college submitted a midterm report, which the Commission accepted in June 2007. The Commission also acted to require a special visit by Commission representatives no later than August 31, 2007 for the following purposes:

“... to focus on the institution’s governance and personnel issues that have led the institution’s inability to move forward in addressing the new accreditation standards on student learning outcomes, (ER 10 and Standard I.B.2.a, b, e, f) as well as efforts the college is taking to restore the core value of commitment to effective and collegial governance as observed and noted by the 2004 comprehensive evaluation team Standard IV.A and IV.B.”

In accord with this action, a four-member team visited MiraCosta College on September 17 and 18, 2007. At its meeting of January 2008, the Commission sanctioned the college by placing it on Warning status and acted to require that the college complete two Progress Reports followed by visits of Commission representatives. The first Progress Report was submitted by April 1, 2008 and the second report by March 15, 2009. Based on the February 2009 college progress report and the report provided by the representative of the Commission which conducted an evaluation visit on April 7, 2009, the Commission acted at its June 2009 meeting to accept the evaluation report and remove the college from Warning.

In May 2009, the Commission approved a Substantive Change Proposal submitted by the college for a change in courses and program attendant to online delivery (distance education). In June 2009, the Commission approved a Substantive Change Proposal submitted by the college for the additional location apart from the main campus at which MiraCosta College offers at least 50% of educational programs know as the San Elijo site.

This evaluation report serves as the report for reaffirmation of accreditation.

The accreditation visiting team was comprised of ten members, including the team assistant. Prior to the arrival of the team, the following preparatory activities occurred:

- college staff began preparation of the self study report in February 2008;
- the team chair and team assistant visited MiraCosta College on January 27, 2010;
- the team chair participated in an ACCJC training session for chairs;

- all team members participated in an ACCJC training session and met with the team chair to discuss preparations for the visit;
- team members read the self study report, the progress reports and supporting evidence and other documents, which the college made available online or electronically, prepared lists of individuals and groups with whom they wanted to meet, and, in sub-teams assigned to Standards, prepared first drafts of the visiting team report.

The visiting team began its onsite work with a tour of the college campus and a reception on campus that offered the team an opportunity to meet college leaders and trustees. During the course of the visit, team members interviewed faculty, staff, administrators, students, and Board members, attended several college committee meetings, and reviewed all pertinent documents supporting the self study report. The visiting team found all college faculty, staff, administrators, students, and trustees open and forthcoming in discussions with team members, expressing both the many strengths of the college, as well as areas for improvement. College personnel responded to every request for interviews and documents, when available, immediately.

The visiting team found a college in significant transition, undergoing many process changes whose intended goals and end results are yet to be accomplished. This transition is following a period of four years of great institutional turmoil and divisiveness. The college leadership is new but clearly committed to the success of the college and its students. At the time of the visit the Superintendent/President had been at the college for one year and two of the three vice presidents have been in their positions for two and three years, respectively.

Through its analysis of the Self Study Report, supported by extensive interviews, observations, and review of documents, the visiting team has defined four recommendations for the college to meet the standards.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO MEET THE STANDARDS**

**Recommendation 1:** In order to meet the standards, the Team recommends that the college (I.A.4, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, III.A.6, III.B.2.a, III.B.2.b, III.C.1.c, III.C.2, III.D.1.a, III.D.1.b, III.D.1.c, III.D.1.d, III.D.3, ER 19):

- Implement, align, and integrate various college plans into a fully integrated institutional plan that advances a defined mission statement.
- Develop specific, measurable, realistic and time-bound objectives in relation to clearly stated institution-wide goals that are understood college-wide and represent the foundation of the integrated institutional plan.
- Conduct consistent, systematic and timely evaluations of the integrated institutional plan and its related components based on analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data and ensure the results are communicated and understood by college constituents. Further, in order to promote and sustain a culture of evidence and improve

institutional effectiveness, the college should implement an ongoing method of measuring and evaluating its effectiveness in achieving stated institutional performance objectives and student learning outcomes.

- Complete the Education Master Plan and begin implementation. In addition, the college must demonstrate that decisions regarding priorities result from stated institutional goals and are linked to an integrated institutional plan and its related planning components.

**Recommendation 2:** In order to meet the standard and achieve the proficiency level by 2012, the Team recommends that the college develop comprehensive reports to clearly demonstrate the ongoing, systematic review of student learning outcomes (I.B.1, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, II.C.2).

**Recommendation 3:** In order to meet the standard, the Team recommends that the college formalize in writing participation in student learning outcomes and assessment as a stated component of the evaluation process for faculty and others directly responsible for student progress for achieving stated student learning outcomes (III.A.1.c).

**Recommendation 4:** In order to meet the standard, the Team recommends that the college develop a process to evaluate the integrity and effectiveness of its new governance structure and use the evaluation results as the basis for improvement (IV.A.2.5).

## COMMENDATIONS

The visiting team also identified five commendations for the college.

**Commendation 1:** The Team commends the college for its nationally recognized service learning program that has established partnerships with over 75 different nonprofit organizations and public schools and supports the participation of over 1,000 MiraCosta students annually.

**Commendation 2:** The Team commends the college for its comprehensive library services and collections and a purposeful and successful approach of functioning as a singular library for multiple sites, ensuring seamless service for all students regardless of location or instructional delivery methods.

**Commendation 3:** The Team commends the college for enhancing the learning environment through well integrated and maintained facilities and grounds with a focus on sustainable practices and landscaping that create a cohesive and esthetically pleasant campus environment.

**Commendation 4:** The Team commends the college for a robust, modern information technology infrastructure and its pervasive use throughout the campuses in support of instruction, student services and operations.

**Commendation 5:** The Team commends the college for its accomplishment in re-establishing a positive and collegial environment.

# ACCREDITATION EVALUATION REPORT FOR MIRACOSTA COLLEGE

## INTRODUCTION

Established in 1934, MiraCosta College is a comprehensive, public community college serving the cities and areas of Oceanside, Carlsbad, Encinitas, Cardiff, Olivehain, Leucadia, Solana Beach, Rancho Santa Fe, Del Mar and parts of Carmel Valley. In 1969, Oceanside-Carlsbad Junior College District separated from the high school by electing its own board. In 1987, MiraCosta College became a basic-aid district, receiving local property tax revenue in excess of the state formula for funding colleges. As a result, MiraCosta College has received no state general apportionment and has been entitled to retain all tax revenue received above the general apportionment formula. The basic aid status has afforded the college significant higher levels of funding than if it were dependent on state apportionment.

The College has three sites: the Oceanside Campus, the San Elijo Center and the Community Learning Center. The latter is focused on noncredit English as a Second Language, adult high school, and a variety of free non-credit classes and fee-based community service classes.

After a period of flat or slightly declining enrollments, MiraCosta College has experienced steady growth between Fall 2006 and Spring 2009, reaching an enrollment of 14,235 credit students and 4,000 noncredit students throughout the district. Because of its basic aid status, MiraCosta has fared better economically than most California community colleges, which has meant fewer cuts to its programs and continued growth in number of employees hired.

The self study is complete in terms of addressing the standards. In some areas of the self study there was good evidence to support the assertions and descriptions within the report, in others the evidence was not well stated or related to the statements made. The quality of writing was generally satisfactory and the organization of the report was good. Supporting documents, if they existed, whether cited in the self study or that the visiting team identified by other means, were made available.

Overall, the visiting team found a college where the entire college community has great institutional pride and there is a sense of institutional identity. The focus on collegiality is evident and pervasive. This is a significant accomplishment in light of the significant changes in leadership and turmoil that the college has weathered over the last four years.

The visiting team identified four recommendations to meet the standards and five commendations. In addition, the team found that the college has resolved five of the six recommendations from the previous comprehensive and follow up visits and the college meets all but two of the ACCJC Eligibility Requirements.

## **Evaluation of Institutional Responses to Previous Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1: The team recommends that the college develop a plan to implement the measurement of student learning outcomes at the course, program and institutional levels. The plan should include tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals so that significant progress can be reported in the midterm report.**

**In addition, the evaluation follow-up visit report dated September 17-18, 2007 recommended that the college provide evidence in four areas by the March 2010 accreditation visit. The team recommends that the following items of evidence be in place at the time of the next accreditation visit:**

- a) Evidence that the process of establishing student learning outcomes at all course and program levels has been completed.**
- b) Evidence that assessment of student learning course and program outcomes is being conducted.**
- c) Evidence that students are achieving stated learning outcomes.**
- d) Evidence that the assessment and evaluation results are used for the improvement of student learning.**

**(Standards II.A.1.a, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f)**

The college has not fully resolved this recommendation. Since the 2007 Midterm Report, MiraCosta College reported continued and significant progress towards meeting this recommendation and the follow-up 2009 recommendation.

The college put forth great effort in implementing an aggressive timetable and schedule for defining and implementing student learning outcomes, assessment strategies, and a commitment to improved student learning. To achieve these goals, the college implemented three new software systems: 1) EDDI, an enrollment and FTES reporting system, 2) TracDat, an SLO collection and tracking system, and 3) PERCY, a program review system. It is evident that the college has been focused on the improvement of processes and has had some dialogue about student learning as evidenced by identifying four institutional student learning outcomes: effective communication, critical thinking and problem solving, professional and ethical behavior, and information literacy. Since the college has only been through one cycle with the new software SLO management software TracDat, which was completed in 2009, it is unclear what the impact has been on improvement.

Much of the evidence was scheduled to be completed by March 2010, when the comprehensive visit was expected. The college identified two programs: general education and career technical education. The outcomes of these two programs were to be assessed in conjunction with the course level outcomes. The institutional outcome assessment was scheduled to be completed in spring 2009. The college revamped the program review



process to incorporate student learning outcomes assessments. That process has been piloted on four programs: Letters, Counseling, Allied Health, and Non Credit Health and Safety. It is evident that the college is committed to change and implementation of all recommendations but the target date for completion does not seem to be adequate to reflect a continuous cycle of improvement.

It appears that nearly all courses have identified SLOs. However, the degree to which assessments have been applied is unclear and difficult to document. The analysis of SLO assessment is not pervasive, and there does not appear to be a mechanism for oversight and tracking related to SLO progress and evolution.

MiraCosta College has not assessed degrees or certificates to date and has yet to establish the process for doing so. In the self study, the college states that the Outcomes and Assessment Committee has established a goal to have degree and certificate SLOs written by March 2010. The self study included a Planning Agenda that stated "The college will establish degree and certificate-level student learning outcomes and assessments and link those to the process that results in continuous improvement in student learning via the Program Review process that drives budgeting and planning in the collegial consultation and governance process. Further, the college will establish a clearly defined connection between student learning outcomes and assessment, institutional learning outcomes and assessment and administrative unit outcomes and assessment for the same purpose. The college is making efforts to achieve this Planning Agenda by the 2010 accreditation team site visit; however, it recognizes the need for this Planning Agenda as of the writing of this self study." At the time of the visit, the college had not completed these stated activities and outcomes.

**Recommendation 2: The team recommends that the college develop a specific "education plan" for first time college students and take concerted action to improve student awareness and access to counseling and advising services at all college sites.**

The college has responded adequately and appropriately to this recommendation. In Fall 2004, the Chair of the Counseling Department revised the education plan forms used at MiraCosta College. The new plans combine the aspects of the CSU and UC transfer check sheets, which delineate the general education course options. The education plan forms are updated each year. In addition to revising the education plan, in Fall 2004, the Public Information Office developed a full-page ad for the Schedule of Classes that details services provided by the Counseling Department, Transfer Center, and the Center for Career Studies and Services. The ad appears in each Schedule of Classes just before the course listings. The Counseling Department also tracks the number of education plans developed with students each year in an effort to ensure students are taking advantage of this opportunity to ensure they are meeting their educational goals through well-informed counselors.

Other Student Services programs support student success through special education plans, as well. For example, Extended Opportunities Programs and Services (EOPS) counselors work with approximately 750 students annually, each of whom works with a counselor on an education plan upon entry to the college. Their plans are updated each semester. Each of

MiraCosta's 600 disabled students receives a preliminary Student Educational Contract at entry and a more formal education plan is prepared by the second or third semester. The Institute for International Perspectives serves approximately 200 students per year, 120 of whom are new each year. Of the new students, approximately 100 prepare an education plan in their first semester. While all counselors work with transfer-bound students to develop and revise education plans, the Transfer Center works solely with students interested in transfer. All of the students who are assisted in the Transfer Center have formal education plans developed. Approximately 80 new veterans enroll each semester and each must have a complete educational plan.

**Recommendation 3: The team recommends that the composition of the credit faculty of MiraCosta College reflect the diversity of the district's student population and the diversity of the community it serves. Diversity should be a primary consideration in the hiring of new or replacement credit faculty. Significant progress toward this diversity must be reported in the mid-term report.**

MiraCosta College has responded adequately and appropriately to this recommendation. In response to this recommendation, the Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee (EEOAC), led by the Human Resources Director, was reconstituted and made a high priority on campus. The committee includes faculty, administrators, classified employees, students, and representatives of the community. This committee has met regularly and has set goals which help the college to recruit diverse credit faculty members.

Each year the college assesses its record in employment equity and diversity. These data are collected and published in the Equal Employment Plan by the staff in Human Resources. The data indicate an increase in the diversity of the faculty at MiraCosta College.

The January 2008 ACCJC letter to the college, the college was directed to "demonstrate the institution's resolution" of the following recommendation in a Progress Report due April 1, 2008:

**Recommendation 3. The team recommends that the governing board establish a comprehensive governing board development plan that builds a shared understanding of board roles and responsibilities, that leads to common agreement about the rules, regulations, and protocols under which the board operates, and that creates a framework that allows the board to operate in a unified manner.**

The college has adequately addressed this recommendation. As described in the May 7-8, 2008 evaluation report of a follow-up progress visit by an accreditation team, the college has taken steps to address this recommendation. In addition to the steps noted in this report, during the March 2010 accreditation visit, the team learned that the current Superintendent/President has initiated and conducted quarterly board retreats that have further helped with this recommendation. The team observed that the current board understands its role and responsibilities and follows appropriate protocol.

The college was also asked to demonstrate in the 2008 Progress Report that it had “set a schedule or plan for beginning the communications that will address Recommendation 2,” with complete resolution expected at the time of the March 2009 Progress Report:

**Recommendation 2: The team recommends that the governing board and college constituent groups engage in a dialogue focused upon identifying and achieving mutual interests central to ensuring a participative governance climate consistent with the college mission, vision and values.**

The college has adequately addressed this recommendation. As described in the May 7-8, 2008 evaluation report of a follow-up progress visit by an accreditation team, the college has taken steps to address this recommendation. In addition to the steps noted in this report, as described in the self study and as observed during the March 2010 accreditation visit, the college has developed a new participatory governance structure which needs time to prove its effectiveness. As discussed later in this report, college constituencies are positive about the potential of this new structure. The board was kept apprised of the progress made in the development of the new governance structure and appears supportive of this effort.

## **Eligibility Requirements**

### **1. Authority**

MiraCosta College has authority to operate as a degree granting institution due to the continuous accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education and is approved by the California State Department of Education Office of Private Postsecondary Education and is approved by the California State Department of Education Office of Private Postsecondary Education for training veterans and other eligible persons under the provisions of the GI Bill. This authority is noted on the page immediately following the title page of the MiraCosta College catalog.

### **2. Mission**

The visiting team confirmed that MiraCosta College adopted its current mission statement in spring 2009. The mission statement is published in the college catalog and on the college web site. It is also posted at various sites on campus.

### **3. Governing Board**

A seven-member Board of Trustees governs MiraCosta College. The Trustees are elected to the Board for four-year terms. The terms of the Trustees are staggered to provide continuity. The student body elects a Student Trustee who votes on college business (except for closed session issues) in an advisory capacity. The Board holds regular bi-monthly meetings. In addition, the Board holds retreats. All meetings are open to the public with the agendas, minutes, and attachments posted on the college web site and also available in the Office of the Superintendent/President.

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

The Board of Trustees selects the chief executive officer (CEO) of the college. Dr. Francisco Rodriguez, Superintendent/President, was appointed on March 1, 2009. The Superintendent/President of the college has primary responsibility for leading the college and to administer Board policies.

### **5. Administrative Capacity**

The current administration is adequate in number, experience, and qualifications to provide appropriate administrative oversight. The senior staff, particularly, the executive leadership has changed significantly in the last three years. At the time of the visit the Superintendent/President had been at the college for one year and two of the three vice presidents have been in their positions for two and three years, respectively.

### **6. Operational Status**

Students are enrolled in a variety of courses that lead to two-year degrees, certificates of proficiency, specializations, skills certificates, and transfer, and that lead to placement in the workforce, in internships, and in professions.

## **7. Degrees**

The majority of the college's offerings are in programs that lead to degrees, as described in the college's catalog. A significant number of students enroll in these courses. Degree opportunities and transfer courses are also clearly identified in the catalog.

## **8. Educational Programs**

The college's educational programs are consistent with its mission, are based on recognized fields of study, are of sufficient content and length, and maintain appropriate levels of quality and rigor for the degrees and programs offered. Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees generally require 60 semester units including 21 units of general education. Certificates of Achievement are designed to prepare students for employment in specific career areas. The total units required for a certificate of achievement varies with each discipline. Certificates of Proficiency are short-term, typically requiring fewer than 18 units of course work.

## **9. Academic Credit**

Academic credit is based on California state law and historically accepted academic standards.

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

The college defines and publishes institutional student learning outcomes in the college catalog. Two program-level student learning outcomes have been identified for assessment purposes: general education and career and technical education. Nearly all courses have identified one or more SLOs. However, the degree to which assessments have been applied is unclear and difficult to document. MiraCosta College has not developed SLOs for its degrees and certificates and it is yet to develop a process for doing so.

## **11. General Education**

General education courses have the required breadth to promote intellectual inquiry. These courses include demonstrated competency in writing and computational skills and serve as an introduction to major areas of knowledge. The quality and rigor of these courses are consistent with the academic standards appropriate to higher education. The general education component of programs is consistent with statewide standards.

## **12. Academic Freedom**

The college's academic freedom policy for faculty and students is defined in Board of Trustees Policy 4030.

## **13. Faculty**

The college has 161 full-time faculty and 381 adjunct/associate credit and non-credit instructors. The names, degrees, and years of employment of full-time faculty are listed in the college catalog.

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

The college provides appropriate services to students and develops programs that meet the educational support needs of its diverse student population. The college provides services in the following areas: Admissions and Records, Testing Center, Extended Opportunity Programs & Services, Assessment Center, Bookstore, Cafeteria, Career Center, Transfer Center, Counseling & Program Advisement, Disabled Student Programs & Services, Distance Education, Financial Aid/Scholarship, International Students Program, and Library. MiraCosta also offers programs such as Puente, Institute for International Perspectives, Retention Services, the Service Learning Program, University Link, Summer Bridge, and Academic Boot Camp.

#### **15. Admissions**

The college's admissions policies are consistent with its mission and conform to parameters outlined in state law and college regulations. They are published in the college catalog, the schedules of classes, and on the college's web site. To enroll at the college, a student must satisfy the published requirements.

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

The college provides specific long-term access to information and learning resources and services to support its educational mission. These resources and services are provided for and delivered by many different divisions, departments, and centers; but, in general, they primarily are the responsibility of the Library and the Office of Instruction.

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

The college has basic aid status which has provided significantly higher revenues than if the college depended on state apportionment as its primary source of income. As a result, the college has been able to maintain adequate reserve levels for contingencies and for expansion and maintains a minimum eight percent ending fund balance. All funds are carefully tracked, accounted for, and documented.

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

Reports on audit of financials and supplemental information including reports on compliance are prepared for MiraCosta College by Vincenti, Lloyd, and Stutzman, Certified Public Accountants. The college is audited on an annual basis by an independent auditing firm. The firm is selected by evaluating the scope of its experience, the size of the firm and its ability to provide backup personnel and a wide range of expertise. References are carefully evaluated. The auditing firm employs Audits of Colleges and Universities, published by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. The Board of Trustees reviews the audit findings, exceptions, letters to management, and any recommendations made by the contracted auditing firm.

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

The college does not satisfy this eligibility requirement. At the time of the visit, the college had an outdated Academic Master Plan, for which the most recent evaluation was written in

2005-06. The college does not have an overall institutional plan, nor clearly understood institutional goals with associated measurable, realistic, specific and time-bound planning objectives to guide the college direction and efforts. At the time of the visit, the college was in the process of interviewing consulting firms to help develop an Educational Master Plan and a Facilities Master Plan. The 2007 Technology Plan has not been updated nor evaluated and there was no active effort to develop a new technology plan as the college is waiting to first engage in the development of the two new plans mentioned earlier. The college lacks an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and reevaluation.

#### **20. Public Disclosure**

The college displays in writing and practice the model of institutional integrity. The college catalog, schedules of classes and the web site provide the public with current information on degrees and curricular offerings, student fees, financial aid, refund policies, admissions policies, transfer requirements, hours of operation, and appropriate contact information such as phone numbers and specific web pages, where needed. The names of the Board of Trustees are listed in the catalog and on the web site.

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

The college meets this Eligibility Requirement.

## **STANDARD I INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND EFFECTIVENESS**

### **General Observations:**

#### **A. Mission**

The mission has been approved by the Board of Trustees and reviewed regularly. The mission was revised from 2006 and again in 2009 (I.A.2, I.A.3). The mission defines the institution's broad educational purposes and the commitment to achieving student learning. The defined student population is the students within the community according to the mission.

#### **B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness**

The college has undergone significant changes in leadership and turmoil over the past four years. At the time of the visit, the Superintendent/President had been in the position for one year and two of the three vice presidents have been in their positions for two and three years, respectively. In response to one of the prior accreditation recommendations, the college made an effort to develop a new governance structure reducing the number of committees from a high of 60 to six principal governance committees.

The new governance process, in place since June 2009, begins with a College Steering Council, consisting of representatives from each constituency group, which filters issues and requests to the appropriate committee (operational issues) or council (planning and policy issues). A parallel system exists for topics related to collective bargaining issues: the four Professional Standards Committees. From the discussions with campus representatives there was optimism about the new structure and a willingness to embrace the new system. However, implementation of the new governance structure is in its very early stages.

In spite of the institutional turmoil and changes in leadership, the college put forth great effort in implementing an aggressive timetable and schedule for defining and implementing student learning outcomes, assessment strategies, and a commitment to improved student learning. To achieve these ends, the college implemented three new software systems: 1) EDDI, an enrollment and full-time equivalent students (FTES) reporting system, 2) TracDat, an SLO tracking system, and 3) PERCY, a program review system. It is evident that the college has been focused on the improvement of its internal processes and has had some dialogue about student learning as evidenced by identifying four institutional student learning outcomes: effective communication, critical thinking and problem solving, professional and ethical behavior, and information literacy. Since the college has only been through one cycle with the new software and was just completed in March 2010, it is unclear what the impact has been or will be on improvement.

Much of the evidence was scheduled to be collected and in place by March 2010, when the comprehensive visit was expected. The college identified two programs: general education



and career technical education. The outcomes of these two programs were to be assessed in conjunction with the course level outcomes. The institutional outcome assessment was scheduled to be completed in spring 2009. The college revamped the program review process to incorporate student learning outcomes assessments. That process has only been piloted on four programs: Letters, Counseling, Allied Health, and Non Credit Health and Safety. It is evident that the college is committed to change and implementation of all recommendations but the target date for completion does not seem to be adequate to reflect a continuous cycle of improvement.

The college is working on establishing processes for improving institutional effectiveness and student learning. The college has initiated many new processes during the past year. It is apparent that the college's completion of one cycle will not yield immediate consequences in spite of many positive events and leadership from many participants. The new processes of implementing PERCY, a program review system, and the TracDat, SLO and assessment tracking system, have created dialog and produced both qualitative and quantitative data which should serve the institution well when the results can be analyzed and synthesized for effectiveness. As stated by most college employees interviewed, that will take more time.

Institutional documents revealed an earlier six-year cycle of program review process and reports but it is not clear that these reports were used in a meaningful way. While the college has set the stage to implement a new annual program review process and assessment system that yields data for decision making and planning, there is no overall, comprehensive institutional plan with measureable goals to guide these efforts. Without clearly established institutional goals with associated, measurable, time-bound, specific objectives, there is no measurement that the team could refer to in determination of how effectively the college is working to achieve stated goals. At the time of the visit, MiraCosta College did not have clearly articulated institutional goals and measurable objectives that were understood by the college community nor did it have an overall college plan to guide the work of the college as a whole.

### **Findings and Evidence:**

#### **A. Mission**

The mission statement in the self study is:

*"Mira Costa College provides quality instruction and support services that allow students to pursue and achieve their educational goals. The college responds to the needs of its students and community by creating new programs, expanding existing program, and implementing innovative approaches to teaching and learning that prepare students to be productive citizens in a diverse and dynamic world."*

However, the 2009-10 college catalog identifies the above mission as the college's vision and has reversed the mission and vision statements. The self study identifies the vision as seeking to empower students to realize their unique potential.

The three expectations in Standard I.A regarding the institutional missions are: 1) the mission defines the institution's broad educational purposes, 2) its intended student population, and 3) its commitment to achieving student learning. The educational purpose appears to identify quality programs, the creation of new programs and innovative teaching/learning which does broadly identify the institution's purposes. The intended student population was not identified other than the reference to the "community." The commitment to student learning is demonstrated by a statement of quality instruction and meeting the educational goals of the students (I.A.1, I.A.4).

### **B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness**

Many new initiatives and process changes have been started in the past two years and they do provide opportunities for constituencies to participate. However, there was no evidence that planning activities are linked to an overall institutional plan or institutional goals that are clearly understood, specific and measurable. In the absence of college-wide goals, it was not possible to evaluate the achievement of these goals as stated in standards I.B.2 and I.B.3. Documents did not provide this information and interviewees confessed that this link is yet to be developed. There were planning documents and earlier program reviews that indicated the college had planning in the past and a system of evaluation. The last evaluation of the outdated Academic Master Plan is dated 2005-06. There was no formal evaluation of the Academic Master Plan conducted since.

The structure of four councils of administrative, faculty, classified, and students with the many committees demonstrates broad based involvement and commits release time to assure participation. Planning activities have been in a state of flux during the past several years with each new leader bringing a new initiative and before completion yet another initiative began. Planning was in a cycle loosely guided by Annual Implementation Priorities (last established in 2008-09) that resulted from the Board Policy Statements and then morphed into a systems/software approach to planning. There is no evidence that any document or outcomes from these earlier initiatives contributed to institutional effectiveness in a structured way. Currently, there is hope that the new software systems implemented over the past two years will yield some meaningful college direction. EDDI, PERCY, and TracDat are loosely connected and each serves a unique purpose but there is a need for an overall institutional plan with measurable goals to guide the college direction and efforts and provide a meaningful basis for program reviews and institutional budgeting. The one institutional goal that has been communicated throughout this accreditation visit is the desire to achieve a 2% annual student growth, goal which could not be tied to any documentation.

The Accrediting Commission defined three rubrics related to Program Review, Planning and Student Learning Outcomes as related to evaluating institutional effectiveness. The college implemented a new software – PERCY- for collection and tracking of program review information. Since the program has only recently been implemented, there is no measure of effectiveness. A program review process did exist in an earlier format but it was not linked to overall institutional planning nor to budgeting. MiraCosta has had a different approach to

conducting program reviews prior to developing this new approach which started in 2009-10 and which at the time of the visit has not been through a complete cycle. The process, as it currently exists, is as described is the Development Level of the ACCJC rubric for program review. Assuming that the college will integrate the results of the new program reviews into institution-wide planning and decision making, the college will move to the Proficiency Level. The college is positioned to move in that direction.

In evaluating effectiveness in Planning on the Commission Rubric, the college has developed the governance and decision making processes which incorporate a review of the institutional mission and plans for improvement. The college is positioned to move to the Proficiency Level by progressing toward achieving its educational goals over time by using longitudinal data and analyses for the purpose of improvement.

The college has established a framework for collecting and tracking assessment of student learning outcomes at the course and program levels using TracDat, a software system which has been implemented over the last two years. Faculty and staff are engaged in developing student learning outcomes and leadership groups have accepted responsibility for implementing student learning outcomes. The college has allocated adequate resources to support this process and, in time, TracDat could provide valuable data to improve student learning, decision making and institutional effectiveness.

The college has some characteristics of higher levels of implementation but the current situation of having just initiated three new systems places the analysis of the results of their efforts incomplete at this time. The Commission has an expectation of Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement Level for program review and planning and an expectation for the Development Level for Student Learning Outcomes.

The self study identified key performance indicators as a means for documenting institutional assessment results and communicating quality assurance. However, the Key Performance Indicator Report cited in the self study was mostly standard fact book data from 2005-06. Further, this report was only produced one time and not fully updated on an annual or regular basis since it was first produced in 2005-06. There were many references to various websites in the self study section for this standard but the information was not analyzed and synthesized.

Since the college has just engaged in the first cycle of the newly developed program review processes in 2009-10, there is no evidence to support the effectiveness of the process at this time. Therefore, the team did not have adequate information to evaluate standards I.B.6 and I.B.7.

## **Conclusions:**

### **A. Mission**

The college partially meets standard I.A. Specifically, the college does not meet standard I.A.4. The mission statement should be consistent in all documents, should define the intended student population and communicate a commitment to achieving student learning outcomes. The mission should provide a framework for planning and decision making that relates to institutional improvement. While it is important to review the mission statement and revise it regularly, it is equally important to emphasize student learning which is evaluated with quantitative and qualitative data for the purpose of improving learning and ultimately institutional effectiveness through a mission that is easily communicated both internally and externally.

The current evidence did not indicate that the mission was central to college decision making or planning. The mission statement appeared to be isolated from planning and decision making (I.A.4).

The college needs to further develop the mission statement to define the student population and to state a commitment to student learning (I.A.1, I.A.3, I.A.4). The college obviously needs more time to fully implement the many changes that have been initiated over the last two years and to evaluate the outcomes of these changes. However, the mission should clearly prompt planning and decision making.

### **B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness**

The college partially meets standard I.B. Specifically, the college does not meet standards I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.5, and I.B.6. The college has a structure for institutional planning and effectiveness but there are no results to assess in terms of evaluating the impact on success at this time. This new governance structure process was approved and implemented starting in June 2009, so a full cycle has yet to be completed; thus, no documentation exists on the effectiveness of the process. Additionally, the college has no overall plan nor institutional goals with specific, measureable institutional planning objectives identified, which also prevents assessment of the effectiveness of the process. The primary objective of the process centers on a collegial consultation process rather than achieving particular college goals.

## **Recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1:** In order to meet the standards, the Team recommends that the college (I.A.4, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, III.A.6, III.B.2.a, III.B.2.b, III.C.1.c, III.C.2, III.D.1.a, III.D.1.b, III.D.1.c, III.D.1.d, III.D.3, ER 19):

- Implement, align, and integrate various college plans into a fully integrated institutional plan that advances a defined mission statement.

- Develop specific, measurable, realistic and time-bound objectives in relation to clearly stated institution-wide goals that are understood college-wide and represent the foundation of the integrated institutional plan.
- Conduct consistent, systematic and timely evaluations of the integrated institutional plan and its related components based on analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data and ensure the results are communicated and understood by college constituents. Further, in order to promote and sustain a culture of evidence and improve institutional effectiveness, the college should implement an ongoing method of measuring and evaluating its effectiveness in achieving stated institutional performance objectives and student learning outcomes.
- Complete the Education Master Plan and begin implementation. In addition, the college must demonstrate that decisions regarding priorities result from stated institutional goals and are linked to an integrated institutional plan and its related planning components.

## STANDARD II STUDENT LEARNING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

### General Observations

#### **A. Instructional Programs**

The self reflection and analysis presented in Standard II.A is somewhat overstated and does not appear to represent an accurate picture of the current status relating to Student Learning Outcome assessment, program review or integrated planning for the instructional programs.

Many of the self study responses to Standard II.A could not be substantiated, as evidence presentation was weak and lacked the detail required to validate progress towards or achievement of the standard. Evidence of meaningful dialogue and documentation throughout Standard II.A is missing in many cases.

MiraCosta College offers a wide range of Associate Degree and Certificate programs at its Oceanside and San Elijo campuses. Students have many programs to choose from in 52 areas of emphasis that include both general education, as well as career and technical education majors. Emerging fields of study accompany a wide selection of traditional offerings. Notable emerging fields of study include Biotechnology, Entrepreneurship, E-commerce and Surgical Technology. The college also offers an extensive selection of Continuing Education (tuition-free noncredit) courses at its Community Learning Center in Oceanside.

The integrity of programs and services appears to be consistent, regardless of the location or means of delivery (II.A.1). The main campus in Oceanside has a broad, comprehensive range of programs, while the San Elijo campus has a specific focus on meeting student needs for transfer programs and courses. Non-credit offerings at the Community Learning Center are broad and have solid pathways and support systems that lead to credit courses when applicable (II.A.2.d).

At the time of the visit, the program review process has been undergoing a major revision and is primarily housed in an online system called PERCY. This program review application provides connections for data driven program review. However, the college has not yet been through a full program review cycle using this new program review approach.

There has been significant progress over the past two years with regard to the development of Student Learning Outcomes at the course level. It appears that nearly all courses have identified SLOs. However, the degree to which assessments have been applied is unclear and difficult to document. The analysis of SLO assessment is not pervasive, and there does not appear to be a mechanism for oversight and tracking related to SLO progress and evolution.

## **B. Student Support Services**

MiraCosta College provides a range of comprehensive programs and services that address both the general and unique needs of the students enrolled at the college. In addition to standard student services including counseling, financial aid, admissions and records, career studies, transfer center, EOPS/CARE, and DSPS, MiraCosta also offers programs such as Puente, Institute for International Perspectives, Retention Services, the Service Learning Program, University Link, Summer Bridge, and Academic Boot Camp. Campus police, School Relations, Student Activities, Testing Services, and Athletics are also part of the Student Services division. Student Services has a long established model of program review which has been used to guide program development for many years. Compared to the last self study, students reported increased satisfaction with all programs and services. A dedicated staff with experienced leadership has provided MiraCosta students with a strong network of student support services.

## **C. Library and Learning Support Services**

The MiraCosta College Library purposefully strives to maintain an existence as one library with multiple sites. This benefits students of the college by ensuring exceptional communication between the two HUBs and the Community Learning Center. Having a single identity reduces issues relating to collection redundancy and therefore, cost to the library. Minimization of redundancy also keeps the library focused on the optimization of resources that facilitate effective access to their collections. This is done, for the most part, through the use of robust intra-library loan practices and the utilization of an extensive collection of electronic resources. The Library has admirable, collection, staffing and associated resources.

### **Findings and Evidence:**

#### **A. Instructional Programs**

A spring 2009 Environmental Scan indicated that the surrounding community perceives MiraCosta College as a source of a high-quality education, and a 2008 Accreditation Survey indicated that students strongly believe that MiraCosta College adequately prepares its students to succeed at transfer institutions as well as the workplace. Aside from student and community surveys, the college is still in the process of implementing a program review process to address quality issues such as breadth, depth, rigor, time to completion or sequencing (II.A.2.c).

The college seeks to meet the varied needs of its surrounding community, but the spring 2009 Environmental Scan indicates that only about half of those surveyed felt that the college is responsive to their needs (II.A.1.a). A consistent balance of support systems is evident between each of the instructional locations. Support systems include full-time counseling, tutoring services, writing centers, supplemental instruction, math labs and library services. Hard-copy library resources are rapidly and effectively transferred between locations through

inter-library loan processes that help to meet the daily needs for students at all three principal locations (II.A.1).

The 2008 Accreditation Survey indicates that a majority of students (88%) are satisfied with the various modes and methods of instruction offered by the college (II.A.2.d). Methods and modes of instructional delivery include: lecture, lecture-discussion, discussion, activity, cooperative/collaborative groups, laboratory, lecture-laboratory, work experience, computer-assisted instruction, distance learning, directed study, independent study, honors program, and study abroad program. While the most common method of instructional delivery is a lecture/lecture-lab format, the college has seen significant growth in the area of distance education over the past few years. Recently, the college has engaged in exploring two other course management systems to support online instruction. The primary course management system is Blackboard, however, some instructors are currently utilizing other platforms. The course and program approval process is the primary mechanism to ensure that course objectives and methods of instruction are compatible. (II.A.1.b)

The institution strives to identify the varied educational goals and needs of its students through surveys, but there does not seem to be a general awareness regarding the availability of this survey information. In general, the spring 2009 Environmental Scan is not well referenced in the self study when compared to the 2008 Accreditation Survey. The 2008 Accreditation Survey was referenced a number of times in the Standard II.A self study response, while the Environmental Scan is not referenced at all in Standard II.A. Unlike the Accreditation Scan, the Environmental Scan has detailed analysis and conclusions. It would serve the college well to raise awareness of, and co-locate such resources. Additionally, while there is a trend towards the collection of data, it often does not have accompanying analysis, dialogue and reflection (II.A.1.a, II.A.1.b, II.A.2.d).

The college awards course credit based on the achievement of the courses stated objectives and learning outcomes. These objectives and learning outcomes are part of the course outline of record and undergo regular six-year review cycles that are overseen by the Courses and Programs Committee. Units of credit are defined in the college catalog and are consistent with norms and equivalencies at other California Community Colleges and have appropriate focus in an area of emphasis (II.A.2.h, II.A.4) and the Academic Senate has a well defined process for program discontinuance (II.A.6.b). Learning outcomes for the college's certificate and degree awards are still in the development stages (II.A.2.i).

The spring 2008 Accreditation Survey identifies that 96% of those surveyed felt that MiraCosta College adequately prepares students for the workforce. MiraCosta College offers 49 vocational associate degrees, 56 vocational certificates of achievement and 57 vocational certificates of proficiency. In addition to community perceptions, pass rates for the state licensing for nursing students, and state cosmetology licensure exams are other indicators of professional competencies and preparation from the various occupational programs (II.A.5).

The comprehensive objectives and philosophy for MiraCosta's General Education Program can be found on page 33 of the 2009-10 MiraCosta College Catalog. This includes a



philosophy, basic content and methodology and minimum competencies. General Education courses at the college, “promote skill development and knowledge acquisition through the study of ideas, the analysis of data, and the interpretation of issues and events.” Students that complete the general education requirements noted as being able to demonstrate the following (II.A.3.a):

1. A broad understanding of mathematics, science, social science, humanities, and the arts
2. Effective communication in oral and written form
3. A multicultural, global perspective
4. Critical thinking skills that apply analytical and creative approaches to problem solving
5. The ability to adapt to new environments and technologies
6. Social awareness and responsibility as a participating member of society.

Student Learning Outcomes at MiraCosta College undergo evaluation as they move through the curriculum approval process. The extent to which these SLOs are assessed and analyzed is unclear.

The program review process for instructional programs is currently undergoing a major revision, and is moving from a paper process to an online database system called PERCY. This program review application provides connections for data driven program review. However, the college has not yet been through a full program review cycle, leaving connections with resource allocation as of yet, untested.

PERCY is a nexus for the integration of evidence, assessment, planning, and the prioritization of resources allocations. As the system is not yet fully functioning in its first iteration, the value and importance of this asset will increase as the college continues support for a culture of evidence and assessment.

The online program review application, PERCY, integrates with an enrollment management reporting system called EDDI. Currently, enrollment management data from EDDI cannot be loaded into PERCY for program review but the capability is there. This may incur some challenges as not all programs at the college generate enrollment management data, and therefore, must enter their own data by hand.

Additionally, each operational program creates specific its own standards to be assessed as part of an annual program review. The college should strive to incorporate additional evidence/information sources (such as SARS data, Chancellor’s Office Data Mart, labor market information) to the resources that populate EDDI with information for program review.

Evaluative standards have been developed by each area to aide in the evaluation of courses, services and programs. The development of these standards is seen as a useful component of the evaluative process and will offer a mechanism for the college to review the relevance,

appropriateness, achievement of learning outcomes, currency, and future needs and plans (II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f).

The college has made significant progress in the area of Student Learning Outcomes over the past two years. The college is encouraged to continue building, collecting and sharing evidence relating to items in Recommendation 1 in the September 17-18, 2007 accreditation evaluation follow-up visit report:

**Recommendation 1: The team recommends that the following items of evidence be in place at the time of the next accreditation visit:**

- e) Evidence that the process of establishing student learning outcomes at all course and program levels has been completed.**
- f) Evidence that assessment of student learning course and program outcomes is being conducted.**
- g) Evidence that students are achieving stated learning outcomes.**
- h) Evidence that the assessment and evaluation results are used for the improvement of student learning.**

**(Standards II.A.1.a, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f)**

Review of the college course outlines of record shows that nearly all courses have identified one or more SLOs (II.A.2.a). However, the degree to which assessments have been applied is unclear and difficult to document. The college is encouraged to continue building and sharing activities relating to college-wide SLO assessment and analysis (II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f).

Currently, the Institutional Research Director does not have a clearly defined role in the processes relating to the assessment and analysis of SLOs at the college. It is suggested that the institution identify specific roles and responsibilities for the Office of Institutional Research or advisory committee (when appropriate) to support the identification of competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes, and that the institution regularly assesses student progress towards achieving those outcomes (II.A.2.b).

## **B. Student Support Services**

For many years the student services division has conducted program review to guide the provision and improvement of services. Student Services was one of the first departments at MiraCosta to systematically review programs against specific criteria and use the results for improvement. In the last year, Student Services has adopted the revised college program review process being implemented at the time of the visit. This revised process is expected to result in annual program reviews rather than a review that takes place every six years, as it was the practice prior to 2009-10. Service area outcomes have been identified for the entire division with input and discussion taking place at the Student Services Council. Data gathering to measure achievement of program goals using the new system started in March 2009. Student satisfaction surveys using CCSEE and the 2008 Accreditation survey have been administered with the results used to assess student response to a variety of services (II.B.1, II.B.4).

MiraCosta is providing services to all three (Oceanside, San Elijo, and Community Learning Center) locations where courses are offered. Periodically staff members are rotated between sites to ensure the staff embraces all campus locations and that students receive quality services regardless of location. With a growing distance education program, the college has responded by offering online counseling and orientation. Attempts have been made over the last several years to launch some form of tutoring online but student usage has been very low, possibly due to the cumbersome nature of the platform being used to provide the service. There is discussion about utilizing the current online instructional platform in an effort to provide online tutoring in a more user-friendly manner. The college is encouraged to develop the capacity to ensure that online students have access to this service (II.B.3.a).

The college catalog contains relevant information including general information, requirements for admission, tuition, fees, and degree and transfer requirements. Relevant information is also listed on the college website, in the student handbook planner, and in the class schedule.

College records are stored in secure and confidential areas including an electronic storage system that is secure and sufficient for storing electronic information (II.B.2, II.B.3.f).

While students may register for courses through walk-in and online registration, the majority utilize SURF, the college's online registration program. The program also allows students to add a class that is officially full. The college has recently added access to online transcripts which is going well and the college anticipates moving to an online waitlist in the near future. Based on the 2008 Accreditation survey, students appear satisfied with the delivery methods for registering for classes (II.B.3.a).

There are numerous ways in which personal and civic responsibility, as well as intellectual and aesthetic development, is encouraged. A variety of clubs are active at MiraCosta and the college demonstrates a sensitivity to its diverse student populations with its programs and services that range from cultural events, outreach efforts to special populations, and services to students with disabilities. The Service Learning Program partners academics with community service with over 1,000 students placed in non-profit organizations and schools for the purpose of providing support services. The program has been named to the President's Higher Education Community Service honor roll for the past three years and is one of very few community colleges to receive this recognition. The Institute for International Perspectives, in an effort to foster personal development and appreciation of diversity, conducts a variety of cultural events each year such as celebration of Chinese New Year and a multicultural festival. The college provides stipends for bilingual staff assisting with college services and the EOPS program provides a number of training opportunities and events that further the appreciation of diversity. Finally, the student ambassador program, which consists of MiraCosta students from diverse backgrounds who represent the college at local events and high schools, is very successful. Participating students are given a unique opportunity to contribute to their community while gaining invaluable experience (II.B.3.b, II.B.3.d).

Counseling and academic advising services are available for students at all three MiraCosta sites. Data from the 2008 Accreditation Survey, Student Version and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) survey reveal increased satisfaction, compared to the 2002 surveys, in regards to counseling and Transfer Center services. In addition to providing counseling and academic guidance to MiraCosta students, counseling faculty co-coordinate the Puente project, conduct classroom visitations, coordinate transfer services, and teach classes designed to enhance student success and develop educational goals. A collaboration of student services and instruction is found in MiraCosta's learning support programs in tutoring, writing, math, and learning communities. In addition, the College Success Skills course involves faculty from both student services and instruction working together in an effort to improve student success (II.B.3.c.).

The majority of student services are located in close proximity to one another which enhances access for students. The counseling building has been remodeled so that career services and transfer services are co-located with general counseling. With the growth in students in the last two years, staffing and facilities have been taxed, especially in the financial aid department. Even with efforts to reduce ancillary activities such as the student newsletter or reducing mass mailings, it is taking nearly 12 weeks to prepare a financial aid package and this is creating a hardship for students. The department has prioritized the hiring of an additional financial aid technician to allow for speedier processing of student aid packages and the college is encouraged to address this need in as timely a manner as funding will allow (II.B.3.a).

All assessment instruments being used have met guidelines for validating effectiveness and minimizing bias. Students wishing to brush up their English or math skills prior to taking the assessment are directed to the website for sample test items and practice tests. Assessments in English and math are on the State Chancellor's Office list of approved instruments and administered at each of the campus sites as well as coordinated with the high school outreach program. High school students are brought to campus for a special activity that includes completing the assessment process and prepares them to get started at MiraCosta when they finish high school (II.B.3.e).

In a variety of formal and informal settings, the college evaluates student support services. Through input at Student Service Council, through program review, and through formal and informal environmental scans, the Student Services Division evaluates the effectiveness of services and uses that information to improve services to students at MiraCosta College (II.B.4).

### **C. Library and Learning Support Services**

The maintenance and development of the library collection is under the guidance of the Collection Development Librarian who works with other college librarians to maintain, select, and purge items for the collection (II.C.1).

The MiraCosta Collection Development Librarian is positioned on specific campus-wide committees or as part of critical processes that help to inform the development of the collection plan in a manner that best serves the instructional and support needs for the college (II.C.1.a). During the process of curriculum or program development and revision, Deans meet with the Collection Development Librarian to assure that critical course material or supporting resources will not be a limiting factor that might negatively impact instruction. Additionally, a librarian reviews all course modifications, proposals and other course or program related action items that go before the Courses and Programs Committee (II.C.1.a).

The college program review process for the library includes a requirement that department chairs or faculty discipline experts review the library collections to identify outdated materials or content areas that might need strengthening. The Collection Development Librarian also works directly with other faculty to identify collection needs (II.C.1.a).

The Collection Development Librarian maintains professional currency and relevance through interacting with professional organizations, reviewing journals and literature searches. Professional development is also strengthened by working with Access Specialists and Disabled Persons Programs and Services staff to maintain compliance with Federal regulations relating to providing access to students or community members with disabilities.

The MiraCosta Library also participates in a lease agreement with McNaughton for bestselling books, and an audio book service. This has enhanced the collection and is a focused effort to offer expanded opportunities for recreational reading and scholarship. Library holdings and collections also include materials that are placed on reserve for students to utilize in support of course work or other school related activities.

Library collections and holdings are greatly enhanced by a substantial (over 50) selection of online research databases and online subscriptions. These subscriptions and databases are overseen by the combined efforts of the Electronic Resources Librarian and the Collection Development Librarian. These librarians work closely with other faculty, students and staff to develop and maintain and develop the online/electronic resources. A number of these online databases are acquired through a cooperative lease program that is cooperatively managed by the Community College Library Consortium, the Community College League of California and the Council of Chief Librarians (II.C.1.a).

Reference services are one of the primary support services offered by the library. All librarians take part in reference services to help support the needs of the students. Credit Library Science courses are also offered, as well as information literacy sessions that serve more than 4400 students a year.

Students can access a librarian 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through an online service called QuestionPoint 24/7. This is a chat reference service that acts in a cooperative manner with librarians from eight colleges. The librarians from each college contribute hours of service to interact live with students at any time. Depending on who is currently staffing the system, a

student using this service might connect with librarians from any of the 8 colleges in the cooperative (II.C.1.a).

The library also has a team of students (Student Navigators) that are trained by librarians to assist patrons who are trying to interact with the online library catalog, electronic resources or general office computing software (II.C.1.a).

Faculty and staff professional development is promoted by offering workshops several times a year as part of their flexible calendar (FLEX) offerings. These workshops orient or re-familiarize faculty and staff with the access and manipulation of resources located through the library.

The library provides coordinated tutoring and academic support (TASC) as a service to students on the Oceanside and San Elijo campuses. The TASC maintains a collection of current textbooks and other instructional resource materials for students to utilize in support of their course offerings. The primary goal of TASC is to provide tutoring services and resources to enhance student success and retention (II.C.1.a).

The Writing Center and Math Learning Center are additional student support resources located within the Library Hub structure. Writing Centers are found at both the San Elijo and Oceanside campuses and offer students a wide range of resources and services to assist in the development and support of writing skills. In support of classes they are taking, students can access computers, handouts, writing guides, style manuals, a wall displaying good writing, a grammar table, and constructive learning toys.

The Writing Center supports student coursework 'across the curriculum,' providing drop-in services, learning communities and training for learning community student facilitators. A recent grant provided the opportunity for a pilot project in support of online learning. Online Writing Labs (OWLs) work with the commercially available resource, Smarthinking.com to build writing skills in an online format (II.C.1.a).

Math Learning Centers are a student resource that house current math textbooks and provide a variety of learning support resources for students taking math classes at MiraCosta. The Math Learning Centers are found on both the Oceanside and San Elijo campuses, and have computers for student use, tutoring services, workshops and self-paced math classes.

Aside from the computer resources found within the various learning support centers, the libraries also have instructional computer labs, a variety of terminals for student access, and audio-video equipment to play a wide format range of audio-visual media.

The MiraCosta Library also provides a number of formats for ongoing skill development in the area of information competency. These information literacy sessions are customized to meet Student Learning Outcomes for faculty who are utilizing library resources as part of a course that they are instructing (II.C.1.b). Beyond customizable courses, librarians also

provide one-on-one information competency skills development. This can be accomplished in person, online, by telephone, email and chat.

The MiraCosta Library exhibits a wide range of practices and resources that ensure that all of their students, regardless of location or means of delivery, have access to a wide range of library and learning resources. EZProxy is a system that allows user authentication for students with a simple login process. EZProxy allows students to access a variety of online databases. The extensive selection of electronic databases and online resources support all students, most notably, those that do not have immediate access to either of the library HUBs. Such access is critical for the development and growth of a healthy online learning program.

The library aids in making resources available for students with disabilities. Working with staff from Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS), librarians work with patrons to connect them with accessible materials when needed.

There are also intra-library loan services that assist students by transporting hard-copy resources between campuses multiple times each day. This service avoids the challenges with having redundant collections at two different sites – there is very little hard-copy collection redundancy between the San Elijo and Oceanside HUBs. In addition to intra-library loans, the MiraCosta library also provides inter-library loan services in collaboration with a number of libraries in the immediate vicinity (II.C.1).

Library resources, equipment and materials are protected by an Information Security Plan (insurance). In addition, the library servers have incremental digital backup systems. Fiscal protection is also critical to maintain the vast range of online and electronic subscriptions that rely on annual contracts or leases (II.C.1.d).

The MiraCosta Library exhibits good practices when evaluating the ability of the library and other learning support services to meet student needs. The library obtains this information through a variety of sources, including; user statistics from online databases, student and staff surveys and statistics that characterize the physical, fiscal and staffing status of the library over time. Additional evaluative information is collected by the library with respect to the tracking of student hours and monitoring the growth and status of the physical collection.

## **Conclusions:**

### **A. Instructional Programs**

The college partially meets standard II.A. Recent surveys indicate that students and the community believe that MiraCosta College adequately prepares its students to succeed at transfer institutions as well as the workplace, and the integrity of programs and services appears to be consistent, regardless of the location or means of delivery.

The institution is building and is encouraged to continue supporting a culture of evidence that embraces, documents and shares meaningful dialogue directly relating to assessment and analysis of student learning outcomes.

MiraCosta College has a positive and encouraging instructional climate, and there are numerous examples that demonstrate the existence of strong and productive collaborations between instructional and learning support services. The college is encouraged to continue the support and recognition of such activities.

### **B. Student Support Services**

The college meets standard II.B. The college supports high quality student programs and services that assist a diverse student population in achieving their goals. While the college is encouraged to address staffing issues in financial aid and to move in a timely manner towards providing tutoring to online students, the college's commitment to access and success is evident by the quality and variety of programs and services available for students.

### **C. Library and Learning Support Services**

The college meets standard II.C. The MiraCosta library features strong collaborations between instruction, student services and technology and consistently focuses its resources on the needs of the students. This collaborative effort enhances the library's ability to support student learning and maintain comprehensive collections that support the learning needs of the students at the college.

#### **Commendations:**

**Commendation 1:** The Team commends the college for its nationally recognized service learning program that has established partnerships with over 75 different nonprofit organizations and public schools and supports the participation of over 1,000 MiraCosta students annually.

**Commendation 2:** The Team commends the college for its comprehensive library services and collections and a purposeful and successful approach of functioning as a singular library for multiple sites, ensuring seamless service for all students regardless of location or instructional delivery methods.

#### **Recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1:** See above.

**Recommendation 2:** In order to meet the standard and achieve proficiency level by 2012, the Team recommends that the college develop comprehensive reports to clearly demonstrate the ongoing, systematic review of student learning outcomes (I.B.1, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, II.C.2).



## **STANDARD III RESOURCES**

### **General Observations:**

#### **A. Human Resources**

MiraCosta College employs qualified and dedicated staff who support programs and college services. Policies and procedures are in place to recruit, employ and evaluate qualified certificated and classified employees. Confirmation of appropriate degrees from accredited institutions and minimum qualifications are confirmed by the Human Resources Office. All employees are evaluated through established written evaluation procedures.

College policies and practices show understanding of and concern for issues of equity and diversity. An Equal Opportunity Employment representative is an established voting member of all full time faculty hiring committees. New employee orientation programs assist employees in understanding district policies and procedures. Resources are provided to ensure employee opportunities for professional growth and development through the professional development programs.

#### **B. Physical Resources**

MiraCosta College's three campuses are all in excellent condition. Based on the accreditation surveys conducted in 2008, both employees and students agreed that the facilities are well maintained and adequately support student learning programs and services. The college's Facility Master Plan was completed in 2006 and was the foundation for several projects: 1) New Horticulture Building - 2007, 2) New Career/Transfer/Counseling Building - 2007, and 3) New Creative Arts Replacement Project – Music and Art Classroom -2009. However, the Facility Master Plan is outdated. At the time of the visit, the college was in the process of selecting consultants to update both the Education and Facilities Master Plan.

#### **C. Technology Resources**

The college has a well designed and pervasive Information Technology (IT) infrastructure that provides quality resources to the campus community. The infrastructure is deployed consistently across the Oceanside, San Elijo, Community Learning Center locations, providing equal services independent of location. Student and faculty access to IT resources at all locations is excellent, with a consistent deployment of labs, tutorial areas, smart classrooms, WiFi access, and video conferencing facilities. Staff at all locations are provided with up-to-date computer equipment and it is evident that the college replaces this equipment on a reasonable schedule. The college has embarked on a new governance structure that was put in place in June 2009. IT governance dramatically changed in this process and there was a general consensus amongst IT staff that the new structure does not adequately address IT governance needs. In concert with the change in the governance structures, the college began

a new program review process which is intended to link planning and budgeting. However, at the time of the visit, the evidence of this link was not available as the college has not completed a full cycle using this new process.

#### **D. Fiscal Resources**

MiraCosta College is a basic aid district that receives a significant amount of its revenue from property taxes and much higher revenues than if it depended on the state apportionment for the majority of its revenues. Based on information in the 2009-10 Final Budget, the college has a \$95.2 million general fund revenue budget. Within the revenues, the college estimated that it would receive an additional \$38 million in 2009-10 above its apportionment revenue of \$41 million, almost double the amount of revenue if MiraCosta were not a basic aid district. The College's audit reports over the last three years have all been unqualified opinions with no material weakness reported. The college's reserve levels over the past three years have exceeded the minimum level of 5% and the college has very little long-term debt. The college has made provisions for funding their OPEB liability by setting up an irrevocable trust and contributing 98% of the annual required contribution.

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

##### **A. Human Resources**

MiraCosta College's hiring procedures are delineated in board policy and administrative procedure. Job descriptions for faculty and administrative positions are updated regularly with duties, responsibilities and minimum qualifications for education and experience clearly stated on the job descriptions. Job descriptions for classified positions are less frequently updated. The team suggests that the revision of all job descriptions for classified positions that has been initiated be completed and that the duties and essential functions for all job descriptions be updated.

Hiring practices are generally standardized. The hiring processes for hiring associate (adjunct) faculty throughout the college have not always been consistent. The college is currently revising the associate faculty hiring process to ensure that practices are standardized. The team suggests that the college complete the revision of the associate faculty hiring policy, disseminate the new policy to all involved with associate faculty hiring, and ensure that hiring processes are followed.

The college extensively advertises positions to ensure broad and diverse candidate pools. Standardized processes and procedures are in place for recruiting and hiring full-time faculty and administrators. Faculty are actively involved in the hiring process. The chair of the hiring department serves as the chair of the hiring committee. The Academic Senate approves faculty members serving on faculty hiring committees. All teaching-faculty hiring committees require teaching demonstrations as part of the screening process to determine candidate's subject matter knowledge and ability to teach (III.A.1.a.).

The Human Resources Office confirms that degrees held by faculty and administrators are from institutions accredited by U.S. accredited institutions and also verifies that faculty meet minimum qualifications for the appropriate teaching discipline. Faculty's names and degrees are published in the college catalogue (III.A.1.a.).

The college ensures hiring equity by requiring that all persons serving on hiring committees receive appropriate training on equal employment practices. An Equal Employment Opportunity Representative serves on all hiring committees (III.A.1.a.).

College employees are evaluated on a regular basis. The evaluation process for all academic employees is documented in handbooks. The Professional Growth and Evaluation (PG&E) committee plays a major role in devising and overseeing the evaluation process of tenure and tenure-track faculty. A rigorous four year tenure evaluation process is thoroughly documented in the MiraCosta College Tenure Candidate Handbook. The process for evaluation of administrators changed under the college's newly established consultation process. Since administrators are no longer a part of the Academic Senate, evaluation of academic administrators is part of the Meet and Confer handbook. Administrators are evaluated during their first two years of employment at the college, followed by an evaluation every third year. Classified employees are evaluated in accordance with classified evaluation standards and timelines. A process is in place for the evaluation of associate faculty (III.A.1.b.).

There is a widely communicated belief that faculty at the college participate in the development and assessment of student learning outcomes. However, the faculty evaluation process does not include as a written component that clearly defines the expectation regarding participation in the development and assessment of student learning outcomes (III.A.1.c.).

Board Policy 3050 and accompanying administrative procedure provide a written code of ethical behavior for all employees (III.A.1.d.).

The college has seen growth in the number of faculty, staff and administrators hired since the last self study. The greatest increase is seen in full-time and part-time teaching and non-teaching faculty. Ninety full-time, tenure-track faculty have been hired at the college since 2004. New faculty positions formerly requested through the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) process are now requested through the program review process. The college adequately evaluates staffing in the planning and development of new facilities and programs (III.A.2.).

Board policies ensure employment of the best qualified individual. Programs exist to assist both new faculty and classified employees in adjusting to the college and in understanding college policies and procedures. Procedures are available to assist employees with resolving problems (III.A.3.a.). Policies and procedures are in place to ensure the security and confidentiality of personnel records (III.A.3.b.).

An Equal Employment Opportunity Plan, developed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee in July 2008, seeks to promote diverse applicant pools and the hiring of diverse personnel. The plan requires that persons serving on hiring committees receive appropriate training on equal employment. The Diversity and Equity Committee (DEqC) focused on campus climate and other academic issues related to diversity (III.A.4.a.).

Employment equity and diversity data is collected and published in the Equal Employment Opportunity Plan. Since the last self study, thirty-nine percent of the full-time faculty hires were of ethnic diversity. In 2007 and 2009, over fifty-five percent of the full-time faculty hires were of ethnic diversity. The college continues to make progress in closing the ethnic diversity gap between the communities it serves and its teaching faculty (III.A.4.b).

Staff development funds are available to provide mediation training for employees desiring such training. All supervisors receive sexual harassment training. In the 2008 Accreditation Self Study Survey, college employees responded that they were treated equitably and fairly and that they were satisfied with procedures available to resolve problems. Employees indicated less satisfaction with the college's commitment to promoting high ethical standards (III.A.4.c.).

The college offers and funds professional development activities for all employees. The Professional Standards Committee has responsibility for staff development for the constituents that they represent. The Classified Staff Development Committee ensures that growth and leadership training opportunities are provided for classified employees. Results from the 2008 Accreditation Self Study Survey indicate that employees believe that they are encouraged to participate in professional development activities of interest and that they have a substantial voice in professional growth (III.A.5.a.).

The college has committees in place to ensure that staff development is consistent and ongoing. Staff development evaluation is part of the staff development program (III.A.5.b.).

The college has processes in place to determine needs. It is unclear at this time how the new consultation and governance process, Program Review and the Budget and Planning Committee will link planning with the allocation of resources for the hiring of faculty, staff and administrators (III.A.6.).

## **B. Physical Resources**

The college is in a transition period as it proceeds to a new governance structure. The physical resource planning is held up by the lack of an institutional overall plan. In the new governance structure the "Campus Committee" has replaced the old Facilities Planning Advisory Committee (FPAC) which was a subcommittee of the Planning and Budget Council. The master planning process which was completed in 2006 for both the educational and facilities components served the college well and a significant number of facility related projects have been completed (III.B.2.b). However, these plans are outdated and no annual evaluation has been conducted since 2005-06.

All three locations are clean, safe and attractive, with state of the art equipment. All buildings are built to Field Act Standards which includes review for access, fire/life/safety issues and mechanical review. Each campus is inspected twice a year, including a night walk to make sure that the campuses are safe. The purpose of the night walk is to inspect lighting in all areas of each campus. Results are used to prioritize project requests. In addition, two online systems are used to report issues related to both the facilities and equipment (III.B.1, III.B.1.a).

A couple of areas where the college has done an exceptional job are constructing all new building to meet California Building Standards Code (Title 24), including Building Energy Efficiency Standards and the sustainability measures that have been put in place, such as water conservation measures, including landscaping focused on drought tolerant planting materials, computerized irrigation controllers and using low flow and electronic fixtures in the restroom remodels. Another sustainability measure is the recycling program that has been implemented, not just the typical glass, paper and aluminum cans, but also construction debris and by products from the automotive program. A number of energy projects have been completed including upgrading the chilled water plant and upgrading lighting at the Oceanside and San Elijo sites.

The college completes the required annual space inventory and submits the results to the State Chancellor's Office each October. This process helps the college determine if there are sufficient classrooms, lecture halls, laboratories and other space. Based on the results of the space inventory, there is currently sufficient classroom space to meet the current need but as growth occurs, additional space will be needed in the future. There is a need for additional lab space at the San Elijo Center (III.B.1.a, III.B.2).

Budget for facilities is not site specific, so when prioritizing projects, each campus has input into the process. The newly initiated allocation model is based on program review so facilities needs are expected to be identified in that process. At the time of the visit, the college had not been through a full cycle of the new program review process, thus the evidence for the actual allocation of resources based on program reviews was not available. During the last budget cycle, the projects were put into three tiers. Tier one were projects that were identified in the program review process and were critical to programs, tier two were projects that had other sources of funding and tier three were projects that should be looked at as part of the new facilities master plan to be developed. Only projects in tier one and two were approved in the last budget cycle.

The college's prior Planning and Budget Council had a mechanism that allowed for resources to be dedicated to facilities. The Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) system was in place to ensure that long-range capital plans supported institutional improvement goals and included all costs of operating the facilities including staff and support services, equipment and supplies and basic overhead, these items were combined to develop an indirect cost rate that rolls into a fixed cost after the first year. This process was disbanded in June 2009 and the functions are expected to be part of the new program review based allocation model. Within

this new model, the Campus Committee is where facilities issues are raised such as determining equipment needs, facilities modernization, campus signage, and parking as examples (III.B.2.b).

The main campus has a major infrastructure project scheduled to begin next year which is the replacement of campus wide fire lines. An additional project that has been submitted in the state required five year construction plan is the Interdisciplinary Building 4900 for completion in 2013-14, if funds are available. The college has not submitted additional funding requests through the State Capital Outlay Program and does not plan to until the new Facility Master Plan will be completed (III.B.2.a).

### **C. Technology Resources**

As detailed in the self study and verified through campus interviews, the college has made commendable progress in providing access to technology services across the campus. Since the last accreditation visit, 33 facilities have had baseline instructional technology installed. In addition, the college has installed a new portal, digital signage across all three sites, an enrollment and FTES reporting system (EDDI), emergency phones in all the classrooms, the PeopleAdmin system for recruitment management, and the TracDat package for collecting and tracking student learning outcomes. MiraCosta has adequate staff and support personnel to maintain the personal computers, servers, and network infrastructure (including wireless technology). The college provides each full-time instructor and almost all full time staff with a computer and has computers available for adjunct faculty. Faculty/staff computers and lab computers are on a four-year replacement cycle. Other computers are reviewed at four years and recommendations are made as to replace or not replace. Network infrastructure is replaced on a four- to five-year cycle, security infrastructure on a three- to five-year cycle, and technology enhanced classrooms on a four- to five-year cycle (III.C.1.a).

The college provides a robust network to its employees and students, supporting the latest technology, and continues to upgrade that infrastructure annually. In addition to the comprehensive Peoplesoft ERP system, additional applications supported by the IT team include a soon to be open student portal, a staff portal, three learning management systems Blackboard, Moodle, and Etudes NG, and a comprehensive array of third party applications supporting both the instructional and administrative sides of the institution. Through interviews with staff and students during the site visit, the team confirmed the utilization and support of these applications (III.C.1.a).

The team toured the technology facilities and concludes that the college takes pride in its infrastructure and has facilities which include a modern data center, video conferencing equipment at the main campus and the two centers, a modern and well maintained data network with ubiquitous WiFi coverage, a Cisco VOIP phone system with coverage in all campus offices and classrooms with the Berbee InformaCast software for emergency messaging, and computer/multi-media display systems in almost all classrooms and conference rooms (III.C.1.a).

The college provides many training opportunities for employees and students. Training opportunities are afforded by the trainer in AIS as well as other AIS staff, through the college's Professional Development Program, during the flex week preceding the beginning of each semester, through the Classified Senate Council, through the Program for Online Teaching (POT), and from outside trainers such as @One. The college has hosted three @One conferences since June 2006 with a total of 15 technical workshops with participants from the college and across the state. In June 2008, the college hosted a statewide Online Teaching Conference with a total of 108 different workshops for faculty from around the state. Technology Hubs are located on both the Oceanside and San Elijo campuses. At the Oceanside location faculty can access PC and Macintosh computers, scanners, digital editing equipment, and training from an on-site specialist. At the San Elijo hub, there are PC and Macintosh computers, scanners, and training staff available to assist faculty with the technology (III.C.1.b).

Every open student lab is staffed with an instructional assistant and from one to five student assistants who are responsible for assisting students with any hardware or software questions they might have. The Admissions and Records Office provides personnel to assist students during peak registration times on using the web interface for online registration. There is also a student helpdesk that is available from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to support student use of all college technology (III.C.1.b).

The college has done a great job of providing just in time training materials that are web accessible. The college's website as well as the new employee portal provides a large number of FAQ's as well as video instructions on a variety of topics (III.C.1.b).

As part of the new program review and budgeting process, AIS calculates the total cost of ownership for technology requests and forwards this to the Campus Committee for consideration. The Budget and Planning Committee is expected to evaluate funding, staff impact, maintenance, sustainability, security, and policy. During the visit, the team confirmed that the college is funding and executing replacements as indicated in the self study (III.C.1.c).

Since the last accreditation visit, the college has made substantial progress in meeting the needs of faculty, students, and staff from technology enhanced classrooms, student open labs, web access to over 15 online applications supporting all college constituents, and well equipped technology hubs at the Oceanside and San Elijo campuses supporting faculty innovation and training. In the 2008 Accreditation Self Study Survey, both employees and students overwhelmingly agreed that the required technology was available to them on campus (III.C.1.d).

Prior to June 2009 when the new governance structure was put in place, MiraCosta College gained information regarding technology needs through a variety of committees, including the Academic Senate Technology and Pedagogy Committee (TAP), the district committee for Strategic Planning and Information Technology (SPIT), and the Integrated Computer Enhancements Committee (ICEcubes). As of June 2009, a new governance structure was put

in place which eliminated SPIT and ICEcubes and created a new Campus Committee that assumed their responsibilities. In discussions with IT college staff, it was revealed that the ICEcubes committee is still meeting to coordinate Peoplesoft activities although they are not listed in the current committee structure. Although TAP was an Academic Senate committee, it was also disbanded during the June 2009 conversion to the new governance structure. In interviews with the team, the chair of the newly created Campus Committee and the Dean of AIS expressed the need to resurrect SPIT and perhaps other disbanded committees to help in the review of instructional technology needs.

The college has a three-year technology plan that began in 2007. However, neither the proposed annual updates to the Technology Plan nor any of the annual assessments were included in the self study documentation or available via the college website. During the site visit it was determined that the annual assessments of the Technology Plan were not conducted nor were there any annual modifications to the plan. There is currently no activity related to the development of a new technology plan but most college employees interviewed felt that this planning would be included in the development of a new Educational Master Plan that would be awarded to an outside vendor in the near future. In the most recent program review cycle, goals and objectives from the Technology Plan were not used to guide departmental/program technology requests (III.C.2).

#### **D. Financial Resources**

This standard was difficult to evaluate since the college has made a significant change to its funding model in 2009-10. The funding model which was used prior to 2009-10 had funding requests divided into four categories: enhancements, new initiatives, innovation and total cost of ownership. The Planning and Budget Council that was in place until June 2009 evaluated the requests for new funding on factors related to support to the Annual Implementation Priorities (AIPs), effects on the 50% law and/or evidence of need, Program Review, and success or merit of the proposal, alignment with the college mission and divisional priorities. The Planning and Budget Council made recommendations to the Superintendent/President for funding. The 2008 Accreditation Survey for employees had 85% agreement that financial planning reflected the philosophy, mission and goals of the institution. Nevertheless, when the college implemented a new governance structure in June 2009, the funding model changed as well.

The new funding model implemented starting in 2009-10 has the goal to better tie the budget planning and program review. The college invested in a new software program PERCY to collect program review information and it is during this process that additional funds can be requested, if there are funds remaining after taking out Board required reserves, fixed costs such as permanent employee compensation including benefits and utilities, previously determined ongoing cost for items such as technology replacement, instructional and operating equipment and growth funding for full-time and part-time salaries and increasing operating accounts by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). If there are funds remaining, funding is expected that will be provided for program review requests (III.D.1).



The college basic aid status has ensured very generous fiscal resources for the college. It also makes revenue projections somewhat of a challenge. Over the last two completed fiscal years, the college was off on the revenue projection by less than 1%, the third year reviewed was understated by 8.36%. Property taxes are difficult to project; being within 1% of the estimate that is prepared almost a year out is remarkable. Reviewing the expenditure budgets, it appears that the college prepares a comprehensive annual budget, paying special attention to salary and benefits. The college participated in the state capital outlay program for the new 21,574 GSF Creative Arts Replacement Project Music and Art Classroom which brought in \$9,559,538 in state resources (III.D.1.b).

The college is fiscally stable, with adequate reserves and has accrued liabilities for its outstanding obligations. Major liabilities include compensated absences of \$2.2 million, a lease revenue bond of \$4.0 million, a capital lease of \$1.6 million and the net other post employee benefit (OPEB) obligation for retiree benefits of \$68,318. In order to comply with Governmental Accounting Standard Board (GASB) statement 45, the college established an irrevocable trust through the Community College League of California (CCLC) and made a contribution of \$3.2 million, which was 98% of the annual required contribution (ARC). The 2007 actuarial study had the unfunded liability for retiree medical at \$41.5 million and a 30 year amortization amount of \$3.3 million. Both the lease revenue bond payable (construction cost for the Community Learning Center) and the capital lease (for six energy efficiency projects) were for assets that had useful lives that exceed the payback period. The one area that has a potential to create a fiscal problem for the college is that ongoing expenses for salaries far exceed the amount of revenue that would be earned through the apportionment process. This is not a necessarily a problem for a basic aid district as long as the basic aid status is maintained. However, in the event that the revenues from property taxes drop significantly or the state funding model changes it would have a major negative impact on the college (III.D.1.c).

The prior planning model used the Planning and Budgeting Council (PBC) as an advisory body to the Superintendent/President. This body consisted of 17 cross-divisional members who represented all constituent groups at the college. The new model has a Budget and Planning Committee consisting of 27 cross-divisional members representing the various constituent groups, the difference is that the Budget and Planning Committee reports to the College Steering Council which in turn refers items to a specific council (Associated Student Government, Administrative Council, Academic Council and the Classified Council). These specific councils make recommendations to the Superintendent/President (III.D.1.d).

The college uses PeopleSoft as its Financial Management System and nVision as the reporting system. Reports are available for all budgets for employees that have access to the system. It was reported in the self study that many employees are having difficulties with proficiency with PeopleSoft. Training in reporting functionality and budget by department is provided for to faculty and staff upon request. No system issues were reported in audit report related to the system and no issues have been reported in standard III.C (III.D.2).

The college has engaged the services of independent auditors to perform the required annual audit and the team noted that for each of the last four years, the college's audit report was given an unqualified opinion, the highest opinion available, with no material weaknesses over internal controls reported. There was a compliance finding related to CalWORKs eligibility in the 2009 audit report that was listed as a significant deficiency but not considered to be a material weakness and there was an audit adjustment within the Student Body Center Fee Trust Fund for \$5.6 million to increase capital assets. The audit report for 2008 had no findings, recommendations or adjustments. The 2007 report had a \$325,000 audit adjustment to the General Fund for understating accounts receivables, but no findings or recommendations. The 2006 report had a reportable condition within the payroll process although it was not considered a material weakness and there was a compliance finding on the 50% calculation. For each year that the college received a finding or recommendation, the college made the correction in a timely manner. Audit reports are posted online and are available for viewing by the general public (III.D.2.a).

Financial information is provided throughout the institution by several means. First, both the old Planning and Budget Council and new Budget and Planning Committees allowed for college-wide representation and members are regularly updated on college finances at the bi-monthly meetings. Academic Senate and Classified Senate representatives are to provide additional information to their constituent groups. Secondly, the team in Business and Administrative Services annually present preliminary, tentative and final budget presentations to the budget/planning group as well as the Board of Trustees. Thirdly, the information including audit reports and budget presentations are posted on the college website that can be viewed by all. As a result of the 2008 Accreditation Survey, where the college was given a 69% approval rating on having timely accurate financial information available, the Superintendent/President has begun sending regular correspondence to staff via college wide e-mail on the state of the budget (III.D.2.b).

Cash flow has not been an issue for the college as demonstrated by not having to issue a tax revenue anticipation note (TRANS). As a precaution, each year the college has filed a resolution with the San Diego County Office of Education for short-term borrowing but has not needed to utilize the loan provision. The college is self-insured for property, liability and workers' compensation with excess coverage through the San Diego and Imperial County Schools Risk Management Joint powers authority (JPA).

Reserve levels have been established at 5% for general reserves and 3% for economic uncertainty. Over the last three years, the college has been well over these reserve levels. Over this same period, the college has not had to access these reserves as its basic aid revenue has been large (III.D.2.c).

The college has effective oversight of its finances, including operations. Several sources can be cited as evidence. First, audit reports are clean, with no material weakness reported over the last three years. Second, the college has completed the Fiscal Health Checklist that was developed by the State Chancellor's Office to identify financial issues and has had discussion with the Board of Trustee at the Board Budget Workshop on the subject. Third, board policy

allows the Vice President of Administrative Service to contract with an outside audit firm to conduct "operational reviews" in order to make improvements over the college's internal controls. Several recently completed reviews include civic center procedures, cash handling controls, and enrollment fee collections. The college has retained its operational cash in the San Diego County investment pool (III.D.2.d).

The college contracts both food services and the bookstore operations, and receives commissions from the vendors. Follet, Inc. pays in excess of \$300,000 annually to run the bookstore. Funds from the bookstore are used to reimburse the college for costs incurred, plus a contribution is made to the Associated Student Government. Premier Food Services operates the cafeteria at both the Oceanside campus and San Elijo Center. The students with whom the team talked had positive comments about the food at the Oceanside campus. The college has an agreement with the MiraCosta College Foundation, which is not considered a component unit of the college. The foundation supports the interest of the college's educational programs and student success through the promotion of gifts, scholarships and community interest. The foundation has its own audit report; assets are approximately \$5 million and in 2008 awarded \$140,000 in scholarships and another \$269,000 in college program support. All grants, other than entitlement programs, must have institutional approval prior to acceptance of the grant. No issues were reported in any of the last three years of audit reports related to auxiliary operations (III.D.2.e).

The college is currently undergoing a complete rewrite of its policy and procedure, as such, the policy and procedure for purchasing and contracts is currently being revised. The old board policy on the topic is still in place and covers the typical array of issues to maintain the integrity of the institution, such as ethical overview, conflict of interest, delegation of purchasing authority, bid limits, and disposal of surplus property. In addition, the college has developed its general terms and conditions that are included on contracts. No issues were noted in the last three years of audit reports related to procurement and contracts (III.D.2.f).

The college does not have a bond issue; therefore there is neither a bond oversight committee nor any audit report. There has been discussion on a future bond issue. At the College Steering Committee, there has been discussion on the need to create a bond oversight committee if the college is successful in getting a bond approved.

The colleges' new budget and planning model, once fully implemented, has the potential to allocate and prioritize resource use based on program reviews. The one area that seems to be missing in the new process is the evaluation of the effective use of financial resources that were allocated. Since this is the first year of the new program review process, this has not occurred yet, but it does not seem that the process, as defined, could measure effectiveness. The college has purchased TracDat to facilitate the collection, management, and evaluation of student learning outcomes and the intent is that information from TracDat will feed into program reviews in the future (III.D.3).

## **Conclusions:**

### **A. Human Resources**

The college partially meets standard III.A. Specifically, the college does not meet standards III.A.1.c. and III.A.6.

MiraCosta College's processes for hiring, evaluating and providing professional development opportunities ensures that the college will continue to maintain qualified personnel that support learning. The college has established a goal of 2% annual growth in the hiring of full-time faculty. Establishing broad and diverse candidate pools and increasing the ethnic diversity of the college faculty continues to be a goal for the college. Although there is evidence of college-wide involvement of faculty in the development of student learning outcomes and assessment, and an expectation that faculty participate in outcomes and assessment activities, there is no evidence that faculty at MiraCosta College have as a written component of their evaluation, participation in student learning outcomes and assessment. Therefore, the college does not meet standard III.A.1.c.

### **B. Physical Resources**

The college partially meets standard III.B. Specifically, the college does not meet standards III.B.2.a and III.B.2.b. Touring the campuses, it is evident that the college's construction and maintenance programs have been successful as facilities are clean and well kept. Because there is access and the facilities are clean and functional, these attributes create a healthful learning and working environment. This conclusion is supported by both the employee and student surveys that confirm that the campus is well maintained and adequately support student learning programs and services.

### **C. Technology Resources**

The college partially meets standard III.C. Specifically, the college does not meet standard III.C.2. The facilities are modern and well maintained with appropriate safeguards for data security and continuity. Faculty, staff, and students have abundant IT resources to support their campus needs and have sufficient support and training to maximize their use of the technology. The linkage between institutional planning and technology planning are missing. There is a new and robust mechanism for tactical planning for the acquisition of new technology (program reviews), but no linkage to an institutional plan with clear and measurable objectives to guide IT tactical planning (IIIC.2).

### **D. Financial Resources**

The college partially meets standard III.D. Specifically, the college does not meet standards III.D.1.a, III.D.1.b. Due to the basic aid status of the college, financial resources are more than sufficient to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness. The college is well managed in the financial arena, maintaining reserves that

exceed 8% of unrestricted expenditures, has adequate cash flow and keeps borrowing to a minimum. The new program review process intends to link program reviews to planning to budgeting. However, without a defined overall institutional plan this link cannot be created. The college also needs to add the evaluation step to see how effectively the money has been spent.

**Commendations:**

**Commendation 3:** The Team commends the college for enhancing the learning environment through well integrated and maintained facilities and grounds with a focus on sustainable practices and landscaping that create a cohesive and esthetically pleasant campus environment.

**Commendation 4:** The Team commends the college for a robust, modern information technology infrastructure and its pervasive use throughout the campuses in support of instruction, student services and operations.

**Recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1:** See above.

**Recommendation 3:** In order to meet the standard, the Team recommends that the college formalize in writing participation in student learning outcomes and assessment as a stated component of the evaluation process for faculty and others directly responsible for student progress for achieving stated student learning outcomes (III.A.1.c).

## STANDARD IV LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

### General Observations:

In 2008, the college embarked on a comprehensive redesign of its governance and planning process. Led by a new campus-wide group, the Governance Organization (GO) committee, the effort sought to address college governance issues and create a link between program review, planning and budget allocation through the creation of a new governance model. The GO committee began with 12 goals, which reflect an inclusive and intentional approach.

The new governance process, in place since June 2009, begins with a College Steering Council, consisting of representatives from each constituency group, which filters issues and requests to the appropriate committee (operational issues) or council (planning and policy issues). (IV.A.2.a.) A parallel system exists for topics related to collective bargaining issues: the four Professional Standards Committees.

The new process was approved and implemented starting in June 2009, so a full cycle has yet to be completed; thus, no documentation exists on the effectiveness of the process. Additionally, the college has no specific, measureable institutional planning objectives identified, which also prevents assessment of the effectiveness of the process. The primary objective of the process centers on a collegial consultation process rather than achieving particular college goals. Decision-making roles and processes are still being refined within the new process. When the College Steering Council was asked by the team how their group determines whether issues are relevant to a council or a committee and which are actually just part of an individual's job duties, it became clear that the members, including the Superintendent/President, see the College Steering Council as fulfilling a collaborative communication function for the institution.

The Governance Organization leadership, administrative staff, and Superintendent/President recognize that the new governance process needs to include a form of reflective evaluation in order to close gaps or increase effectiveness. Current discussions among the GO include attention to this important aspect of continuous quality improvement. There is no consensus at this point which body (e.g., GO or College Steering Council) should take on the role of oversight body.

The Board of Trustees has been actively reviewing Board Policies and Administrative Procedures, in effect conducting on-going Board development. The Board members and Superintendent/President concur that the review is assisting with clarifying roles and responsibilities to the college community on the whole ( IV.B.1.e.; IV.B.1.g.).

### **Findings and Evidence:**

The college has experienced significant changes in the past two years and embarked on a redefinition of the governance model. Prior to the hire of the current Superintendent/President on March 1, 2009, the college had two consecutive interim presidents and there was discord among the members of the Board of Trustees. In early 2009, the interim Superintendent/President established the Governance Organization (GO), which bore responsibility for the redesign of the governance process and included representation from all constituent groups. The resultant process is complex and broad-based.

Since the process is yet to be fully realized, the college has not conducted a formal evaluation of its effectiveness. Interviews with a variety of faculty, staff, administrators and the student government representative reflect support for the model and a positive view of its ultimate potential. Closing the loop of data collection, analysis and decision making is not reflected in the process nor is it linked to institutional planning.

There is no evidence that changes in programs or services are assessed in light of larger institutional goals. The Board of Trustees adopted seven goals in 2009. The Superintendent/President has goals established for his performance evaluation by the Board of Trustees. (IV.B.1.j.) Summary documents of each administrative area's goals were provided to the team during the visit. In each case, the goals are linked to the Board goals. According to several administrators, the Board goals are serving as institutional goals until an updated Educational Master Plan is completed even though only a few of the Board goals are relevant at the institution level and none are stated in measureable, specific, time-bound terms. At the Board of Trustees regular meeting scheduled during the site visit, the Board had a first reading of Board Policy 3250 and Administrative Procedure 3250 related to institutional planning. In all cases, the goals are not stated in measurable terms nor do they include targets for performance.

The structure, as depicted in flow charts within the self study and in a Board of Trustees meeting presentation, may inadequately depict the role and authority of the college Superintendent/President. Where a dotted line (or indirect relationship) between the Academic Senate Council and the Board of Trustees may accurately reflect legal rights, the same connection of the other three councils to the Board of Trustees implies potential circumventing of the authority of the Superintendent/President. The president of the Classified Senate Council understood the dotted line to mean that the group literally reported to (as in providing information to) the Board at its regular meetings. The president of the Academic Senate Council believed the connections to be more reflective of legal right to confer with the Board. In either case, the lack of agreement among the leadership is noteworthy. The Superintendent/President believes that the highly collaborative working relationships he has developed with the councils, and the Academic Senate Council in particular, will be maintained through the full implementation of the new governance process (IV.A.1).

The self study refers to surveys conducted in 2002 and 2008 which reveal a sharp decline in the campus community's perception of ethical and equitable treatment. There is a claim that the perception is reflective of dissatisfaction with the Board of Trustees although there is no documentation which supports the claim or reflects a change since 2008. Interviews with faculty, staff, administrators and Board of Trustees members reveal a substantial effort in creating a positive and cooperative college climate. Members of the college community appear to genuinely want to move beyond the conflicts and contentiousness of the recent past and re-establish positive working relationships. Clearly, the Superintendent/President has played and continues to play a significant role in reinforcing a highly participative college culture (IV.A.1).

A variety of explanations were offered about why academic administrators were removed from the Academic Senate Council in 2009. One explanation was that the new Administrative Council provided sufficient input for administrators and their inclusion in the Academic Senate Council was duplicative. Another explanation was that the college was directed to do so by ACCJC. Some interviewees stated that faculty were not in favor of the change but that the Board of Trustees wanted it. According to one administrator, the academic administrators voted themselves out of the Academic Senate because of the conflation of annual performance review of administrators with faculty tenure review procedures. These reports reflect a lack of common understanding of the role and responsibility of academic administrators; however, administrators state that this separation has not prevented them from effectively working with faculty on relevant issues. The Superintendent/President attends Academic Senate meetings, as do other administrators, and does provide a regular report to the body as noted in agendas and serves as an *ex officio* member of the Academic Senate Council.

The Board of Trustees has undertaken a comprehensive review and updating of all policies and administrative procedures. A faculty member has been given 100% reassignment to lead this effort. The Board has completed a substantial portion of the work and is on target for completing the task in spring 2010 (approximately 250 of 320 items completed). Regular summaries of the status of particular policies and procedures are included in each Board meeting agenda with clear categorization of draft, first reading, seconding reading, and routing. Board members in particular are supportive of this activity and believe it is strengthening not only their understanding of their role, but extending that understanding campus-wide.

The Board of Trustees did adopt BP 2431 in April 2009 which establishes a search process for the Superintendent/President. There is no attendant Administrative Procedure articulating how the process will occur. Documentation of the search process exists in the form of a memorandum from former interim Superintendent/President and search committee co-chair to the Board of Trustees. Included in the memorandum is a timeline but it does not include definition of the search committee membership and how members will be chosen. The memorandum does include a recommendation for the composition of the site visit committee. The Office of Human Resources provided a one-page document dated 2008 that defined committee membership for the search resulting in the hiring of the current



Superintendent/President. The team suggests that the college codify the process in a formal Administrative Procedure to accompany the recently approved Board Policy 2431: Superintendent/President Selection (IV.B.1.j).

The college had a 2000-02 Academic Master Plan and no new plan has been developed since. According to the self study, an Educational Master Plan was to be created in fall 2009. After a failed attempt to find a firm to develop a comprehensive document, the leadership decided to separate the instructional facet from the facilities facet. At the time of the visit, the college was in the process of interviewing firms for each of the plans. Interviews with members of the faculty, staff, administration and Board of Trustees revealed a belief that the new Educational Master Plan, once developed, will align the instructional, facilities, and technology plans into their desired long-range institutional planning document.

### **Conclusions:**

The college partially meets standard IV. Specifically, the college does not meet standard IV.A.2.5. The new governance model has traction with the college community. It is embraced and supported by most faculty, staff, and administration. The college has quickly moved into implementation and believes in the potential of the process to serve its needs. A full cycle of implementation along with an objective assessment of its strengths and weaknesses is needed.

The Board of Trustees is working closely with the Superintendent/President to keep informed and maintain their role as a policy-level body. Their quarterly workshops provide an opportunity for more in-depth study of a particular aspect of their role. Frequent, timely, and regular communication with the Superintendent/President is leading to more efficient and effective Board meetings.

There is no evidence that the college has an agreed-upon, current, institutional plan consisting of measureable goals. Thus, institutional effectiveness is driven by more discrete annual Program Reviews and budget requests and is not assessed as progressing toward a stated goal. The institution has placed great emphasis on the design and implementation of a new governance model. The partial implementation of the new governance process and no articulated plan for the assessment of its impact leads to a lack of evidence in support of the college's fulfillment of standard IV (IV.A.2.5).

### **Commendation:**

**Commendation 5:** The Team commends the college for its accomplishment in re-establishing a positive and collegial environment.

### **Recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1:** See above.

**Recommendation 4:** In order to meet the standard, the Team recommends that the college develop a process to evaluate the integrity and effectiveness of its new governance structure and use the evaluation results as the basis for improvement (IV.A.2.5).

