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*Accrediting Commission for
Community and Junior Colleges*

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

Norco College
2001 Third Street
Norco, CA 92860

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

This report represents the findings of the External Evaluation Team that visited
Norco College on March 3, 2014 through March 6, 2014.

Kathleen F. Burke, Chair

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Summary of the Visit and Report

INSTITUTION: Norco College

DATES OF VISIT: March 3, 2014 through March 6, 2014

TEAM CHAIR: Kathleen F. Burke, Ed.D.
President, Los Angeles Pierce College

A team of twelve professional educators visited Norco College from Monday, March 3, 2014 through Thursday, March 6, 2014 in order to validate the College's Institutional Self Evaluation, assess its performance relative to the Accreditation Standards, and evaluate its compliance with Eligibility Requirements and Commission Policies. Based on that review and evaluation, the team developed recommendations for the College to assure sustainable continuous quality improvement and made a recommendation to the Accrediting Commission regarding the College's accredited status. In order to prepare for this assignment, team members reviewed and analyzed the Institutional Self Evaluation 2014; the 2010 External Evaluation Report; the 2010 Follow-Up Report; the 2012 Midterm Report; Annual Reports to the Accrediting Commission dating back to 2010; twelve financial audit reports; and, the plans, policies, and procedures of both the College and the District.

Norco College is part of the three-college Riverside Community College District. In a recent revision to the procedures of comprehensive site visits, a separate team chair and team assistant were assigned to visit the District Office in order to assess its performance relative to the three colleges. To ensure the relationship between the College and the District was understood and evaluated, two Norco College team members met with and interviewed District staff; and, two College team members interviewed Board members and observed a Board of Trustees meeting. The District team chair maintained regular contact with the chairs of the three college teams. A separate report prepared by the chair of the District team is appended to the end of this report. This section of the report includes recommendations for the District and the colleges.

The accommodations for the team worked well. To facilitate the team's work, there was a conference room at the hotel equipped with computer resources, printers, a projector, supplies and additional supporting documentation. Similar accommodations were available in a team room on site at the College. A majority of team members traveled to the College in personal vehicles. As a result, team members provided local transportation between the hotel and the College and to all of the offsite locations.

Six team members arrived on Sunday in order to engage in special assignments early the following day. On Monday morning, three team members visited International Rectifier in Temecula where Norco College, in association with Mount San Jacinto College, is offering a program of study leading to a certificate in Digital Electronics for a cohort of 30 International Rectifier employees. A substantive change proposal regarding this program was sent to the Accrediting Commission for review by March 6, 2014. Two team members visited the District Office on Monday morning to meet with personnel regarding District operations as

they relate to and support the College. In the afternoon of Monday, March 3, 2014, the full team convened in the hotel conference room to discuss its analysis of the College's Institutional Self Evaluation 2014.

The team conducted its work at the College from the morning of Tuesday, March 4, 2014 through the early afternoon of Thursday, March 6, 2014. During this time, the team conducted over 188 interviews with individuals and groups; attended nine meetings, including the meeting of the Institutional Strategic Planning Committee (ISPC); reviewed seven distance education courses, including courses covering disciplines from accounting to theatre arts; and, toured facilities on the main campus and at the offsite location in Temecula. There were two open meetings held, one during the day and one in the early evening, to allow any member of the College or external community to address the team.

The team found that the College is dedicated to improving its plans, practices, procedures, and programs in service to its students and the surrounding community. Overall interactions with the College community were positive and supportive of the external evaluation process. There was a willingness to schedule and reschedule appointments when necessary as well as to provide additional supporting documentation when requested by the team. Internal and external constituent comments reflecting an appreciation for the College as a welcoming and supportive environment occurred at both public forums. Team members especially noted comments made by students about the impact the College has on both their specific educational goals as well as how the College contributes to the quality of students' lives. Each student who addressed the team cited specific programs and individuals who create this welcoming and supportive environment at the College.

Team members found the Norco College Institutional Self Evaluation 2014 was generally well organized and well written, including responses to all of the required elements. Review of the evidence prepared by the College in support of the Self Evaluation Report and made available through an accompanying compact disk and the College website was challenging for the team. Norco College has varying and, at times, conflicting names for the same material provided as evidence. It was difficult to validate the consistent implementation of planning processes and evaluations when the names of the plans, processes, reports and evaluation mechanisms were presented differently throughout the Self Evaluation Report. This may also make it difficult for the College going forward to accurately assess itself if there is no agreement on basic terms as developed and used by the College. While not required in the context of the Standards, the team recommends the College resolve any issues with document/evidence names to ensure a more effective representation of the work the College engages in related to sustainable continuous quality improvement. Problems with the evidence caused the team to request additional supporting documentation prior to and during the visit. These requests were filled quickly and effectively.

Introduction

On January 29, 2010, Norco College became the third college in the Riverside Community College District and the 112th community college approved to operate in the State of California. Although initial accreditation was granted in 2010, the history of the Riverside Community College District offering classes in the Norco-Corona area dates back to the 1970s. In 1985, 141 acres were acquired in order to build a permanent campus in Norco at its current location. In fall 1991, the Norco campus was formally opened coinciding with the 75th anniversary of Riverside Junior College. In its first full year of operation, the campus enrolled over 3000 students.

Dating back to its origins, the Norco campus was planned to focus on technology while its sister campus, Moreno Valley, developed programs related to health care. With this technology focus in mind, buildings constructed include: Science and Technology, Applied Technology, Center for Applied and Competitive Technologies, and Industrial Technology. As a comprehensive community college, these technology-based buildings are complemented by a library, student services center, student success center, theatre, and the recently completed operations center.

Norco College offers both a breadth of courses and some innovative and unique programs. As part of its Career and Technical Education (CTE) offerings, the College's technology-related programs include the following: simulation and gaming, logistics management, commercial music performance, engineering technology, digital electronics, and supply chain technology. Norco College courses are delivered on campus, online, and in a hybrid format. Courses are also delivered at International Rectifier in Temecula in partnership with Mount San Jacinto College. In addition to these CTE programs, the College has successfully graduated students with associate degrees in social and behavioral sciences, humanities and the arts, administration and information systems, and communications/media and languages.

According to the State Chancellor's Office Data Mart, in fall 2013, Norco College served a student headcount of 9,357 representing a growth of over 300 percent from its 1991 academic year at the current location. Full-time Equivalent Students (FTES) for 2012-2013 totaled 5759. According to the Institutional Self Evaluation 2014, the College serves a diverse student population, including the following ethnicities: Hispanic/Latino (51.3 percent), White (26.7 percent), Asian/Pacific Islander (8.5 percent), Black (7.1 percent), and Multiracial (3.7 percent). In fall 2013, approximately 75 percent of students attended Norco College on a part-time basis with about 32 percent of students enrolling in fewer than six units. The College offers seven interdisciplinary Area of Emphasis (AOE) programs, Associate Degrees for Transfer (AD-T), 14 locally approved certificates in Career and Technical Education (CTE), and 27 associate degrees or state approved CTE certificates.

As a result of the comprehensive initial accreditation visit in 2009, Norco College was granted initial accreditation in January 2010. The College was required to submit a Follow Up Report in 2010 and a Midterm Report in 2012. Since the current comprehensive visit takes place within four years of initial accreditation being granted, the College focused its attention on improving its procedures and practices related to sustainable continuous quality

improvement. Following submission of the Midterm Report in 2012, Norco College immediately began preparing for its 2014 comprehensive visit, including writing the Self Evaluation Report. As part of that preparation, the College mission statement was revised and approved by the governing board, and the strategic planning process was revised and a new strategic plan was implemented. Additionally, both a technology strategic plan and a facilities master plan were adopted.

The team found that the College continuously complies with the Eligibility Requirements and with Commission Policies, including the: Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education; Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV; Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status; Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits; Policy on Institutional Integrity and Ethics; Policy on Contractual Relationships and Non Regionally Accredited Organizations; and, the Policy on Student and Public Complaints against Institutions. In addition to reviewing responses to previous recommendations in the current Self Evaluation Report, the team considered responses to the recommendations in the 2010 Follow Up Report and the 2012 Midterm Report. The team found that the College has resolved all of its previous recommendations through the establishment of sustainable continuous quality improvement processes and procedures.

Overall, Norco College meets the Standards. The Self Evaluation Report clearly outlines the commitment of Norco College to its mission and core values. The College offers high-quality programs in recognized and emerging fields of study. Disaggregated demographic data is used to determine student needs and to develop student support services and programs. As part of program review processes, units link their goals, functions, resource requests and assessments to the College mission and strategic goals. Dialogue on continuously improving student learning and institutional effectiveness takes place regularly through established procedures and decision-making structures. There is an extensive array of councils and committees, including the Committee of the Whole, in which all College personnel may participate. The College has a structure and a culture of representation on committees consisting of students, faculty, staff and administrators participating in evidence-based decision making, with a clearly defined role and a voice in the development of policies, planning and budgeting.

The team commends the College for the following: the development and implementation of the Summer Advantage Program; the Read 2 Succeed program for promoting literacy, integrating technology, and building community; and, the Legacy Committee for providing a wide variety of activities promoting inclusion, understanding, respect and diversity; and, the active participation of all constituency groups in its planning efforts, which demonstrates an ongoing commitment and recognition of the value of all voices in these processes.

The team recommends that Norco College strengthen the assessment of its planning and resource allocation evaluation mechanisms. While the team found the College has developed and implemented processes related to the assessment of student learning and service area outcomes in a number of areas, there were inconsistencies between student learning outcomes on sampled course syllabi when compared to the course outlines of record. The

College should create a system to ensure consistency in transferring student learning outcomes on official course outlines of record to course syllabi and a requirement that these be verified in advance of the start of a class. Disaggregation of student learning outcomes data by instructional delivery mode and more direct assessment of student learning at the program level would benefit the College in developing programs and services to support students. Finally, the College should develop, implement, and assess an evaluative mechanism to review all parts of the student learning outcomes process in an ongoing and systematic way. A regular and systematic cycle of service area outcomes assessment should be undertaken in the Business Service units. The College should develop a plan for replacing its technology infrastructure and equipment, including completing the formal process to project the total cost of ownership of new facilities and equipment.

In addition to these recommendations, the teams recommend the implementation of a comprehensive District technology plan to include a disaster recovery plan as well as a plan to refresh aging and outdated technology. Finally, the teams recommend that the District implement a plan to fund the Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) obligations.

Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations

The team commends Norco College for its collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Services in addressing the needs of incoming high school students through the Summer Advantage Program.

The team commends the Library for its Read 2 Succeed Program for promoting literacy, integrating technology, and building community.

The team commends the Legacy Committee for providing a wide variety of activities promoting inclusion, understanding, respect, and diversity.

College Recommendations to come into compliance with Accreditation Standards

College Recommendation 1

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College consistently evaluate all parts of the planning and resource allocation cycle; develop a standard assessment instrument for all participatory governance committees; develop a process to assess the evaluation mechanisms used in integrated planning and resource allocation to ensure that those evaluations are effective in improving programs, processes, and decision-making structures; and develop strategies to broadly communicate the results of these evaluations to the entire College community. (Standards I.B.6, I.B.7; IV.A.5)

College Recommendation 2

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College create a system to ensure consistency in transferring student learning outcomes on official course outlines of record to course syllabi; implement more direct assessment of student learning at the program level; complete its cycle of evaluation for all general education outcomes; and, develop, implement, and assess an evaluative mechanism to review all parts of the student learning outcomes process in an ongoing and systematic way. (Standards I.B.6, II.A.1.a; II.A.1.b; II.A.1.c, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f; II.A.2.h; II.A.2.i)

College Recommendation 3

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that service area outcomes are systematically assessed for all areas in Business Services and the results of the evaluation are used to make improvements. (Standards I.B.3; III.B.2.b)

College Recommendation 4

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College systematically plan for the replacement of technology infrastructure and equipment, reflect projections of total cost

of ownership for new equipment, systematically assess the effective use of technology resources and use the results of evaluation as the basis for improvement. (Standards III.B.2.a, III.C.1.c, III.C.2)

District Recommendations to come into compliance with Accreditation Standards

District Recommendation 1

In order to meet Standards, compile the various completed elements of technology planning into an integrated, comprehensive district technology plan that is accessible and transparent, including a disaster recovery plan and a plan to refresh aging and outdated technologies. Insure that the district technology plan is based on input from the colleges and is in alignment with college planning processes. (Standards I.B.6 and III.C.2)

District Recommendation 2

In order to meet Standards, implement a plan to fund contributions to the District's other post-employment benefits (OPEB) obligation. (Standard III.D.3.c)

Evaluation of Institutional Responses to the Previous Recommendations

College Recommendations:

College Recommendation 1

In order to increase institutional effectiveness, the team recommends the College establish and document a policy for the regular evaluation of its integrated institutional planning, budgeting, and decision-making processes and that the results be widely disseminated and used to improve the process. (Standards I.B.3, I.B.6, I.B.7; III.B; IV.B.3.g)

In response to this recommendation, the College instituted policies and procedures for regular evaluation of integrated institutional planning, budgeting, and decision-making processes, titled Strategic Planning Policy 2010-01. Drafted in 2010 in response to this recommendation, the policy was revised in 2011. It details procedures that provide stakeholders with the opportunity to evaluate and continually improve the planning, resource allocation, and decision-making processes of the College, and requires that strategic planning, program review, and resource allocation be effectively linked. The evaluation procedures include eight components: Annual Survey of the Planning Councils; Annual Survey of Effectiveness of Academic Senate and Senate Standing Committees; Memorandum from the College President to Norco College; Annual Progress Report on Educational Master Plan Goals, Objectives and “Dashboard Indicators;” Survey of the Committee of the Whole; Report on Resource Allocation; Annual Open Dialogue Session; and, Annual Evaluation Report. Norco College has established mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of its integrated institutional planning, budgeting, and decision-making processes. An interview with the dean of Institutional Effectiveness indicated that all components of the evaluation policy were completed in fall 2013.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness compiled the Annual Evaluation Report 2012-2013. The report is presented to the Committee of the Whole (COTW) membership during fall semester of each academic year, at which time Committee membership is invited to make suggestions for improving the process. Another area of annual evaluation is the Annual Progress Report on Educational Master Plan Goals, Objectives and “Dashboard Indicators.” Annually, at a fall semester COTW meeting, the dean of Institutional Effectiveness makes a presentation regarding the prior academic year progress toward achieving the College’s educational master plan goals. Minutes of the COTW indicate that a report with a similar title has been presented to that group (Educational Master Plan/Strategic Plan Goals and Outcomes 2008-2011 and 2008-2012). All evaluation reports are posted on the College website. The completed evaluations have been widely disseminated to all College constituencies. An example of the use of these evaluations to make improvements in the processes is the development of a tri-chair system for all planning groups. Moving forward, these committees/councils will now have an administrator, a faculty member and a classified staff member serving as tri-chairs.

The College addressed this 2010 recommendation to increase effectiveness by approving and implementing the strategic planning policy and its evaluative steps. In fall 2011, the planning policy was revised to incorporate two additional evaluations, including an annual evaluation of the standing committees of the Academic Senate, and a report on resource allocation to be completed annually in October.

College Recommendation 2

In order to comply with the ACCJC Distance Education Policy for all programs, certificates or degrees where 50 percent or more of the requirements are delivered via distance learning and may be completed at Norco College, the team recommends submission of a substantive change proposal. (Standards II.A.1.b, II.A.1.d; II.B.1, II.B.2.a; II.C.1, II.2.c)

In response to this recommendation, the College submitted a substantive change proposal regarding Distance Education (DE) in March 2010. In June 2010, the Commission deferred approval pending information on “1) student success and retention data for DE programs; 2) evidence of student services online, specifically counseling and advising; and 3) more detail about human resources, the administration of distance education and the staff development for faculty.” In September 2010, the College submitted an addendum to the proposal addressing these issues and in December 2010, the Commission approved the substantive change proposal. The ACCJC follow-up letter to the 2012 Midterm Report stated that the College resolved the recommendation and should be showing evidence that the “changes and improvements have been sustained” by the time of the next comprehensive visit.

The visiting team confirmed that the College met the requirements of this recommendation by reviewing evidence referenced in the Self Evaluation and additional evidence requested during the site visit; interviewing faculty, who teach DE and hybrid classes, students, who enroll in DE courses, and administrators, who oversee DE; and, through observance of the Distance Education Committee. Additionally, the team noted a number of improvements that are contributing to sustaining a high-quality distance education program of study, including: modification of the curriculum approval process to include requirements and standards for distance education, adoption of an online tutoring service, and development of guidelines for substantive and effective student and faculty interaction in an online format.

The College fully addressed this recommendation, operates in alignment with the policy, and meets the Standards.

College Recommendation 3

In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the campus validate all department examinations for their effectiveness in measuring student learning and to ensure that they minimize test bias. (Standard II.A.2.g)

The team confirmed that Norco College has a thorough process in place and all deficiencies have been resolved regarding the requirement that departmental course and/or program

examinations are validated for the effectiveness in measuring student learning and minimizing test bias (Standard II.A.2.g). The validation process includes three components: disproportionate impact, cultural impact, and student learning outcome mapping. There are currently three departments with common examinations: ESL, Reading, and Spanish. Most recently, a new Spanish I final underwent cultural impact validation as scheduled.

The College fully addressed this recommendation and meets the Standard.

District Recommendations:

Please refer to the report of the District evaluation team, appended to this report and made a part of it.

Eligibility Requirements

1. Authority

The evaluation team confirmed that Norco College is a public two-year college operating under the regulations of the California State Department of Education, the Board of Governors of the California Community College Chancellor's Office, and the Board of Trustees of the Riverside Community College District. The College received initial accreditation from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges in 2010 becoming the 112th college in the California community college system.

2. Mission

The evaluation team confirmed that the Board of Trustees approved the current mission statement on August 21, 2012. The mission statement is appropriate in its focus for a community college. It is published in both the College catalog and on the website.

3. Governing Board

The evaluation team confirmed that the Riverside Community College District has a publically elected five-member governing board. On June 19, 2012, a resolution was passed changing the election for trustees from an at-large election to a by-district method. The governing board is an independent policy-making body with no conflicts of interest or financial interests in the institution. The board members are responsible for the academic and financial integrity of the district.

4. Chief Executive Officer

The evaluation team confirmed that Norco College has a chief executive officer appointed by the governing board whose full-time responsibility is to the institution. Board policy and administrative procedures delegate authority from the Board to the District chancellor and the college president.

5. Administrative Capacity

The evaluation team confirmed that Norco College has 24 administrators, including three vice presidents, eight deans, one associate dean, and one assistant dean, with the appropriate preparation and experience to provide the administrative services necessary to support its mission and purpose.

6. Operating Status

The evaluation team confirmed that Norco College is operational with 712 degrees in 34 majors being awarded during the 2012-2013 academic year.

7. Degrees

The evaluation team confirmed that Norco College offers Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees in over 75 programs and 42 certificates of completion in career and technical programs.

8. Educational Programs

The evaluation team confirmed that Norco College degree programs align with the College's mission and are based on recognized higher education fields of study. Additionally, the team confirmed that the programs are of sufficient content and length, are taught at appropriate levels of quality and rigor, and culminate in identified student learning outcomes.

9. Academic Credit

The evaluation team confirmed that Norco College awards academic credit in a manner consistent with the California Code of Regulations, Title 5 Section 55002.5. The College publishes detailed information about academic credit annually in the College Catalog.

10. Student Learning and Achievement

The evaluation team confirmed that Norco College has defined course, program/degree, and institutional/general education learning outcomes. These learning outcomes are regularly and systematically assessed and the College uses the results to engage in meaningful dialogue leading to continuous quality improvement.

11. General Education

The evaluation team confirmed that Norco College incorporates general education into its degree programs emphasizing demonstrated competencies in writing, computational skills, and other major areas of knowledge. There are comprehensive learning outcomes for the students who complete the general education component, and degree credit reflects both the quality and rigor expected for higher education.

12. Academic Freedom

The evaluation team confirmed that the Riverside Community College District has an adopted Board policy on academic freedom, to ensure that students and faculty are free to examine and test knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as judged by the general academic/educational community. The statement on academic freedom is published in the College catalog.

13. Faculty

The evaluation team confirmed that Norco College has a core of qualified faculty with full-time responsibility to the institution to meet current needs. At the time of the visit, the College had 69 full-time faculty and 194 active associate faculty. Faculty members are responsible for curriculum processes and for the assessment of student learning. As Norco College continues to grow, team members are concerned that maintaining the current level of full-time faculty will not be sufficient to enable the College to serve future student populations and to support the College in accomplishing committee work and sustaining a planning and evaluation cycle for continuous quality improvement.

14. Student Services

The evaluation team confirmed that a wide variety of student services in support of the College mission and to support student learning and development are offered through multiple formats.

15. Admissions

The evaluation team confirmed that clear, accessible, and consistent admissions policies are publicized in the College catalog, in the schedule of classes, on the College website and in governing board policies.

16. Information and Learning Resources

The evaluation team confirmed that Norco College provides students, faculty, staff and administrators with access to sufficient information, learning resources and services to support its mission and academic programs. Students and staff have access 24/7 to library resources. In addition, online tutorial services can be accessed directly from every distance education and hybrid course.

17. Financial Resources

The evaluation team confirmed that Norco College's funding base is documented in the Budget Allocation Model (BAM) as developed by the Riverside Community College District. The College is responsible for the management of financial aid, grants, programs, and contracts. College auxiliary operations, including the bookstore and food services are well managed and self-supporting.

A review of the Riverside Community College District Final Budget Projections 2011-2013, the 2013-2014 Final Budget and audit reports confirm that the District and the College document financial resources and assure financial stability.

18. Financial Accountability

The evaluation team confirmed that the District undergoes an annual independent external audit by a certified public accountant. The past four audits for the District were certified without exception. The audits are made available to the public on the District's website.

19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation

The evaluation team confirmed that Norco College uses data about student achievement and learning in its planning and resource allocation processes. Data is presented and discussed at all-college and other participatory governance committee meetings. The Strategic Plan outlines college goals and strategies planned from 2013 to 2018 with defined metrics related to increase student achievement and success. College planning processes are integrated, open, and collaborative including a systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation and re-evaluation.

20. Public Information

The evaluation team confirmed that general information including, the mission, vision, goals and strategies, and core commitments of Norco College; course, program, and degree offerings; academic calendar; academic freedom statement; availability of student financial aid; available learning resources, academic credentials of faculty and administrators; and, the names of governing board members; requirements, including: admissions requirements; fees and refund policies; and, requirements for degrees, certificates, graduations, and transfer; and, major policies affecting students and related items are published in the catalog, the class schedule, and other appropriate documents and are also posted on the College website.

21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission

The evaluation team confirmed that Norco College adheres to the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and policies of the Accrediting Commission and describes itself in identical terms to all of its external accrediting agencies. The College publishes accurate information regarding its accreditation status both in printed documents and on its website.

Commission Policy Compliance

Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education

Norco College offers distance education courses that are equivalent in quality, accountability, and focus on student outcomes to courses offered in a traditional face-to-face format. All distance education courses have the same student learning outcomes as the face-to-face courses. This applies to the fully online and hybrid courses. Student learning outcomes in distance education courses are incorporated in the regular course assessment rotation and become integrated in program assessment as well. According to published guidelines, distance education courses are developed and reviewed through an additional curriculum approval process built into the District's curriculum software program. The course approval process includes approval by discipline faculty and other College and District departments or offices, such as the library, and the Disability Resource Center.

Faculty who teach distance education courses are evaluated according to the same guidelines applied to faculty who teach traditional face-to-face courses. Distance education faculty are supported with training, development opportunities and technology by the Distance Education Committee, the Faculty Development Committee and the Technology Committee. Faculty development is further supported at the College through a peer mentoring program in which experienced distance education faculty work with those who are new to this teaching and student service modality.

Students who enroll in distance education classes have access to tutoring, counseling, library services, and technical support for the learning management system that is available in an online format 24/7. Students are authenticated via several methods, such as secure login and passwords, proctored examinations, and discrete pedagogical tools conducive to verify the identity of the person completing the course.

Faculty accepting DE assignments have to read and demonstrate acceptance of the College's approved *Summary of Regulations for Regular and Effective/Substantive Contact for Distance Education* and the *RCCD Guide to Best Practices to Achieve Regular and Effective/Substantive Contact in Distance Education*. These documents were developed collaboratively among the three RCCD colleges with the objective to ensure that student-faculty interaction in the DE environment is equivalent to the "seat time" in a traditional face-to-face class. These documents demonstrate that both the College and the District understand that the policy on distance education requires regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, and that the College is not engaged correspondence education in which contact between the student and the instructor is limited, neither regular nor substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student.

Norco College complies with the Commission Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education.

Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV

Norco College systematically reviews and manages the disbursement of federal student loans and the default rate to ensure compliance. The College monitors and manages student loan default rates to ensure compliance with federal requirements and Commission policies. There has been a decline in the official default rate over the last two years from the two-year official rate of 10.9 to the two-year draft rate of 10.0. The rates are well within the Federal compliance guidelines. The College has contracted with a vendor to assist in managing the default rate through systematic contact with students, financial aid staff and customized reports. The Student Financial Services Office also provides information and services for students to develop their financial literacy. Financial literacy workshops and a Consumer Guide have been designed to better educate students about their financial responsibilities. The guide is available online. Norco College is in compliance with the Title IV guidelines for the federal loan default rate.

Norco College complies with the Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV.

Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status

Norco College exhibits integrity and responsibility in advertising, student recruitment, and in its representation of accredited status. The College uses its catalog and the schedule of classes as the primary media to convey information about its educational programs and services. The catalog, schedule of classes, and other official publications are available in both print and electronic format. The catalog contains the most comprehensive information about the College, including the information detailed in Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior College's Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status. The statement in the catalog and on the College website complies with policy requirements by stating its accredited status accurately and fully in a comprehensive statement identifying the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges by name. In addition, comprehensive information is included on general education student learning outcomes, conditions for acceptance of course credits, degree and certificate requirements, and full-time faculty members and their degrees.

Norco College complies with the Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment and Representation of Accredited Status.

Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits

Norco College meets generally accepted practices when awarding units of credit in accordance with California Code of Regulations Title 5 and the California Community College Chancellor's Office *Program and Course Approval Handbook*, which requires a minimum of three hours of student learning per week throughout the semester for each unit of credit. Board policy and administrative procedure define the requirements for the award of credit. Course descriptions, located in the College catalog and the District's curriculum software include this information. A review of course outlines of record demonstrate that the

College consistently requires one lecture hour of direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work for sixteen weeks for one unit of credit. Courses requiring laboratory hours award one unit of credit for three hours of student participation in classroom laboratory over a sixteen-week semester. Norco College classroom hours are primarily defined as either lecture or laboratory and units of credit are consistently awarded in both classifications. The team did not find any courses in which credit was awarded based on a clock hour.

Course outlines are regularly reviewed by the Curriculum Committee to ensure courses and programs are of sufficient length, appropriate breadth, content and rigor. Statements of student learning outcomes are included in course outlines and the College catalog. The achievement of student learning outcomes is assessed at the course, program, and institutional levels. Graduation from Norco College with an associate's degree is granted upon successful completion of an approved program of study, which requires a minimum of 60 degree-applicable semester units. The College does not direct assessment programs.

Norco College complies with the Commission Policy on Institutional Degree and Credits.

Policy on Institutional Integrity and Ethics

Norco College presents accurate information to the Accrediting Commission as well as other governmental entities and accrediting agencies. In addition, the College provides accurate information to its students and to the communities it serves. Norco College maintains a comprehensive website, which houses numerous reports, policies and information related to District and College policies and procedures, student data, and accreditation status and reports.

The Norco College catalog and schedule of classes contain information on admission requirements, fees and financial aid programs, student services provided, transfer of credit, transcripts, and the student code of conduct. The Norco College mission, a description of the education programs it offers, and its accreditation status, are also included in these publications.

The review of District Board Policies validated the existence of policies related to institutional integrity and ethics. These include policies on academic freedom, academic honesty, conflicts of interest, codes of ethics, and grievance/complaint procedures.

Norco College complies with the Policy on Institutional Integrity and Ethics.

Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations

Management of contracts with non-regionally accredited organizations including grants, awards, outside agency contracts for personal and professional services, construction, consultants, instructional service agreements and information technology contracts follow governing Board policies on bids and contracts and change orders. The District defines and follows a review process as identified in the Board's policies.

Based on a site visit to International Rectifier, review of financial audit reports, Board policies and procedures, and committee minutes, the team confirms that there is a defined process for handling of contracts related to public construction cost accounting, capital construction and change orders, electronic systems and materials, and the accessibility of information technology. Evidence also indicates that the defined processes for approval of contractual relationships are being followed.

Norco College complies with the Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations.

Policy on Student and Public Complaints against Institutions

The College and the Riverside Community College District have in place student grievance procedures that are reasonable, fairly administered and publicized in the Norco College catalog and on the website. The procedures include informal, formal, and appeal processes with appropriate timelines listed for each phase. There is a process for receiving and maintaining confidential records. These processes are clearly defined and consistently followed. The team confirmed that there was no pattern of unresolved complaints against the College. No concerns were noted and there was no pattern of complaints that would indicate issues with Accreditation Standards. The College has developed an actionable improvement plan to create an internal tracking system for complaints and grievances. In addition to College procedures, the public has the right to address the governing board as designated times during the public session of their meetings as specified in Board policy.

Norco College complies with the Policy on Public Complaints against Institutions.

Standard I – Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

Standard I.A Mission

General Observations

The team confirmed the commitment of Norco College to its mission and core values. As a portion of the program review processes, units link their goals, functions, resource requests and assessments to the College mission and strategic goals. The latest mission was developed in spring 2012 and approved by the Committee of the Whole (COTW) in May 2012 and by the Board of Trustees in August 2012.

Findings and Evidence

Norco College has a mission statement that defines its educational purposes and its commitment to student learning. (Standard I.A.1) The current Norco College mission statement and core values were reviewed and revised in April 2012. The College utilized the existing governance and planning structures to carry out this revision. (Standard I.A.3) The Institutional Strategic Planning Council (ISPC) initiated the review during the process of updating the Strategic Plan of Norco College. The final versions of the mission and core values were presented to the Committee of the Whole for approval. Since the Committee of the Whole is comprised of all faculty, classified staff and administrators of Norco College, this process ensured broad dissemination of the revised mission and core values and participation in their approval. The Board of Trustees approved the revised mission and core values of Norco College on August 12, 2012. (Standard I.A.2)

The College defines its intended student population broadly as current students and the community and the workforce. Research and data analysis about the labor market, demographics and socio-economics, include information about the surrounding local communities, including: Corona, Eastvale, Norco, and Riverside. Additionally, the College has reviewed the twenty fastest growing occupations in the surrounding counties of Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ontario. Since the student population is defined in general and broad terms, the College should either consider expanding its research and analysis to ensure each element of this broad population is truly being served or, the College may consider defining its intended student population served more narrowly as those in the surrounding local communities. (Standard I.A.1)

The mission of Norco College identifies “transfer, career and technical education, certificates and degrees” as the goals of their educational programs. Review of the educational programs and student support services provided by the College indicate that the College is providing its community with educational opportunities and its student populations with appropriate support services, which are consistent with its mission. (Standard I.A.1) The Institutional Strategic Planning Council (ISPC) reviews new degrees and programs to ensure that they are aligned with the mission and the strategic plan of Norco College.

While the Norco College mission was revised in 2012, until recently, Norco College did not have an established process for review of its mission. The need for this process was

identified by the ISPC in February 2013 and approved by the ISPC in March 2013. Norco College now meets this Standard (Standard I.A.3).

The team confirmed that program review is at the core of Norco College's planning processes. In instructional and administrative program reviews, units are asked to link their goals, functions and resource requests to the mission and the strategic planning objectives. However, student services program review templates do not request that they tie their goals, functions and resource requests to the mission; instead, they are asked to link their goals to the strategic plan and to the student services objectives. While the strategic plan goals are linked to the College mission, student services program review templates could strengthen its link to the mission by explicitly requiring it.

Annual program review documents are used to prioritize requests for budget allocations and through that decision-making process the college moves towards achieving its mission and strategic plan objectives. (Standard I.A.4) The Program Review Committee uses a rubric to evaluate instructional program reviews. This evaluation rubric includes criteria on supporting the College mission and achieving the strategic plan objectives. The Academic Planning Council has a rubric for prioritization of faculty requests. Additionally, there is an evaluation rubric for ranking resource requests from administrative unit annual program reviews. The Student Services Planning Council has also developed a rubric. All rubrics include at least one criterion on how the request meets the mission or strategic plan objectives. The prioritized lists go to the ISPC for final approval, which are then forwarded to the Committee of the Whole. Once approved by the COTW, each prioritized list of requests is forwarded to the president. The College meets this Standard as it has made consistent efforts to tie planning and resource requests to its mission and strategic plan objectives. (Standard I.A.4)

Conclusions

The College meets the Standard. Norco College has a mission statement that has been recently revised and approved by the Board of Trustees. The mission statement is central to the planning processes through linkages within the annual program reviews conducted by all units at the college. Norco College decision-making bodies utilize various rating rubrics, which include linkages to the mission as a criterion for making resource allocation decisions. The College has established a procedure to regularly evaluate its mission statement.

Recommendations

None

Standard I – Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

Standard I.B Improving Institutional Effectiveness

General Observations

Norco College has established procedures and decision-making groups that allow it to maintain dialogue on continuously improving student learning and institutional effectiveness. There is an extensive array of councils and committees, including the Committee of the Whole, which is comprised of all College personnel. All decision-making groups meet regularly and meetings are generally well attended. Data, both quantitative and qualitative, are available for use by these groups. However, the team observed that there was not a regular and systematic review of all parts of the planning and resource allocation cycle.

The team experienced difficulty in reviewing the accompanying evidence and the material available through the College website in support of the Institutional Self Evaluation. The College uses different names for the same material. It was difficult to validate consistent implementation of planning processes and evaluations when the names of the plans, processes, evaluations and reports are presented differently throughout of the Self Evaluation and on the College website. The lack of agreement on basic terms developed and used by the College may also make it difficult for the constituents at Norco College to access and analyze relevant information, and accurately assess itself.

Findings and Evidence

Norco College has multiple groups that are charged with various aspects of planning and evaluation. These groups include the Academic Planning Council, the Student Services Planning Council, the Business and Facilities Planning Council, the Norco Assessment Committee, and the Institutional Strategic Planning Council; and, the Academic Senate and its standing committees, including the Program Review Committee. These entities have broad participation from all areas of the College. Each group has an established web page, which outlines the purpose of the group, its membership, its meeting schedules, agendas and minutes, and any other relevant documents. An examination of the minutes from these groups reveal that they meet regularly, and review and act on information related to continual improvement of student learning and institutional processes. (Standard I.B.1)

The Committee of the Whole is comprised of all personnel at Norco College; this group votes and makes final recommendations to the president. The inclusive nature of the Committee of the Whole is an example of the effort to foster widespread dialogue at Norco College. In addition, Norco College has an annual Open Dialogue Session. The stated goal of this session is to allow all College constituencies to discuss how planning, program review, resource allocation and decision-making processes contribute to the achievement of course, program and institutional student learning outcomes. During this meeting, any member of the College community may bring forward an issue or concern for discussion. These concerns may then be referred to the appropriate council or committee for investigation or review. (Standard I.B.1)

Norco College has an established Education Master Plan (EMP) and a Strategic Plan, which share the same goals and objectives. The current Strategic Plan and Process 2013-2018 was revised in fall 2012 and approved by the Board of Trustees in February 2013. The Strategic Plan has seven goals and forty-four objectives, which are generally stated in measurable terms. Strategic Plan objectives have been assigned to particular decision-making groups. Progress toward achieving the objectives has been monitored by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and a report is presented to the Committee of the Whole annually. Norco College made the decision to assign each objective to one or more committees or councils. Beginning in spring 2014, these groups were made responsible for developing actions to achieve the objectives and for monitoring the progress of the College in achieving these objectives. It is anticipated that the action plans will be developed by the end of the spring 2014 academic term. A planning retreat for these groups is scheduled to provide training and assistance with the use of data and benchmarks. The Accreditation Survey 2013 indicate that over 90 percent of faculty, management, and staff respondents agree that the College is committed to continuous improvement of student learning. Eighty percent of respondents agree that the mission statement guides institutional planning. (Standard I.B.2)

As outlined previously, annual program reviews are used to link resource requests to the College mission, institutional objectives, and/or outcome assessments. The current round of comprehensive program reviews will be the last that will be submitted to the District. Interviews with members of the Norco College Program Review Committee and the Institutional Strategic Planning Council indicate that a new template for the comprehensive program reviews is under discussion. (Standard I.B.2)

The College has a defined process for developing strategic goals and objectives, annual program reviews with their plans and resource requests linked to the mission and/or strategic plan objectives, requests that are evaluated and prioritized, and pathways that resource priorities take to the College president. However, these processes are not consistently applied in all areas of the College. The Business Services division began creating service area outcomes several years ago as a means of measuring the effectiveness of its services; however, follow-through on assessment of those outcomes has not been consistent. The College should assure that service area outcomes are systematically assessed for all areas in Business Services and the results of the evaluation used to make improvements to ensure that the College is making progress on achieving its stated goals. (Standard I.B.3)

There are three reports that indicate the College has assessed its progress towards meeting its strategic plan objectives: Educational Master Plan/Strategic Plan Goals and Outcomes 2008-11, Educational Master Plan/Strategic Plan Goals and Outcomes 2008-12, and Strategic Planning Goals Summary 2013. The College evaluates these processes by surveys of members of the decision-making groups. According to the defined process, surveys are to be completed annually and on a specific timeline; however, there has not always been adherence to this timeline or to the groups that should be participating in it. For example, not all of the Academic Senate standing committees participated in this process in 2012. However, interviews with College personnel indicate that all of the appropriate groups participated in the latest round of surveys and/or evaluations. The Annual Evaluation Report 2012-2013 was a compilation of evaluations that were done in 2012 or 2013, rather than annually. The

surveys provide feedback on the perceptions of the committee and/or council members. Some surveys ask participants to rate their knowledge and perception of processes, while others ask participants to rate the performance of the group. The team found that Norco College has established mechanisms to assess its effectiveness in meeting its strategic plan objectives and that the intent is for these processes to be ongoing and cyclical. (Standard I.B.3)

Norco College has multiple levels of planning groups, which allow all college constituents an opportunity to have input into planning and allocation processes. The membership of the planning councils and the newly instituted tri-chair system demonstrate the inclusion of all constituent groups in the planning process and in making recommendations on resource allocations to the president. Reports on the strategic plan objectives indicate that the College is making progress towards improving its effectiveness. (Standard I.B.4)

The College surveys those individuals who are members of these planning councils regarding their perception of the processes related to their functions. There is a high degree of agreement of those actively involved in the planning that these processes are data driven and are allowing the College to meet its objectives. However, the Accreditation Survey reported that nearly 40 percent of respondents believed that planning decisions are based on personal opinions or personal agendas. Interestingly, the same survey identified that nearly 75 percent of respondents also believed that decisions were made based on research data. The survey notes the inconsistent responses to these questions, but does not attempt to explain it. In order to make the collection of such data meaningful, the team recommends the College analyze why the responses appear to be contradictory. (Standard I.B.4)

The College identified ways in which it communicates quality assurance, including: program reviews, assessment reports, submission of data to the state Chancellor's Office, participation in national surveys, and a report on progress in achieving its strategic goals. Annual program reviews are completed by each unit and are available through the College website. An Annual Assessment Report has been produced for the last three years and, once approved, is also available on the website. This report evaluates the learning outcomes assessment work being done by instructional areas, as well as outcomes assessments in Student Services and Business Services areas. The primary source documents for this evaluation and report are the annual program reviews. The College submits the required Management Information System (MIS) data to the District, which is then transmitted to the Chancellor's Office. This information is then available through the California Community College Chancellor's Office Data Mart. The data is also used to produce Accountability Reporting for Community Colleges (ARCC) reports. Additionally, Norco College has a link to the Student Success Scorecard data on its primary web page. Norco College has participated in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and the results are available on the Institutional Research website. The College also produces a report on the progress in achieving the objectives of the strategic plan. (Standard I.B.5)

The team confirmed the development and the approval of a procedure to conduct evaluations of College planning and decision-making processes. The Strategic Planning Committee Policy was approved and integrated into the Strategic Planning Timeline in fall 2010. In

2011, this policy was revised as a result of a restructuring of committees and councils. During this revision, timelines for communication were altered and additional reporting to the Committee of the Whole (COTW) was established. (Standard I.B.6)

The procedures outlined in the Strategic Planning Committee Policy include eight different evaluations to be conducted annually, including: the Annual Survey of the Planning Councils; the Annual Survey of Effectiveness of Academic Senate and Senate Standing Committees; the Memorandum from the College President to Norco College; the Annual Progress Report on Educational Master Plan Goals, Objectives and “Dashboard Indicators;” the Survey of the Committee of the Whole; the Report on Resource Allocation; the Annual Open Dialogue Session; and, the Annual Evaluation Report. Following a review of the appropriate committee, council, or senate minutes, it is apparent that these procedures for evaluation have not always been consistently implemented. Of the above listed evaluation mechanisms, the Memorandum from the College President to Norco College, Survey of the Committee of the Whole, Annual Open Dialogue Session, and the Report of Resource Allocation are being completed on an annual basis. The other evaluation procedures have all been completed at least once, but not necessarily on an annual basis. The Annual Survey of Effectiveness of Academic Senate and Senate Standing Committees done in 2012 indicated that several standing committees did not participate. For example, the Program Review Committee did not complete the 2011 survey. Since the College claims that program review processes are core to the integration of planning and resource allocation at Norco College, it is surprising that greater effort to participate in the annual evaluation was not undertaken by that committee. In fall 2013, all standing committees of the Academic Senate participated in the evaluation process. There is only one Annual Evaluation Report, which is dated November 2013. This report includes a compilation of evaluations utilizing both 2012 and 2013 information. There are two reports titled “Educational Master Plan/Strategic Plan Goals and Outcomes” (2008-11; 2008-12). These may be the evaluation procedure of Annual Progress on Educational Master Plan Goals, Objectives and “Dashboard Indicators” listed in the Strategic Planning Committee Policy 2010-01. (Standard I.B.6)

In order to address a perceived lack of involvement of staff in prioritizations identified in the 2013 Survey of the Committee of the Whole, a new tri-chair system was instituted in planning councils. Each planning council now has three co-chairs; a faculty member, a staff member and an administrator. The visiting team was provided with additional examples of how the use of information derived from the “dashboard indicators” was utilized in decision-making processes. These included the development and expansion of the Summer Advantage program. While Norco College has evaluation procedures for its planning and resource allocation processes, these procedures have not always been systematically accomplished. The College needs to strengthen its commitment to systematically engaging in all parts of that defined process. (Standard I.B.6)

The Strategic Planning Committee Policy 2010-01 describes eight different evaluation processes for systematically reviewing and modifying all parts of the integrated planning and resource allocation cycle. The team found no evidence that the College has reviewed these eight evaluation mechanisms to ensure their effectiveness in measuring improvement in the College’s defined integrated planning and resource allocation processes. Since the

implementation of the eight evaluation mechanisms has been inconsistent, it is difficult to measure their effectiveness. The College should review and confirm the frequency for engaging in these evaluation mechanisms, and measure their effectiveness in assisting the College with reviewing and modifying all parts of the integrated planning and resource allocation process. The College does not meet this Standard. (Standard I.B.7)

Norco College has established Institutional Set Standards (ISS). The institutional set standards were presented in the introduction of the Institutional Self Evaluations as a part of some of the tables of data that were presented. According to documentation on the ISS development process, the institutional set standards were vetted through the strategic planning process, reviewed and discussed by the Institutional Strategic Planning Council, and then forwarded to the Committee of the Whole for review and approval. However, discussion with members of the Institutional Strategic Planning Council stated that the dean of Institutional Effectiveness was given the charge of developing the set standards. The Institutional Set Standards were approved by the COTW in May 2013.

The College has identified five ISS. For four of the five standards, the College reviewed five successive years of data; these four standards are course completion and retention, and degree and certificate completion within six years. The College relied on four successive years of data for the institutional set standard for transfer rate within six years. Institutional set standards for job placement and licensure exam pass rates for career and technical education programs have not been developed. The five identified ISS were based on one standard deviation below the mean of four or five successive years of data. Overall, this methodology for creating the standards appears to be low. For example, the transfer standard is set at 18.4 percent; however, the three-year mean for transfer within six years is around 32 percent. Similarly, the ISS for degree completion within six years is 10.5 percent but the three-year mean is approximately 19 percent.

Members of the ISPC indicated that there is a plan to map the institutional set standards to particular committees who will be charged with monitoring them. This mirrors the College's process of distributing the strategic objectives to councils and committees. The stated intent is to have the responsible committee develop action plans for the strategic plan objectives and set standards assigned to them. It is anticipated that this process will be completed by the end of spring 2014.

At the time of the visit, the College had not defined what actions it would take if the data trend below its institutional set standards. The team recommends that the College evaluate the methodology used to establish the institutional set standards to determine if one standard deviation below the mean is too low and does not sufficiently challenge the College to improve upon its current levels of achievement. Institutional set standards for job placement and licensure exam pass rates for career and technical education programs should be established. Finally, the College should determine what steps it will take if the College or a program is found to be performing below the institutional set standards.

Conclusions

The College partially meets the Standard. Norco College has planning procedures in place, which are tied to the College's mission and Educational Master/Strategic Plan objectives. The planning procedures are inclusive and foster ongoing dialogue at the College regarding its future and its effectiveness. The evaluation of these processes has not been systematically implemented. While an annual eight-step process was defined to evaluate the elements of the planning cycle, the College has not been successful in completing all of the evaluation mechanisms on an annual basis. In addition, Norco College does not have a process in place to assess its evaluation mechanisms. As comprehensive program reviews are decentralized from the District to the colleges, Norco College will need to address how these reviews will be integrated into their local planning processes.

The College has established five institutional set standards related to completion and success, but lacks standards for job placement and licensure pass rates for career and technical education programs. The current Institutional Set Standards should be reviewed to determine if they are too low, and the College must define what it will do if the data indicate it is falling below its Institutional Set Standards.

Recommendations

College Recommendation 1

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College consistently evaluate all parts of the planning and resource allocation cycle; develop a standard assessment instrument for all participatory governance committees; develop a process to assess the evaluation mechanisms used in integrated planning and resource allocation to ensure that those evaluations are effective in improving programs, processes, and decision-making structures; and develop strategies to distribute the results of the evaluation to broadly communicate the results of these evaluations to the entire College community. (Standards I.B.6, I.B.7; IV.A.5)

Standard II – Student Learning Program and Services

Standard II A – Instructional Programs

General Observations

Consistent with its mission, Norco College offers high-quality programs in recognized and emerging fields of study. The College offers seven interdisciplinary Area of Emphasis (AOE) programs, Associate Degrees for Transfer (AD-T), 14 locally approved certificates in Career and Technical Education (CTE), and 27 associate degrees or state approved CTE certificates. Norco College offers a breadth of courses and some innovative and unique programs. From its origins as a campus in a single college district, Norco College has emphasized technology programs as part of its CTE course offerings, including classes in simulation and gaming, supply chain, and logistics management. Norco College courses are delivered on campus, online, and in a hybrid format. Courses are also delivered at International Rectifier in Temecula in partnership with Mt. San Jacinto College. Program developments are initiated by faculty and created through a process based, in part, on whether they are District wide or local college courses or programs.

Norco College has developed Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) at the course, program, and institutional levels. Course level SLOs are included in the course outlines of record (COR) and course syllabi. Program and General Education Outcomes (GEOs) are listed in the College catalog and on the website. In general, the team found evidence of significant progress since the last evaluation visit in assessing student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels. A review of a sampling of course syllabi revealed that the SLOs did not consistently match the approved course outlines of record. These inconsistencies should be addressed. Course level assessments are robust and ongoing with cycles of assessment established by faculty. At least one cycle of assessment has been completed for the majority of the Program Level Outcomes (PLOs). Additionally, there is a move to use more direct assessments of PLOs rather than just indirect assessments of graduates. A software system has been purchased and is being implemented to manage the institutional repository of assessments and provide improved query and reporting features. Norco College reduced their general education outcomes to four in fall 2013 and faculty have begun the process of assessing each of the outcomes in a more systematic method. The College assessment plan requires that one GEO be assessed each fall semester.

At Norco College, courses and programs are evaluated through the program review process, which includes the Annual Program Review (APR) and a Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) leading to resource allocation and pedagogical improvements. The Norco Assessment Committee (NAC) oversees the SLO assessment process and the co-chairs have developed a working model that connects the three different levels of learning outcomes. NAC uses a rubric to provide developmental feedback to faculty on draft program reviews. Assessment results are reported annually.

Recently, Norco entered into a unique contract education partnership with International Rectifier and Mount San Jacinto to offer a certificate in digital electronics to their employees. A substantive change proposal for this program was needed in order to comply with

Commission policies. The team confirmed the proposal was submitted to the Commission for approval during the course of the team's visit.

Findings and Evidence

Norco College offers Career and Technical Education (CTE), basic skills, and degree and transfer level courses. The Enrollment Management subcommittee analyzes Student Educational Plan (SEP) data and course taking patterns in order to set appropriate Full-Time Equivalent Student (FTES) targets to inform schedule construction. The College offers AD-T, AOE, and CTE certificates and associate's degrees. The College created and implemented courses and intervention programs in light of the under-preparedness of students. These include the Math Intervention Program, Step Ahead, and the Summer Advantage Program. Contract Education courses are in place through a partnership with industry and another community college. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness tracked data of those programs to ensure data driven decision-making. The results of course level SLOs are robust and are used to change pedagogy. Data of program level SLOs are incorporated into the APR and CPR. Accountability reports show results of data and highlights of improvements. (Standard II.A.1.a)

Norco College uses appropriate delivery systems and modes of instruction. The Distance Education Committee and the Professional Development Committee support online instruction. Hybrid classes are the means that the College uses to have students familiarize themselves with the Learning Management System (LMS). The College's Distance Education (DE) form requires instructors to explicitly state how instruction will compensate for the loss of face-to-face time. The College completed a Distance Education Survey Report to identify predictors of online success. (Standard II.A.1.b)

Courses offered in the DE format undergo a rigorous process that assures the same integrity and rigor as face-to-face classes. The College measures student success and retention rates and uses the data to improve instruction and inform scheduling decisions. The percentage of students choosing to enroll in DE classes has increased steadily since 2009, which is an indicator that these offerings address the needs of the student population.

DE courses undergo a separate curriculum approval process, which includes adherence to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements. Additionally, faculty accepting DE assignments have to read and demonstrate acceptance of the College's approved *Summary of Regulations for Regular and Effective/Substantive Contact for Distance Education* and the *RCCD Guide to Best Practices to Achieve Regular and Effective/Substantive Contact in Distance Education*. These documents were developed collaboratively among the three RCCD colleges with the objective to ensure that student-faculty interaction in the DE environment is equivalent to the "seat time" in a traditional face-to-face class. Student Learning Outcomes for DE courses are included in the course syllabus, evaluated, and added to the data reported by each discipline and department. However, at this time departments do not disaggregate SLOs by means of delivery. (Standards II.A.1.a; II.A.1.b; II.A.1.c)

Norco College has identified SLOs for courses, programs, certificates, and degrees, and SLOs are housed in the data system as evidenced by sampling several Course Outlines of Record (COR). The samples included online, lecture, and laboratory classes. Student Area Outcomes (SAOs) and Administrative Outcomes (AOs) are also established. Course SLOs are listed on the CORs. Program, certificate, and degree SLOs are listed in the catalog. Program level outcomes are also made public on the program's web page. At the course level, there is widespread assessment of the outcomes. The College has assessed at least one cycle of SLOs at the program level for most programs. The cycle was to be completed by the end of fall 2013. During the visit the team confirmed via interviews that all SLOs at the program level were completed as planned; however, the data had not been entered into their tracking system. The College's GEOs are also its institutional learning outcomes. Because Norco College recently revised its GEOs, they completed assessing one of the four GEOs last fall and have developed a cycle of assessing each of the GEOs each subsequent fall semester. In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College complete its cycle of evaluation for all GEOs. (Standards II.A.1.c; II.A.2.e; II.A.2.f)

While the full SLO process is not yet completely institutionalized it is well developed because of the energies of the co-chairs of NAC and a committed faculty. There needs to be further College discussion about institutionalizing assessment at all levels. A data system has been purchased to support the process. (Standards II.A.1.c; II.A.2.e; II.A.2.f) In order to achieve sustainable continuous quality improvement, the College should fully implement an evaluation mechanism to review all the parts of the SLO process in an ongoing, systematic way. (Standards II.A.1.c; II.A.2.e; II.A.2.f)

The NAC oversees the SLO process by developing guidelines for assessment, reports, training, and reporting forms. In addition, the NAC evaluates the reports based upon a four-point scale. The faculty content experts identify appropriate student learning outcomes and assessments. Learning outcomes have been identified for all levels with the exception of newly created and approved AD-T degrees. Results of assessments are brought back to NAC and also vetted to Institutional Strategic Planning Committee (ISPC) through the means of an annual program review and a comprehensive program review every four years. There are examples of improvements at the course and program levels, including adoption of new textbooks, development of new laboratory assignments and worksheets in chemistry to improve a critical gap in students' understanding that followed them throughout the course sequence, and improvement in student performance in written communication and information competency. (Standard II.A.2.a)

The College has implemented an annual Industry Summit Breakfast to develop partnerships with businesses and determine the relevancy of the CTE programs. By mapping course level to program and GEO level outcomes, the College has a structured relationship between student learning and competency levels. Faculty members are given guidelines for the various forms of assessment. The English Department uses composition courses as a quasi-capstone class for the critical thinking GEO. Electronic portfolios have also been used to demonstrate competency. (Standard II.A.2.b)

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness conducts research and analysis to inform demographics, educational preparedness, and diversity. The ISPC determines FTES targets and forwards the information to department chairs to decide the course offerings. New college students are blocked from enrollment until they complete an abbreviated education plan. The Academic Planning Committee (APC) develops a scheduling grid to minimize overlap of classes. The curriculum process establishes depth and rigor of each of the courses. (Standard II.A.2.c)

The College has a variety of delivery modes including online, hybrid, and face-to-face. Faculty interviews confirm that various learning styles are used to capture student interest. Faculty informal sharing within their respective disciplines, professional development opportunities, and conference attendance were cited as the most popular methods to share ways to engage students using students' learning styles. For online classes, a guideline of best practices has been established. (Standard II.A.2.d)

Distance Education courses undergo rigorous quality control at the design, implementation and delivery stages. Faculty teaching DE courses must adhere to approved best practice guidelines and they are aware of differences in learning styles and learning needs of students enrolled in DE classes. DE classes reviewed feature a variety of activities and assessment instruments in various formats to address multiple and different learning needs. Student success, retention, and satisfaction surveys are conducted to determine, validate or modify best practices. Surveys indicate students want DE courses and they increasingly enroll in such offerings. Success, retention, and satisfaction surveys are conducted regularly to determine the effectiveness of DE courses in meeting students' needs. Slightly lower success and retention rates of DE courses compared to face-to-face courses has prompted the Distance Education Committee (DEC) to consider recommendations to increase methods of available local College online training for students to supplement what is offered through Open Campus.

Discussions of instructional design, pedagogy best practices, and faculty and student training occur in various participatory governance bodies, such as the DEC and the Technology Committee. These bodies also collaborate with the Open Campus office in the RCCD. The DEC was originally an ad hoc task force, but it is now a standing committee of the Academic Senate. This structure assures the sustainability of quality and integrity processes as it relates to DE pedagogy. The DEC, in collaboration with the Technology Committee, regularly researches and discusses student success, retention, and satisfaction in DE classes. Data gathered in these efforts support their recommendations. (Standards II.A.2.a; II.A.2.b; II.A.2.c; II.A.2.d; II.A.2.e; II.A.2.f)

Norco College has a thorough process in place in regard to minimizing test bias for departmental examinations. The validation process includes three components: disproportionate impact, cultural impact, and student learning outcomes mapping. There are currently three departments with common examinations: ESL, Reading, and Spanish. Most recently, a new Spanish I final underwent cultural impact validation as scheduled. (Standard II.A.2.g)

Units are awarded according to institutional policies as stated in the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 5. Methods of instruction and evaluation of course outcomes relate to the achievement of course learning outcomes. The extensive curriculum process ensures generally accepted norms in higher education. To meet the Standards the team recommends, development of a system to ensure consistency in transferring SLOs from the CORs to course syllabi and a requirement that these be verified in advance of the start of a class. Course level SLOs are mapped to the program level ensuring that award of degrees and certificates is based on student achievement of defined outcomes. (Standards II.A.2.h; II.A.2.i)

Norco College's general education requirements for associate degrees are determined at the District level by the General Education Workgroup. This workgroup made a change in the fall of 2011 to reduce six broad categories of outcomes down to four: critical thinking; information competency and technology literacy; communication, and self-development and global awareness. As indicated in the College catalog, the general education program includes an understanding of the basic content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge, the capability to be a productive life-long learner, and recognition of what it means to be an ethical human being and effective citizen. (Standards II.A.3.a; II.A.3.b; II.A.3.c)

Norco College has appropriate outcomes in place for its general education program and existing general education course outlines map course outcomes to the GEOs. However, there is currently no clear process identified by the Curriculum Committee for proposing new courses for general education. (Standard II.A.3) The College could strengthen its curriculum processes by defining a clear method for identifying courses to be added to the approved general education offerings.

All degrees and certificates, as evidenced by the College catalog, include course work in at least one area of inquiry or interdisciplinary core for each degree. Additionally, the annual Industry Summit Minutes, results from the 2012 CTE Graduate Follow-up Survey, and course alignment with external industry examinations provide evidence that all vocational programs are competency-based and meet the standards of applicable external licensing or accrediting agencies. (Standards II.A.4; II.A.5)

The College catalog, schedule, and website provide students with information about educational courses and programs and transfer policies. An area of concern is that all students may not receive a course syllabus that specifies learning outcomes consistent with the institution's officially approved course outline. An examination of a random sample of fall 2013 syllabus for courses with multiple sections (ACC1A, MAT35, PSY-1) found that student learning outcomes were not consistent across multiple sections of the same course and were not consistent with the official course outline of record. Although course syllabi are collected each semester and routinely used as part of the faculty evaluation process, there is no evidence to indicate there is an ongoing review of the syllabi to ensure they align with the official course outline of record as they relate to student learning outcomes. (Standards II.A.6; II.A.6.a)

Program Discontinuance is defined for all three colleges in administrative procedures. The process begins with a plan to revitalize the program and a timetable to achieve that goal. A taskforce comprised of discipline faculty, representatives from Counseling, Research and Planning, and Academic Deans; and, representatives from the Academic Senate and Curriculum Committee of the affected college is convened to review the program and make recommendations. If it is determined that the program be discontinued, a plan and timeline for a phase out of the program is initiated. The administrative procedure requires that currently enrolled students be allowed to complete their program of study. (Standard II.A.6.b)

Norco College provides clear, accurate, and consistent information about its programs and policies. The College catalog, schedule, website, brochure and flyers were reviewed. Accurate catalog information is assured through the use of a spreadsheet that tracks the production and review process. (Standard II.A.6.c)

Norco College demonstrates a commitment to the academic integrity of the teaching and learning process. There is an Academic Freedom Policy and faculty receive relevant training and information through the *Faculty Handbook* and orientations. For example, in regard to controversial issues, the *Faculty Handbook* states the following: “The study of controversial issues is to be objective and scholarly. Instructors should approach controversial issues in the classroom in an impartial and unprejudiced manner.” Furthermore, Board policy describes standards for student conduct, which are published in the College catalog. Evidence was also found within Academic Senate Minutes, the *Faculty Handbook*, and the *Fall 2013 Faculty Guide* concerning academic honesty and consequences for dishonesty. (Standards II.A.7.a; II.A.7.b)

Norco College imposes no specific beliefs or worldviews on its students, faculty, staff, or administrators. The College does not offer curricula in foreign locations to students other than U.S. nationals. (Standards II.A.7.c; II.A.8)

Conclusions

The College partially meets the Standard. The College has student learning outcomes at all levels and identifies its student population in order to offer relevant courses and rigorous content regardless of location or delivery methods. The College has a process for systematic review of outcomes at all levels, which is integrated into planning through the annual and comprehensive program review.

The College catalog includes a general education philosophy statement and faculty members determine general education student learning outcomes. The College and District processes for adding new general education courses were unclear to the visiting team. While the faculty are clearly actively engaged in determining which courses are designated as general education, the College should articulate, implement and evaluate a process for adding new general education courses, including a process to add the new courses to existing general education outcomes.

The team recommends the College continue to enhance authentic assessment at all levels, create a system to ensure that course SLOs are accurately and consistently transferred from the course outline of record to course syllabi, develop more direct assessment at the program level and complete its defined evaluation cycle for general education outcomes. Additionally, in order to achieve sustainable continuous quality improvement, the College should develop and implement an evaluative mechanism to review all the parts of the SLO process in an ongoing systematic way in order to fine-tune its structures.

Recommendations

College Recommendation 2

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College create a system to ensure consistency in transferring student learning outcomes on official course outlines of record to course syllabi; implement more direct assessment of student learning at the program level; complete its cycle of evaluation for all general education outcomes; and, assess the effectiveness of its evaluative mechanisms to ensure they are an effective means of evaluating all parts of the student learning outcomes process. (Standards II.A.1.a; II.A.1.b; II.A.1.c, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f; II.A.2.h; II.A.2.i)

Standard II – Student Learning Program and Services

Standard II B – Student Support Services

General Observations

Norco College's student services programs provide a comprehensive range of services that are consistent with its mission and are designed to meet the unique needs of the diverse student population it serves. Specific support programs have been established to reach and support students throughout their college pathways regardless of location and the delivery mode of services. Student support services are systematically reviewed through an established program review process and improvements are made. The overall quality of the services support student learning and enhance the achievement of the College's mission.

The College has developed a seamless process for students to access information and the services for admissions, registration, orientation and counseling regardless of location and mode of delivery. Each of the student services programs has an established mission statement that demonstrates a concern for student access and success and informs the goals of the program. Student learning outcomes, service area outcomes, program level outcomes and assessment processes are well established and are assessed through the annual review process. Dialogue takes place at the department and College level through various venues.

The Norco College catalog is thorough and provides students with requisite general information, requirements and major policies that effect student enrollment, and identifies the locations or publications where other policies can be found, regardless of location or mode of delivery.

Student support service programs link assessment results to quality improvement. Internal processes are assessed, outcomes are reviewed within the program and improvement plans are developed and implemented. Assessment strategies include the use of quantitative and qualitative data, pre and post testing, and student surveys. Disaggregated demographic data is used to determine student needs and to develop services and programs. The majority of the student learning outcomes and service area outcomes for student support services demonstrates achievement, progress, and improvement.

Findings and Evidence

Norco College provides student support services in both traditional and online formats. Students register online for counseling appointments and have access to a 24/7 reference librarian without needing to be on campus. They also have links to tutorials, and course websites directly from the browser or via the Norco College website. The College, through Open Campus, collects success and retention rates, surveys student satisfaction, compiles data of students enrolled in distance education classes and has filed state authorization requirements for out-of-state students. The Distance Education Committee (DEC), a subcommittee of the Academic Senate, reviews and assesses the Open Campus data and develops guidelines and recommendations to improve student success. (Standards II.B.1; II.B.3.a; II.B.4)

The College uses its catalog and the schedule of classes as the primary means of conveying information about its educational programs and services. The catalog, schedule of classes, and other official publications are available in both print and electronic format. The catalog contains the most comprehensive information about the College, including course, program, and degree offerings; academic calendar; academic freedom statement; availability of student financial aid; available learning resources, academic credentials of faculty and administrators; and, the names of governing board members; requirements, including: admissions requirements; fees and refund policies; and, requirements for degrees, certificates, graduations, and transfer; and, major policies affecting students. The College has defined grievance and complaint procedures that are outlined in both the catalog and the student handbook. There is a process for receiving and maintaining confidential records. A review of individual complaints confirms that the defined process is consistently followed. No concerns were noted and there was no pattern of complaints that would indicate issues with Accreditation Standards. The College has developed an actionable improvement plan to create an internal tracking system for complaints and grievances. (Standards II.B.2.a; II.B.2.b; II.B.2.c; II.B.2.d)

Norco College has developed clear pathways to guide incoming students from outreach activities to becoming fully matriculated. The College provides both access and support for students regardless of their location and the modes of delivery. The Student Services Division is fully engaged in assessing its services and promoting institutional effectiveness. All of the programs have established Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Service Area Outcomes (SAOs) that are assessed annually. Each of the 2012-2013 program reviews includes a mission statement, philosophy, SLO and SAO, objectives, assessment results, and future plans that guide the goals of the programs. (Standards II.B.3.a; II.B.3.c; II.B.4)

Student Support Services has made a concerted effort to better address the needs of incoming high school students. Upward Bound and TRIO grants provide services at three area high schools. Specific orientations have been developed for the students from John F. Kennedy Middle College High School, which is located on College property. Student Services and Academic Affairs have worked collaboratively to develop an innovative Summer Advantage Program to provide incoming high school seniors with access to courses and to better prepare them for collegiate level courses. All high school seniors who complete the Summer Advantage Program are guaranteed early registration, an English course during their first semester of enrollment, and a student education plan. This program addressed reduced access to courses for high school students during the recent fiscal downturn and better prepared the service area high school graduates to progress through both English and mathematics courses early in their college-going careers. (Standards II.B.1; II.B.3.a; II.B.4)

Norco College set goals in its Strategic Plan to increase success rates for students in basic skills mathematics and English courses and increase the number of students who receive a degree or certificate. The College generates and uses disaggregated data to identify the learning support needs of its student population. Services and programs are implemented to address those needs. The College has used both College and grant resources to address the general completion rates, including African American and Latino students. The Talented

Tenth Program, Rites to Thrive, and the African American Leadership Club have been developed to engage African American and male students in particular. The College is also engaged in a Puente Program and two Title V grants to engage and support Hispanic students. From the time the College was accredited in 2010, it has shown modest but consistent gains in success and retention data across a number of categories, including age, gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. For example, success across seven different ethnic groups rose from 2011 to 2013 between 0.8 percent to 3.8 percent, including a 3.4 percent increase among African Americans, and a 3.8 percent increase for Native Americans and Multi-Ethnic students. (Standards II.B.3; II.B.4)

Norco College assures that equitable access is provided to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services regardless of service location or delivery method. The College provides services for day and evening students on campus and offers services either online or via telephone. (Standard II.B.3.a)

The College environment encourages both personal and civic responsibilities. Students have numerous opportunities through various programs and events held on campus to serve both the College and the community. Interviews with students and employees confirm that the College environment encourages and facilitates engagement. The Associated Students of Norco College (ASNC) leadership program, clubs, and activities all contribute to an environment that engages its diverse student population. There is an array of events that promote intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development. The College provides opportunities for students and the College community to develop aesthetic literacy through events at the Norco College Art Gallery and the Wilfred J. Airey Library. The Library-sponsored "Read 2 Succeed" and "Poetry Readings" programs build community and support the value of diversity. (Standards II.B.3.b; II.B.3.d)

Through these activities, the College promotes student understanding and appreciation of diversity. The mission statement and College values reflect a commitment to understanding and appreciating diversity. The curriculum also contains discipline-specific courses that include the general education student learning outcome of self development and global awareness. The College's diversity committee, the Legacy Committee, hosts numerous events, film screenings, facilitated discussions and presentations that support the understanding and appreciation of diversity. The College evaluates and assesses the impact of these activities. (Standards II.B.3.b; II.B.3.d)

Student support services are actively engaged in improving its programs and services. For example, Financial Aid counseling and advising programs regularly assess services and makes adjustments as appropriate. Internal professional development activities are provided for student workers, adjunct and full time employees. For example, training on Student Education Plans and the newly developed *Counselor Manual* were part of the 2013 counseling retreat. (Standard II.B.3.c)

The College's admissions and placement instruments are periodically evaluated. The College follows state minimum eligibility requirements and subscribes to the state online application process, which is routinely assessed. The placement tools used for English, mathematics, and

reading are validated every three years, with the most recent evaluation occurring in spring 2013. The validation study involves discipline faculty, students, and leaders from the Institutional Research and Assessment Center. The study also monitors demographic groups and placement levels for disproportionate impact. (Standard II.B.3.e)

The College ensures that both paper and electronic student information is secure and remains confidential. The College follows District Board policies and guidelines. The District's website publicizes policies for the release of student records. The team suggests that a link to this information be added to the College's website to ensure ease of access for its students. In order to provide clear and accessible information to students about the release of student records, the team proposes that the College also include the information in the College catalog on the website. (II.B.3.f)

Conclusions

The College meets the Standard. The various student support services programs work collaboratively to ensure that students receive quality services. The programs and services meet the needs of its diverse student population. There is regular and systematic assessment of the programs' effectiveness and that analysis informs plans for improvement.

Recommendations

None

Standard II – Student Learning Program and Services

Standard II C – Library and Learning Support Services

General Observations

The College provides support for instructional programs through its library and learning support services. The Wilfred J. Airey Library provides information competency instruction, access to technology, and learning resources both on site and online. Overall, the library supports the success of the learning community. The library also contributes to the cultural and aesthetic life of the College community through the innovative “Read to Succeed Program,” “Poetry Performance,” and related events. The library and Learning Resource Center (LRC) encompasses a variety of learning support services including instructional computer labs, tutoring services, instructional media and assessment centers. Multiple strategies are used to evaluate the services, programs and the facilities that are identified as the LRC. The results are utilized to make improvements. The library operates independently but works collaboratively with the other two college libraries in the District. All District libraries participate in an inter-library loan system and collectively review options for joint services.

Findings and Evidence

Norco College supports the quality of instructional programs by providing library and other learning support services that are sufficient in quantity, currency, depth and variety to facilitate educational offerings regardless of location or modes of delivery. The library and Learning Resource Center are collectively referred to as the Library/Learning Resources Department. The Wilfred J. Airey Library collection consists of print books, reserve textbooks, periodicals, newspapers, and DVD/videos. The library provides access to a 24/7 reference librarian service, over 50 electronic databases and over 50,000 electronic books that can be accessed by students, faculty and staff regardless of location. The library’s design is supportive of student needs and includes individual and collaborative computer workstations, and group study rooms in the Learning Resource Center. Equipment and software have been selected to ensure accessibility for all students. Learning Support Services, located on the first floor, includes the Computer Information Systems (CIS), Simulation and Gaming laboratory, the Instructional Media Center (IMC), Tutoring Services, Math Express, and the Assessment Testing Center. The Writing Lab was recently moved to another building to better accommodate its functions. The instructional labs are discipline specific and supervised by faculty within the disciplines. The instructional labs located in the Learning Resource Center are appropriately assessed within the discipline’s assessment plans. (Standard II.C.1.a)

In addition to the LRC instructional labs, a wide range of tutoring and academic support services are offered including tutoring services for specific disciplines, “Class Assisted Tutoring,” “Supplemental Instruction,” and “Math Express.” The online reference librarian service and NetTutor are available for students taking online and hybrid courses and also for students attending courses at the International Rectifier location in Temecula. (Standard II.C.1.c)

The Library Advisory Committee provides guidance and input from the College community. There is also a prescribed process to solicit input from discipline faculty about the library and its collections. The library has an established goal to increase the currency of the collection and progress has been made toward this goal. (Standards II.C.1.a; II.C.2)

The College provides adequate security, ongoing monitoring and maintenance of the facilities and equipment in the Learning Resource Center including computers and infrastructure. (Standard II.C.1.d)

The Library/LRC has conducted multiple assessments of its services. Assessments are used to improve services and to secure additional resources. Assessment results showed that students who used the reference library services were significantly more successful in courses and less likely to drop than those who did not. Those results have been disseminated to the College community and to incoming students with the intent of positively impacting student behaviors. The assessment of student satisfaction with Library/LRC services indicated an overall positive rating but also noted a need to increase the availability of services for some academic programs and to reduce noise levels in the LRC. Learning Resources Center staff used those results to make improvements. Program reviews for English, CIS and game disciplines indicated a need to reassess facilities usage and the Gaming and Writing Labs were relocated to improve the learning environments. (Standards II.C.1.b; II.C.1.c; II.C.2)

The library operates independently but works with the other two college libraries in the District. All District libraries participate in an inter-library loan system and collectively reviewed options for a new web-based operating system. Copy services were contracted out to the same service provider for all libraries following a joint review process that included representatives from each of the colleges. Contracted services are completed in accordance with Board policies, including regular evaluation, appropriate review and cyclical competitive bidding of services. (Standard II.C.1.e)

Conclusions

The College meets the Standard. The library seeks input from faculty and conducts ongoing assessment of the collection and College needs. The Library/LRC works effectively and cooperatively to provide quality services that are systematically evaluated and the results of that evaluation are used as a basis for improvement. Student learning outcomes have been developed and assessed using a variety of methods, including direct data collection and analysis, surveys and information dissemination. Results have been used to improve services where there is a strong correlation between the assessment data and student success. Financial resources have been dedicated to hire additional personnel and to improve facilities based on the assessment of student learning outcomes.

Recommendations

None

Standard III – Resources

Standard III A – Human Resources

General Observations

At the time of the visit, Norco College employed 69 full-time faculty, 194 active associate (part-time) faculty, 23 administrator/managers, and 101 staff members. The California Teachers Association (CTA) represents the faculty and the Classified School Employees Association (CSEA) represents the staff. The College has a collegial working environment, with all constituencies working well together for the good of the institution and each group having a voice in College affairs.

Findings and Evidence

Norco College follows established Board policies and administrative procedures to hire its employees. The College creates job descriptions with required and desirable qualifications, and the District Office of Diversity and Human Resources advertises job openings in various publications. It verifies non-U.S. degrees through a certified evaluation service. All hiring committee members are required to have completed or updated Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and interview protocols training within two years prior to serving. (Standard III.A.1.a)

Evaluation processes and prescribed timelines for faculty and staff are spelled out in their respective collective bargaining agreements. Classified staff members are evaluated at least annually. The timelines for regularly scheduled performance evaluations are dependent on whether they are contract, regular, or part-time. Faculty evaluation committees are now called Improvement of Instruction Committees, demonstrating the College's focus on assisting faculty to improve teaching. The team's review of faculty evaluation samples found thoughtful analysis and feedback regarding various aspects of instructors' teaching strategies and classroom performance. When needed, evaluation committees provide improvement plans and mentoring, with follow-up meetings and evaluations to assess progress. (Standard III.A.1.b)

Procedures for the evaluation of managers are described in the *Management Handbook*. The evaluation process for managers was revised in 2013 to add goals and objectives, with progress on achievement reviewed annually and comprehensive evaluation scheduled every three years. The District offers training for administrators on the new evaluation procedures. Interviews and survey results showed that employees feel evaluations are fairly administered. (Standard III.A.1.b)

According to spreadsheets listing performance evaluation due dates, 100% of the evaluations of managers, classified staff, and full-time faculty are up to date; 94% of part-time faculty evaluations are current, with the remaining 6% to be completed by the end of the spring 2014 term. (Standard III.A.1.b)

One criterion used in the evaluation of contract and regular faculty, as specified in the collective bargaining agreement, is “participation in student learning outcomes assessment processes.” Although not required, associate faculty are also encouraged to participate in these assessment processes. They are paid a \$50 stipend to take an assessment training session and another \$50 stipend to complete an assessment project. Effectiveness in contributing to student learning is the primary measurement of the quality of faculty members’ performance. (Standard III.A.1.c)

The District has a number of policies dictating ethical behavior, including: policies against nepotism, sexual harassment and intimidation, conflict of interest, and nondiscrimination. An Institutional Code of Ethics specifically applies to College employees. However, the team could find no documents spelling out the consequences for violating the code. (Standard III.A.1.d)

Norco College has a defined strategic planning process to request and prioritize staffing when needs are identified. In terms of the percentage of faculty with full-time responsibility to the institution, in fall 2013, the College had a full-time/part-time faculty ratio of 47.16 percent of courses taught by contract or regular faculty and 52.84 percent taught by associate faculty. In spring 2014, there were 194 active associate faculty and 69 full-time faculty. While the college is fulfilling its instructional and instructional support obligations, it should monitor the expectations for professional responsibilities between full time and part time faculty for sustaining the quality of effort in the future. (Standard III.A.2)

The College adheres to established written policies ensuring fairness in employment procedures. Personnel files, which are confidential yet accessible to personnel, are located in a secure location in the District Office of Diversity and Human Resources. (Standards III.A.3.a; III.A.3.b)

Norco College offers a wide range of diversity activities for employees and students. District training has included sessions on disability awareness and “having difficult conversations.” The College’s Legacy Committee is a large and active committee that holds events throughout the year, using a thematic approach each semester and offering programs in a variety of formats (films, lectures, performances) on numerous topics, including the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender (LGBT) population; racism; poverty; autism; intergenerational issues; mental health; and the Holocaust. The events inspired students to start two new student clubs. According to a 2013 student climate survey, students strongly agreed that the College provides opportunities to participate in diversity activities and that the College addresses diversity issues. (Standard III.A.4)

To ensure that members of hiring committees are appropriately trained to be sensitive to issues of diversity, the District Office of Diversity and Human Resources offers a monthly comprehensive Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) training session, Equity Monitors, to hiring committee members. The office tracks attendance to ensure that members of hiring committees are current in their training within two years of serving and sends notices to remind them to update their training. If someone is overdue, they are offered the chance to

take the training session in order to serve. In 2011-2012, 541 employees District wide attended 61 training sessions. (Standard III.A.4.a)

The District Office of Diversity and Human Resources collects a great deal of data on the number of individuals from monitored groups who are recruited and hired. It issues monthly and annual reports on the District's and the College's employment diversity record, which are shared with the College president, executive team and managers. These reports indicate that the College has made some progress over the years toward having a workforce that more closely reflects the student population and area demographics. To continue making progress, the District has expanded recruitment efforts to attract a more diverse pool of candidates. (Standard III.A.4.b)

Norco College adheres to policies and practices to ensure that employees and students are treated with integrity. The campus climate survey, although not statistically valid due to the low number of respondents, did not indicate any major concerns in this area, and overall, respondents reported feeling that they were treated with respect at Norco College. The College website has a link to a complaint form and information on the District Diversity page to give faculty and staff the opportunity to file complaints. Students can access Board policies by clicking on the Standards of Student Conduct page. While there is no link to complaint forms or practical information on the process for students to follow, students with issues can file complaints in person in appropriate College offices. (Standard III.A.4.c)

Norco College offers its faculty opportunities for professional development through fall and spring flex days, workshops, training sessions, and orientations for new faculty. A *Faculty Guide*, updated every fall and spring, provides campus-specific information and an online *Faculty Handbook* offers general information for all District faculty (e.g., syllabi, grading policy, forms). The Faculty Innovation Center (FIC) is staffed by an instructional technology specialist, who provides support to faculty through one-on-one training in the use of classroom technology. The FIC has 11 workstations and is used for technology workshops. (Standard III.A.5.a)

The Faculty Development Coordinator arranges activities and co-chairs the Professional Development Committee, which formerly dealt only with faculty development and the flex obligation but was reconstituted in 2013 to broaden its scope to include staff training. The committee reports to the Academic Senate. Interviews with classified staff revealed that in the past, although classified staff were welcome to attend workshops if their supervisors would permit it, very few training opportunities had been offered specifically for them. But in January 2014, a plan was developed to create a calendar of staff training workshops. Staff work schedules were considered so the first sessions are being offered on Fridays, one in February and one in March. Surveys after the sessions will be used to determine interests for future sessions. (Standard III.A.5.a)

The Faculty Development Coordinator and the Professional Development Committee review surveys filled out by attendees after each workshop to find out what topics they would like the College to offer. Committee minutes showed that members recognized that ACCJC standards require the assessment of professional development, so the Professional

Development Committee is exploring other methods to evaluate the program and determine needs. The coordinator recently sent a focused survey on technology topics and will distribute a college wide survey at the end of spring 2014. Accreditation survey results showed that the majority of respondents felt sufficient professional development activities were offered. (Standard III.A.5.a)

While the Faculty Development Committee changed its name to the Professional Development Committee, it was not clear to the team that the College has fully transitioned the work of the committee to serve all employees particularly since the committee still reports to the Academic Senate. Although evaluations are conducted following professional development activities, the process through which staff provide input about their share of training is not clear. The team recommends that the College review the committee's reporting structure to ensure the College plans professional activities to meet the needs of all employees, and that staff and administrators are welcomed to actively participate in the creation of professional development activities. (Standard III.A.5.a)

Participants complete evaluations after each activity. These evaluations are used to help the presenters improve, to assess whether the workshop was successful, and to provide a way for attendees to request future session topics and volunteer to lead trainings if they have particular expertise to share. The Faculty Development Coordinator and the Professional Development Committee review these surveys. (Standard III.A.5.b)

Norco College uses an established strategic planning process to evaluate its staffing needs and request new hires. Each unit completes an annual program review to assess staffing levels and request additional or replacement positions, based on need. These requests must include justifications. Requests for faculty are forwarded to the Academic Planning Council, and requests for student services and other non-faculty positions go to the Budget and Facilities Planning Council. These councils rank the requested positions using a prioritization rubric. From there, the requests are sent to the Institutional Strategic Planning Council (ISPC) for approval and then to the Committee of the Whole (COTW) for review. Ultimately, the College president, in consultation with the area vice presidents, make the final hiring decisions and sends a memo to College constituencies to communicate the list of approved positions. (Standard III.A.6)

Conclusions

The College meets the Standard. Norco College adheres to clearly delineated hiring processes. The District Office of Diversity and Human Resources, which has a staff member on campus two days a week, handles the functions of human resources for the College. There appears to be a good understanding of the roles of the College departments and the District in the hiring process. The College has a clearly defined process in place for human resource planning. For the most part, the College president follows the prioritized list of recommended faculty hires and communicates his decision to the entire College community. The College adheres to its established written policies ensuring fairness in employment procedures. Personnel files are located in a secure location in the District Office of Diversity and Human Resources. Comprehensive Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) training sessions assure

that hiring committee members are sensitive to issues of diversity and free of bias. The District Office of Diversity and Human Resources collects a great deal of data on the number of individuals from monitored groups who are recruited and hired in order to judge progress on achieving a more diverse workforce. Policies and practices ensure that employees and students are treated with integrity.

The evaluation process for employees is comprehensive. A recent change to evaluation procedures for managers has made the process more rigorous. Evaluations are completed in a timely manner.

The College demonstrates its concern for equity and diversity in many ways by offering programs, practices, and services that support its diverse personnel. The Legacy Committee has worked hard to influence perceptions and attitudes through programs that have now become institutionalized at the College. The recent change from a Faculty Development Committee to a broader, more inclusive Professional Development Committee is still a work in progress. The committee reports to the Academic Senate, so with the addition of staff and the change of focus that reporting structure will need to be examined. The College has taken a positive step by creating professional development activities specifically geared for classified staff. The addition of a college wide survey would prove to be a useful vehicle to gain additional information about employee needs. The College has made a start to ensure that professional development activities are designed for and offered to all employees, but it should redouble its efforts to ensure that these needs are met and assessed for effectiveness in meaningful ways.

Recommendations

None

Standard III – Resources

Standard III B – Physical Resources

General Observations

Norco College sits on 141 acres of land and is comprised of 20 buildings and structures. As a relatively recent campus (opening in 1991 as a satellite campus of Riverside Community College), its facilities are new. To meet increasing student demand, the campus expanded, and buildings were added – a Library and an Applied Technology Building in 1995, an Industrial Technology Building in 2009, a Center for Student Success in 2010, and the Norco Operations Center in 2013.

The Business Services Department oversees several areas crucial to the safety and maintenance of the campus: The College Police with a sergeant, four officers, and two community aides, Food Services with three personnel, and Facilities with a director and two assistants. Falling under the supervision of the Facilities Director are Grounds with three staff, Maintenance with four staff, and Custodial services with a manager and nine custodians.

An open quad area provides a convenient and airy gathering place for students to gather and hold events, such as Club Day. Smoking areas are designated in locations away from the center of campus. Parking is sufficient for faculty, staff, and students.

Findings and Evidence

Norco College provides safe and sufficient physical resources to support its programs and services. The College used its 2008 Educational Master Plan (EMP), its Strategic Plan and Process 2013-2018, a recent Environmental Scan, and the District Strategic Plan to craft its new comprehensive 2013 Facilities Master Plan (FMP), approved in October 2013, which replaced the 2008 FMP. The College currently has nearly 10,000 students and has sufficient space to accommodate 12,000 students. Its Five-Year Construction Plan is updated annually. (Standard III.B.1)

Needs for upgrading or replacement of physical resources and equipment are identified in requests made through the annual program review process. The Director of Facilities evaluates the need for replacement and repair through this process. Requests must be connected to College plans and goals and are prioritized through the strategic planning process for funding. Emergency replacements are processed through area vice presidents and the College president. Facility reports in a database provide information about the efficiency percentages for each building and existing space. These reports also project future space needs based on enrollment growth trends, information that is used to develop its Five-Year Construction Plan, submitted annually to the state. (Standard III.B.1.a)

The Safety Committee meets monthly to deal with issues related to health and safety at the College. The team verified that issues brought to the Committee are identified for follow-up. Facilities are maintained through the submission of work orders, which are tracked using a

software program. A schedule of quarterly inspections of College facilities is available; classrooms are inspected annually. When issues are discovered, the facilities staff addresses them in a timely manner. Facilities survey results indicate general satisfaction with maintenance of restrooms, common areas, classrooms, etc. Accreditation survey results were also positive: 92 percent felt the campus buildings provide a safe environment in which to work; 96 percent felt safe on campus during the day, and 90 percent felt safe on campus at night. Smoking is limited to three designated smoking areas away from most buildings. (Standard III.B.1.b)

College safety is handled by a Police Department on campus 24/7. The campus has security cameras and emergency phones. Emergency preparedness has been a major initiative this year. The College has held earthquake drills and active shooter training. A threat assessment was conducted in March 2013 in conjunction with the Riverside County Sheriff's Office to identify potential security shortfalls. Items on the resulting Vulnerability Assessment Report are being reviewed and addressed by College administration, Facilities, District Police, and other responsible parties. The College has designated building and floor captains and has tested evacuation procedures and emergency response. On a recent drill, personnel discovered that people did not know how to use the evacuation chairs, so the College plans to sponsor training. (Standard III.B.1.b)

Norco College holds classes leading to an associate's degree in digital electronics at an off-site location, International Rectifier in Temecula. Three team members visited the facility and determined that its instructional space and high quality technology provide a safe, accessible, secure learning and working environment. (Standard III.B.1.b)

Norco College uses its Educational Master/Strategic Plan and Facilities Master Plan to guide its planning. It used a 2012 external environmental scan data to evaluate its resources and update its strategic initiatives. The scan provided data on the feasibility and effectiveness of physical resources in supporting the College's programs and services. The College evaluates its facilities and equipment by means of satisfaction surveys and annual program review requests for upgrading and replacement. Service area outcomes in Business Services have been identified, but a review of service outcomes reports revealed that assessments in some areas have not been completed consistently. (Standard III.B.2)

Long-range capital plans are included in the FMP and Five-Year Construction Plan. The College used \$38 million in funding from Measure C for capital construction and improvement projects and has \$33 million committed for more improvements. A Bond Oversight Committee monitors the bond project to ensure the public that funds are being used appropriately. Although the College determines the total cost of ownership on a piecemeal basis for individual projects, it does not have a formal college wide process to determine the total cost of ownership for long-range projects. The team encourages the College to implement its Actionable Improvement Plan to develop a college wide standard to project the total cost of ownership for new facilities and equipment. (Standard III.B.2.a)

Requests for facilities and equipment, including upgrades and maintenance, are made through annual program reviews, which are sent to the Business and Facilities Planning

Council (BFPC) for prioritization using a rubric to assign numerical ratings to the requests. Interviews about the validity of the ranking system revealed that inter-rater reliability was evident in the similar rankings given by participants in the process. However, only two criteria—addressing service area outcomes and promoting College/District strategic initiatives—are used in the ranking process. Because safety needs were not considered, the Safety Committee has proposed that a safety criterion be added. After the requests are ranked, they are sent to the Institutional Strategic Planning Council (ISPC) for approval, to the Committee of the Whole (COTW) for review, and to the College president for approval of funding. According to participants, the College used its integrated planning process effectively to make an important decision through participatory governance in order to find a solution for the unused Early Childhood Education Center. The space is being renovated for use as a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Center. (Standard III.B.2.b)

The FMP identifies needs and is aligned with the EMP and with the College planning and resource allocation process. The College uses a database to track space inventory reports to identify needs and make projections about space requirements. Maintenance and Operations uses software to track work orders and assess efficiency. Recently, the work order process has been improved by ensuring that work orders are closed so that data can be used to determine efficiency and time taken to complete tasks can be compared. If there is a delay in completing the request, facilities staff let employees know why there is a delay and establish an expected timeline for the request to be fulfilled. (Standard III.B.2.b)

Conclusions

The College partially meets the Standard. The College provides safe and sufficient physical resources that support its programs and services. The College plans, builds, and maintains its physical resources appropriately. A great deal of effort was made to craft its new comprehensive 2013 Facilities Master Plan (FMP) to replace the previous one.

There have been very few instances of crime on campus. College police are present 24/7 and are a visible presence on campus. The Safety Committee is diligent about identifying physical resource issues and following up to ensure they are resolved. Emergency preparedness is a key initiative on the campus, with numerous drills and training. Survey results showed general satisfaction with cleanliness and maintenance of common areas, restrooms, and classrooms.

The College regularly assesses its effectiveness in ensuring that facilities and equipment support its programs and services successfully. In order to meet the Standards, the College needs to strengthen its assessment efforts. Some areas, such as facilities and maintenance, are beginning to use data more productively, as demonstrated by a recent effort to close work orders to obtain more accurate data that can be used to measure efficiency to improve. The Business Services division began creating service outcomes several years ago, but follow-through on assessment of those outcomes needs to be consistent. The team recommends that in order to meet the Standards, the College assure that service area outcomes are

systematically assessed for all areas in Business Services and the results of the evaluation are used to make improvements.

Aware of the fact that the College did not have a formal college wide process to determine the total cost of ownership for long-range projects, it set a goal to develop a college wide standard to project the total cost of ownership for new facilities and equipment. The team encourages the College to follow through on this action plan.

The College has a defined process in place to prioritize requests for equipment purchases and facilities improvements in order to make decisions regarding their funding. The process appears to be working well.

Recommendations

College Recommendation 3

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that service area outcomes are systematically assessed for all areas in Business Services and the results of the evaluation are used to make improvements. (Standards I.B.3; III.B.2.b)

Standard III – Resources

Standard III C – Technology Resources

General Observations

The District Office Information Services Department manages technology services and professional support for both instructional and administrative users at the College. Four staff members are assigned on site at the College to support microcomputers and the network/data phone. The Riverside Community College District Information Services and Norco College Technology and Learning Resources departments operate systems to support learning and administrative functions across the campus. Cooperatively they operate systems for distance education, teaching and learning, College communications within and between the various District locations, administrative functions and the infrastructure to support these systems including a voice, wireless, and wired data network.

The Technology Strategic Plan 2013-2016 identifies technology priorities at the College. The Technology Committee tracks the progress of the strategies, objectives and activities identified in the plan. The plan maps the goals to the Norco College Strategic Plan. There is currently no District level technology plan. Both the District and College staff indicate that a plan is under development that will incorporate the three college technology plans along with items from the 2011 District Information Technology Audit as a basis for the creation of a District technology plan.

The Norco College prioritization process describes the way in which technology needs are identified through program review, prioritized, and incorporated into budget decisions. A College level technology refresh plan has been drafted; it is anticipated that the plan will be implemented next fall. Discussions have begun at the District level regarding ongoing funding for technology acquisition. A draft technology satisfaction survey is under review to assess the effectiveness of technology, but to date has not been implemented.

Findings and Evidence

The team finds that Norco College uses new technology initiatives along with the maintenance and upgrade of current systems to provide for technology that supports the needs of learning as evidenced by the investment in the College Faculty Innovation Center, the Instructional Media Center and the Disability Resource Center. The availability of systems and support for the network, enterprise resource planning, phone, desktop computers, helpdesk, instructional systems, website support, and online learning systems was confirmed by the team. Norco College appropriately uses available technology resources to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness efforts. The instructional and administrative systems in which the College has invested have enhanced the learning environment. Examples of instructional systems that have enhanced the learning environment include Open Campus and Blackboard for distance education and WordPress for websites. In addition, administrative systems have been enhanced by District Information Services to assist staff in being more efficient and effective in serving students. One example of this, which is in progress, is a District coordinated single sign-on portal that

allows access to information for students, staff, faculty and alumni. There is no disaster recovery/business continuity plan in place. With the exception of infrastructure standards, there are no service level agreements, standards or policies in place for technology acquisition, maintenance or usage. These items are currently being addressed by the Information Technology Strategy Council. A systematic process for the backup of systems is in place; however, the backup process does not include offsite storage so the College is at risk should a major disaster occur. (Standard III.C.1)

During visits to several classrooms and during interviews, the team found that classrooms have varying levels of hardware and software, each well designed to enhance the operation and effectiveness of technology services provided in specific classrooms. Some classrooms have computer equipment provided for each student, and others have projection, DVD, assistive technology, audio, video, document cameras, and smart board technology which are all designed to enhance student learning based on course needs. This has resulted in effective use of technology services, facilities, hardware and software. (Standard III.C.1.a)

Student technology resources are a combination of discipline specific laboratories including: architecture, drafting, engineering, computer information systems, mobile applications, music, writing, simulation and gaming and supply chain technology; and open general usage facilities available across the campus. Student usage of these laboratories is high and the hardware and software available to them is operational and supports learning. A draft of the Technology Survey for 2014 is currently being vetted in the Technology Committee, which will be used for ongoing assessment regarding satisfaction with technology resources for students, faculty and staff. (Standard III.C.1.a)

Administrative technology needs are being met through the use of an enterprise resource system and other associated systems. Technology resources also provide tools for faculty and staff to assess student learning and for use in program reviews. In addition, the Institutional Research Department provides a set of reports regarding institutional effectiveness which are available on the Institutional Research Department website. Needed reports and data are available to the departments, and the Information Services Department does a good job in meeting user needs. (Standard III.C.1.a)

The team found that faculty and staff training in the area of distance education is very robust and comprehensive. Students must complete an online skills assessment prior to enrollment in online courses. Before faculty can teach online courses, they must complete the Online Blackboard Academy. In addition, there is a website that provides a 24-hour help desk, tutorials, and information for students and instructors. (Standard III.C.1.b)

The Instructional Media Center provides training and materials in the use of classroom media technology. The Faculty Innovation Center offers one-on-one instruction and documents to assist faculty in the use of instructional technology. The Professional Development Committee coordinates flex activities and other training related to technology such as website development. Training for students is provided by Admissions and Records and Student Financial Services regarding the application and financial aid process. In addition, the Disability Resource Center provides individualized training on the needed equipment for

students with disabilities. Assessments are done at the conclusion of workshops and professional development events to assess the satisfaction with the training; these evaluations are used to improve offerings. (Standard III.C.1.b)

The Technology Strategic Plan 2013-2016 identified the need for a technology refresh plan. A draft of the document *Technology Principles and Guidelines* contains a technology refresh cycle policy, which will be used to address the systematic planning, acquisition, maintenance, upgrade and replacement of computers at the College. The team found that although the *Technology Principles and Guidelines* document is not formally adopted, the College is using one time funding sources to the extent they are available, to fund the refresh cycle identified in the document. This document has been approved by the Technology Committee and is currently being reviewed by both the District and College technology departments. After review and input, the document will be sent forward to the College's Business and Facilities Planning Council for review and approval. From there, it will go to the Institutional Strategic Planning Council and Committee of the Whole for approval and recommendation to the College president. (Standard III.C.1.c)

Technology needs are identified and prioritized by each department through the program review process. Prioritized lists are forwarded to the appropriate College planning council, which combines all department requests and develops a prioritized list. The prioritized lists are sent to the Institutional Strategic Planning Council (ISPC) and finally to the Committee of the Whole for input and approval. Ultimately, the recommendations are sent to the president for decision. Recently, a change proposed to this process resulted from an evaluation of the cycle. In the future, the Technology Committee will receive the prioritized lists from the planning councils and combine them into a single list to be forwarded to the ISPC. The Technology Committee has created a technology request form that will be used in the acquisition process as a mechanism to identify the specific equipment needed, the total cost of ownership, the funding source, and to obtain a signoff from technology staff and the Technology Committee. The Program Review Committee is considering this form for inclusion in future program review templates. Should it be adopted, the form would provide consistency in purchases and verify the ability of the technology staff to appropriately support the new equipment. The team found no evidence that the institution systematically plans for the replacement of technology resources. (Standard III.C.1.c)

Program Review documents require administrative and instructional units to identify the relationship of unit goals to the mission of the college and the Educational Master Plan. Equipment requests must also identify the Education Master/Strategic Plan goals that justify the request. No evidence was found that the Technology Plan is used in the evaluation or ranking of the requests either by the planning councils, the Technology Committee or the Institutional Strategic Planning Council. However, interviews with those who participate directly in this process indicate great satisfaction and a real sense of fairness with both the process and its outcomes. Further, the process is well known, participants feel that their requests are heard, and they indicate satisfaction even if their requests are not funded because of the feedback they receive regarding the rationale for the decision. (Standard III.C.1.d)

The District Technology Strategy Council, which sets priorities and makes strategic decisions involving the provision of information services and technology to advance institutional goals, has three members from Norco College. An outside firm was hired to create a technology roadmap in 2011 for the entire District and \$6 million was allocated for technology projects across the District. Examples of funded projects are a document imaging system, an upgrade to the District network core equipment, and a wireless upgrade for the Norco campus. Tracking of these recommended projects is ongoing. A survey was done in early 2014 by the District Strategic Planning Committee posing the following question: "To what extent do the District's offices support the colleges related to developing a technological plan that addresses hardware improvements and corresponding professional training?" Results indicate that faculty are least satisfied with the extent that the District provides support for technological improvements and training; the administration at both the District and the College are far more satisfied with the support that is provided by the District. The team can find no evidence that the assessment of the effectiveness of technology improvements has been an ongoing and systematic process. The integration of District level technology planning with college level processes is not clear. A District wide technology plan is under discussion whereby the proposed technology roadmap and the technology plans for the three colleges will be used to create a district wide plan. (Standard III.C.2)

The Technology Strategic Plan and Norco College prioritization process documents describe how planning at the College level is integrated locally with local budget allocations. Once the complete prioritized list is provided to the Committee of the Whole for information and recommendation to the president for final funding, the president issues a college wide memorandum outlining his final decisions. Much work has been done at the College to integrate technology planning with budget allocation via this program review process. In addition, the Technology Strategic Plan has been used to determine District wide funding for technology initiatives. The identification and prioritization of technology needs through the program review process has occurred. However, the team can find no evidence that evaluation and assessment of the effectiveness of the technology that is implemented is systematically done, nor is there evidence that the assessment results are used as a basis for improvement of the process for selection of future technology investments. (Standard III.C.2)

Conclusions

The technology used at Norco College meets the needs of learning, teaching, College wide communications, research, and operational systems in an effective manner. Classroom, laboratory and desktop services, support, facilities, hardware and software provided for students and staff is designed to enhance the operation and effectiveness of the institution. Training for faculty and students in the distance education program is comprehensive and very well developed. Training for students and staff in common applications provided by the College is adequate.

The current processes of program review and technology planning ensure that the institution systematically plans, acquires, maintains and upgrades or replaces technology infrastructure and equipment to meet institutional needs. There is widespread agreement from those

interviewed that the processes currently used for the distribution and utilization of technology resources support the development, maintenance, and enhancement of programs and services.

The College partially meets the Standard. Technology planning is integrated with institutional planning at the College level. The institution does systematically allocate technology resources based on needs identified in program review. The institution does not systematically plan for the replacement of technology but rather develops a list of needs, prioritizes that list, and funds what it can annually. The institution does not systematically assess the effective use of technology resources and does not use the results of evaluation as the basis for improvement. Technology planning at the college is not fully integrated with District-wide technology planning. Additionally, the team recommends that the District, in conjunction with the College, develop a disaster recovery/business continuity plan.

Recommendations

College Recommendation 4

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College systematically plan for the replacement of technology infrastructure and equipment, reflect projections of total cost of ownership for new equipment, systematically assess the effective use of technology resources and use the results of evaluation as the basis for improvement. (Standards III.B.2.a; III.C.1.c; III.C.2)

District Recommendation 1

In order to meet Standards, compile the various completed elements of technology planning into an integrated, comprehensive district technology plan that is accessible and transparent, including a disaster recovery plan and a plan to refresh aging and outdated technologies. Insure that the district technology plan is based on input from the colleges and is in alignment with college planning processes. (Standards I.B.6 and III.C.2)

Standard III – Resources

Standard III D – Financial Resources

General Observations

The College's Business Services Division consists of 25 positions; however, a number of these funded positions are currently vacant. Several positions, including: Information Technology, Budget/Payroll, Human Resources, and the Bookstore, are not direct reports to the vice president of Business Services. These positions are shared with the District Office. The Bookstore is managed through a contract with a third party.

The Norco College vice president of Business Services sits on the District Budget Allocation Council (DBAC) along with the Business Services vice presidents of the sister colleges and the vice chancellor of Business and Financial Services. Since 2007, the focus of the Council has been convolved with the work of the Budget Allocation Model Task Force, which has developed and implemented a budget model that allocates unrestricted general fund revenue among the three colleges, and the District Office.

Findings and Evidence

Based on interviews and review of documentation and minutes of the various governance committees and the College website, there is a connection between planning and resource allocation across the campus. The College's budget planning and review process includes prioritization of human resource needs, technology, and facilities through the various College councils, including: Student Services, Business Services, and Academic Planning, which includes membership and participation of the key constituency groups of students, faculty, classified staff and administrators. The resource priorities are then forwarded along with the results of program reviews to the Institutional Strategic Planning Council (ISPC), which serves as the College clearinghouse for both resource allocation and planning issues. (Standards III.D.1.d; III.D.4)

The ISPC also receives regular updates on available resources from the Budget and Facilities Planning Council (BFPC). It makes recommendations regarding the priority lists, which are then forwarded to the Committee of the Whole (COTW). This committee is unique in that the entire College community is allowed to attend and vote on issues. The recommendations of the ISPC are presented as information only before they are forwarded to the executive team for review and final decision. It is the president and his team of vice presidents that review the items in detail against the panoply of existing resources, and make the determination of how resources will be deployed, including which priorities and requests will be funded, denied, or delayed. (Standard III.D.1.a)

The president makes his decisions public to the College community via his annual memorandum. During the Board of Trustees' annual budget adoption process, College resource allocation decisions through its annual budget are combined with those from the other colleges and the District Office. The College's budget and planning process is evaluated through the use of surveys and feedback from meetings of the BFPC, ISPC, SSPC,

BFPC, and Academic Planning Council (APC). However, the full definition of assessment needs to include how the allocation of a particular resource, or combination of resources, impacted program outcomes and/or student learning. The team could find little evidence that the process of assessment of the impact of resource allocation has been folded into the integrated planning model. (Standards III.D.1.b; III.D.4)

Administrators develop pro forma statements and projections based upon different iterations of the Budget Allocation Model to determine the impact of the BAM on College operations. These analyses are discussed in BFPC, ISPC and the President's Council and brought back to the District Budget Advisory Council (DBAC) as feedback on the BAM. (Standard III.D.1.c) The Tri-chairs of the BFPC indicated that this final piece of the assessment process has been included in the latest iteration of the planning cycle and the data will be available by the end of the fiscal year for inclusion in next year's process. (Standards III.D.1.d; III.D.4)

The budget allocation process reflects the priorities of the College community and its stakeholders. It uses the Educational Master Plan (EMP)/Strategic Plan, Facilities Master Plan and financial statements to guide and inform the various councils, committees, and constituent groups through the minutes and other documentation of the proceedings of these groups. (Standards III.D.2.a; III.D.2.c)

College auxiliary operations, including the bookstore and food services, are well run and consistently return healthy profits. Customer surveys reflect high satisfaction levels among students, faculty, and staff. District annual financial audits reveal that the College has a number of high-dollar-value federal grants that provide resources to expand the reach of services and improve student learning. Audits of categorical programs are unexceptional and unremarkable, which are the goals for financial and management audits. Appropriate financial information is provided throughout the District as evidenced by a review of reports available from both the Riverside Community College District (RCCD) and the Norco College websites. Governing board meeting agendas include information reviewed and considered by the Board when approving both the tentative and final budgets. (Standards III.D.2.b; III.D.2.d; III.D.2.e; III.D.3.a; III.D.3.b; III.D.3.c)

Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) has an actuarial determined liability of \$24.6 million. The Annual Required Contribution (ARC) is \$2.9 million. The District does not have a plan to address this obligation and has not as yet funded any portion of this benefit cost. The Annual Financial Information Report submitted to the Commission reflects a portion of the ARC is funded each year. Based on the data available from the District's Annual Audit, the teams identified a difference between reported funding and actual funding of the Other Post-Employment Benefit obligation. (Standard III.D.3.d)

The District's local debt includes Tax Revenue Anticipation Notes (TRANS), which are short-term loans for cash flow purposes. TRANS have become necessary due to deferrals of payments by the state to community college districts. The District's annual audit report identified an outstanding balance at the end of the fiscal year ended June 30, 2013. That obligation is reported as a current liability that is due within 12 months. (Standard III.D.3.e)

Because the District has assessed each of its funds and their related impacts on the remainder of District operations the team concludes that the financial challenges are known and are being addressed as this college determines is appropriate to sustain services offered to its communities. (Standards III.D.2.d; III.D.3.b)

Student loan default rates are as follows: for Fiscal Year 2009-2010, it was 10.2 percent (two year rate); and for Fiscal Year 2010-2011, it was 10 percent (two year draft rate). In future years, the College will be assigned three-year rates. The College default rate is below the 30% level currently used by the Department of Education as the guideline for requiring a college to prepare a plan to reduce default rates. When converting from a large single college district to a three college district loans sourced at each of the colleges were assigned to those colleges. There have not been any actions taken by the Department of Education against the college. (Standard III.D.3.f)

The College relies on board policies for direction on contracts issued for goods, services and public works projects. The District and College control contracting activities through delegated authority to specific levels for direct student support. Contracts initially approved by the College president are submitted to the Board of Trustees for ratification. The District's general counsel reviews contract documents used by the College. The team noted that the District includes appropriate requirements in its contracts to ensure vendors comply with certain provisions and, should they fail to comply, the District can terminate the contracts. (Standard III.D.3.g)

Through the DBAC, the College coordinates its financial planning and management practices to ensure financial stewardship over resources and adequate policies and procedures are developed. The functional map needs more definition than currently exists to define the responsibilities of the colleges versus the District Office for many business functions. It has been acknowledged that the functional map needs additional work and clarification. (Standard III.D.3.h)

The College has implemented a program review process, which incorporates both planning for and evaluation of the needs of all instructional, student service, and administrative programs in light of available resources. In spring 2011, the College reviewed its Educational Master Plan (EMP) using a number of subcommittees engaged in strategic planning. The subcommittees engaged in a review of the mission, vision, core commitments, goals and objectives of the plan, and performance indicators, in order to determine continued relevance. Suggested changes were reflected in an update of the Strategic Plan that was completed in spring 2012. District wide comprehensive instructional program reviews, conducted on a four-year cycle, and college wide annual student services, instructional, and administrative unit program reviews provide an opportunity for disciplines, programs, and units to assess and voice their resource needs. Annual program reviews establish a direct linkage between planning and resource allocation. The Annual Instructional and Administrative Program Review Templates were revised to include the mission statement and goals of the Educational Master Plan. This revision requires resource requests to be linked to the support of a specific goal in the EMP. Mapping resource requests to the goals of the EMP in a manner that is embedded within the program review process further ensures that resource

allocations are linked to planning and assessment. In addition, a recently implemented process called “Travel Guidelines and Procedures” requires that all professional development requests include an explanation of how the activity will support the College mission and/or the EMP. The College created an Institutional Strategic Planning Council (ISPC), which serves as the clearinghouse for all planning and resource allocation issues. (Standard III.D.4)

Conclusions

The College meets the Standard. Implementation issues surrounding the Budget Allocation Model (BAM) are primarily the purview of the District, but have a direct impact on the College’s ability to ensure and maintain its financial stability. Despite its perceived “underfunding,” the College does well in managing its resources. The low District wide reserve leaves the College and District vulnerable to down turns in funding, or temporary cash flow issues.

While the College has a strategic planning process, with specific goals, objectives, and benchmarks, the District lacks such a plan that links with college plans. This is further complicated by the lack of an accurate and widely understood function map that clearly delineates the responsibilities between the District Office and colleges, which hampers Norco College’s ability to plan effectively in all of the areas where it is needed.

Recommendations

District Recommendation 2

In order to meet Standards, implement a plan to fund contributions to the District’s other post-employment benefits (OPEB) obligation. (Standard III.D.3.c)

Standard IV – Leadership and Governance

Standard IV A – Decision-Making Roles and Processes

General Observations

The College has a structure and a culture that embraces broad representation on committees, including students, faculty, staff and administrators. These constituencies participate in evidence-based decision making, the participatory governance process, and they have a clearly defined role in expressing a voice on policies, planning, and budgeting. The College strategic planning process and the open membership of the Committee of the Whole (COTW) ensure broad input from all constituency groups. The constituency organizations hold regular meetings, post agendas, and make minutes available to the entire College community. In addition, the *Procedure for Participation in Decision-Making Processes* specifically defines the role of students, faculty, staff and administrators in the participatory governance process.

Findings and Evidence

College governance is student centered and designed to facilitate decisions that promote student learning and student success. Interviews with the president indicate that he encourages all constituency groups to participate in the governance process. The 2013 Accreditation Survey indicated that 99 percent of respondents believe the president provides effective leadership for the College. Moreover, the Survey states that the College community believes that governing board policies support the quality, integrity and effectiveness of student learning and services. (Standard IV.A)

Minutes and interviews with Norco College students, faculty, staff, and administrators, indicate that the 2011 reorganization of the strategic planning committee increased its effectiveness and that systematic participative processes were used to assure effective discussion, planning, and implementation. Ninety-four percent of faculty, staff, and administrators felt that the Student Senate has a defined role in the institutional governance. However, when the students were surveyed most felt that they had a defined role in governance, but it was evident that many students were not informed about the role and opportunities for participation in College governance. Students who attended the open forums during the visit were clearly involved in the College and they expressed genuine appreciation for the staff and College processes. (Standard IV.A.1)

Administrative procedures describe how institutional planning processes are broad-based, comprehensive, systematic, and integrated into all aspects of decision making within the District. The procedures also require that the College use planning councils and committees for developing, reviewing, updating and implementing plans. The College also delineated an approach specific to Norco College to help ensure that students, faculty, staff and administrators are part of the decision-making process. The *Procedure for Participation in Decision-Making Processes* specifically states how to bring ideas forward through College processes. During interviews, classified staff described how this procedure was used last year to add classified tri-chairs to participatory governance committees. (Standard IV.A.2)

Norco's *Procedure for Participation in Decision-Making Processes* specifically defines the role of students, faculty, staff and administrators. Norco's Strategic Planning Committee Policy outlines the procedure for evaluating integrated planning, budgeting and decision-making processes. An aspect of the policy includes the identification of concerns from stakeholders and incorporating those concerns into the planning, resource allocation, and decision-making processes. Results of the planning council survey indicate that the stakeholders serving on these participatory governance committees feel that they play an important role in strategic planning. Ninety-seven percent also felt that there was open dialogue. Data was collected differently from the various councils and committees, which makes it difficult for the College to effectively assess the results on how it is providing a substantial voice to stakeholders in institutional policies, planning, and resource allocation. Developing a standard methodology for data collection would improve the feedback the College needs to continue to meet the standard. (Standard IV.A.2.a)

Board policy specifies that faculty and the Academic Senate be relied on for recommendations about student learning programs and services. In addition, the Academic Senate Constitution states that the Senate will make recommendations on curriculum, programs and services. The College's Curriculum Committee, a subcommittee of the Academic Senate, reviews all course outlines and student learning outcomes. The Curriculum Committee reports to the Senate monthly on curriculum issues. Evidence clearly describes the responsibilities and authority of faculty and academic administrators in curricular and other education matters. The College and District curriculum committees are small and appear to function effectively. (Standard IV.A.2.b)

Board policy specifies that procedures be established to ensure that students, faculty and staff have the opportunity to express their opinions, to ensure that these opinions are given reasonable consideration, and to ensure the right to participate in District and College governance. Interviews and meeting minutes indicate that all constituencies work together for the good of the institution. An example of this collaboration was illustrated through the discussion and decision-making process that lead to the adoption of the tri-chair concept. Currently survey data from faculty, staff and administrators is not disaggregated. The value of survey results could be improved if the data were disaggregated by constituency group, or if questions were added to the survey instrument to examine how effectively constituencies work together to facilitate discussion of ideas and effective communication among and between the groups. (Standard IV.A.3)

The College demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies. It complies with Accrediting Commission Standards, policies and guidelines. It documents past accreditation history on the College website and it has responded to and resolved previous recommendations. Additionally, it has filed appropriate substantive change reports. (Standard IV.A.4)

Interviews, minutes, and reports indicate that the governance and decision-making structures and processes are evaluated on a regular basis. The College uses the *Policy and Procedure for Regular Evaluation of Integrated Institutional Planning, Budgeting and Decision-Making*

Processes as its mechanism for evaluation of governance processes. A review of the participatory governance structure was completed in 2011, which led to a revision of the committee structure. The current approach to this evaluation is different for different committees and it is recommended that the evaluation be standardized to help widely communicate the results of these evaluations and use them as the basis for improvement. Interviews and the College research website indicate that the results of the evaluations are posted to the website and distributed to the committees in which they are evaluating. However, it does not appear that the results of the evaluations are widely communicated. It is recommended that the College develop strategies to distribute the results of the evaluation and decision-making structures beyond the committees being evaluated. (Standard IV.A.5)

Conclusions

The College meets the Standard. The College has both a structure and a culture that encourages participation of all constituencies. Its *Procedure for Participation in Decision-Making Processes* document specifically describes how constituencies can bring ideas forward. Policy describes the process for evaluation of governance committees and integrated planning processes. The College should make an effort to assess and/or identify how well the different constituent groups work together for the good of the institution to help facilitate discussion of ideas and effective communication among the various College constituencies. The process for evaluating institutional planning processes should be improved by developing a standard assessment instrument for all participatory governance committees that will help inform improvement of planning processes and more broadly communicate the results of these evaluations to the entire College community.

Recommendations

None

Standard IV – Leadership and Governance

Standard IV B – Board and Administrative Organization

General Observations

Norco College, Riverside City College and Moreno Valley College comprise the three institutions of the Riverside Community College District. In 2010, Board policy established these three separate institutions, morphing a single college district into a multi-college district that is governed by a five-member Board of Trustees that acts independently to set policy for the District. A non voting student trustee serves a one-year term bringing to the Board the students' perspective.

Transitioning into a multi-college district has been an iterative process and the District continues to negotiate, define and distinguish roles and responsibilities between itself and the colleges. An ongoing conversation continues to clarify and refine roles and responsibilities. Despite the serious nature of this conversation, the Board has established a tone of transparency, inclusiveness, civility and trust so that members of various constituency groups participate in and support these changes. This collaboration allowed the colleges and the District to weather the recent economic storms. An illustration of this cooperative spirit is the ability of the Board and constituency groups to navigate the current change in health care provider.

Findings and Evidence

A five-member Board of Trustees (BOT) governs the Riverside Community College District (RCCD) complemented by a sixth, non-voting, student member. The governing board has adopted a series of board policies to assure the quality, integrity and effectiveness of the District. These policies are posted on the RCCD website. (Standard IV.B.1) Board policy delineates the duties, responsibilities and privileges of the Board members, including the need to act as a whole, channel requests through the chancellor, and act ethically and professionally. (Standard IV.B.1.a)

The Riverside Community College District Board of Trustees is transitioning to regional elections. Currently, half of the elected Board members represent specific regions; the other half of the governing board will represent designated regions after the November 2014 election.

The governing board approved the District mission statement on June 19, 2012; and, they approved a revised statement on April 16, 2013. The mission statement is used to ensure the quality, integrity and improvement of the student learning programs and services. The governing board has committees indicative of their areas of focus: Governance; Teaching and Learning; Planning and Operations; and, Resources and Facilities. Committee meetings and reports occur monthly during open session. All members of the governing board participate in these committee meetings. The Board reviewed the District Strategic Plan on December 19, 2012 through a review of data on the seven main themes. At that time, the Board mentioned that these themes would carry over to the Centennial Strategic Plan of 2012-2016. (Standard IV.B.1.b)

The governing board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters and financial integrity as stated in Board policy. (Standard IV.B.1.c) The Board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. Board bylaws and policies specifying the governing board's size, duties, responsibility, structure and operating procedures are published on the District website and updated regularly. (Standard IV.B.1.d)

The governing board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws as evidenced in various minutes, resolutions and reports from its five board committees as posted on the RCCD website under the Board of Trustees. The Board does appear to update its policies and practices; however, no systematic review schedule was found and some board policies have not been reviewed in several years, such as Board Policy 4030, Academic Honesty, which was last reviewed in 2007 or Board Policy 4021 Program Discontinuance, which was last reviewed in 2008. (Standard IV.B.1.e)

The governing board is diverse in terms of the member's length of service, political viewpoints, ethnicity and backgrounds. The policy on governing board education is a broad statement and does not specify a new member orientation. The Board president affirms that new board members attend orientations sponsored by the Community College League of California (CCLC), and in the one instance, when a new Board member could not attend the CCLC conference due to religious observance the Board facilitated an alternate orientation program. Board Policy 2740 has not been revised since 2007. Board policy identifies governing board membership and staggered terms of office. (Standard IV.B.1.f)

The governing board outlines the process for periodical self-assessment policy, calling for a self-evaluation to occur annually prior to the end of June. The team verified that evaluations were completed in 2012 and 2013. Review of the Board evaluation occurred at a special meeting/retreat of the Board on May 29, 2012. A summary of the results was reported out in public session on June 19, 2012. The retreat was held in open session as required in Board Policy 2745 and reflected in the minutes. The Board self-evaluation did not appear to include input from any District entities other than the Board members. Various leaders from constituency groups voiced that communication and feedback with the Board was ongoing, mutually respectful and facilitated positive collaboration. (Standard IV.B.1.g)

Several board policies deal with ethical and appropriate behavior, including conflict of interest; gifts, tickets and passes; and, personal use of public resources. These policies comply with the Political Reform Act and Fair Political Practices. Board policy also defines a process for dealing with inappropriate governing board member behavior. When appropriate, the Board president has brought outside mediators to facilitate Board cohesiveness. (Standard IV.B.1.h)

The Board policy on self-evaluation references Accreditation Standards IV.B.1.e and IV.B.1.g. In addition, the Board's annual goals indirectly incorporate accreditation standards such as "create a mission statement for the Board of Trustees with guiding principles for governance of the members of the Board." At the December 10, 2013, Board meeting the Board accepted the recommendation of the Teaching and Learning Board Committee and officially approved the accreditation reports for all three colleges. (Standard IV.B.1.i)

The RCCD governing board has the responsibility for selecting and evaluating the chancellor and delegates full responsibility and authority to him/her. Board policy and administrative procedure establishes the process for chancellor selection. The administrative procedure states, "The process for hiring the Chancellor will be inclusive, participatory and transparent." The District is currently in the process of selecting its next chancellor. The District website illustrates that the current search for a chancellor aligns with existing policy. The job prospectus, committee membership and upcoming forums are listed. In Board policy, the governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to the chancellor. The established process for Board evaluation of the chancellor is also contained within the evaluation process for managers and specified in Board policy. (Standard IV.B.1.j)

The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to the chancellor and the college presidents, recognizing the authority of the president on college matters. Board policy states that, "Each College President's administrative organization shall be the established authority on campus. The College President is the final authority at the college level." The College president has ultimate oversight and responsibility for the planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness. He performs these functions by delegating authority to his senior administrative team as well as relying on the participatory governance structure for recommendations. (Standard IV.B.2)

There is a defined participatory governance system at the College where discussions on institutional matters are considered. The decision-making processes forward recommendations to the president for action and final decision. Through the governance councils and committees and the decision-making processes, the president guides the development of the mission, values, goals and priorities of the College. Institutional planning activities, program review, annual program plans, and student learning outcomes assessment rely on research and the analysis of internal and external conditions. Since the College is still relatively new, integrated planning and resource allocation processes at the College are still developing and going through initial cycles of evaluation. While evaluation mechanisms are defined and have been implemented, their application has been inconsistent. Using the College's decision-making processes, the president should ensure these evaluation processes are consistently applied and reviewed for their effectiveness. The president assures compliance with statutes, regulations and policies and assures that institutional procedures and processes are aligned with the college's mission. (Standards IV.B.2.a; IV.B.2.b; IV.B.2.c)

The president manages the College budget effectively. During the 2012 state wide budget crisis, the president and vice presidents developed and implemented budget reductions. Prior to finalizing these reductions, the proposal was vetted through the participatory governance decision-making processes. Although there was recognition that the District Budget Allocation Model (BAM) was developed through a dialogue among the three college presidents and the chancellor, there was some level of concern expressed that this model needs to be further refined to capture additional factors that impact resource allocation at each of the District's colleges. (Standard IV.B.2.d)

The president collaborates and communicates effectively with the communities served by the College. The president is actively involved in several community organizations, including the

local Chambers of Commerce and local service groups. He works closely with the local unified school district and he maintains open lines of communication with the neighboring U.S. Naval Surface Warfare Center. In addition, the president convenes a community advisory group periodically throughout the year to discuss issues related to the College and the community. (Standard IV.B.2.e)

Operational functions are delineated and communicated between the District and the colleges in the Function Map. The team confirmed that the District provides a number of centralized services that support both the mission and operation of the colleges. As the District continues to review what functions should be centralized or decentralized in the ongoing transition to a multi-college district, the RCCD will benefit from the development of a district staffing plan that delineates the needs and allocation of human resources to the District Office and the three colleges. (Standards IV.B.3.a; IV.B.3.b)

Through the District Budget Advisory Committee, which includes membership from the District and colleges, a Budget Allocation Model (BAM) was devised and implemented to ensure that adequate resources are distributed to the colleges to support their effective operation. To refine the implementation and improvement of the Budget Allocation Model, the District will benefit from the establishment of a written policy including clear metrics to assess and revise the evolving Budget Allocation Model (BAM) and demonstrate alignment between the Budget Allocation Model and the District Strategic Plan. (Standards IV.B.3.c; IV.B.3.d)

Board policy clearly delegates authority for the daily operation of the District and the colleges to the chancellor and the college presidents. The functional map defines the roles and responsibilities of the chancellor and the presidents. The chancellor ensures the Norco College president is responsible for the administration and operation of the College. The College president is held accountable for his responsibilities and the sound operation of the College. This accountability is monitored through the annual evaluation process. (Standard IV.B.3.e)

The District and the chancellor act as liaisons between the governing board and the colleges as defined in the RCCD Function Map. Information regarding Board policy is communicated to the colleges in a variety of ways. The Norco College president attends the bi-monthly governing board meetings. Additionally, Board meetings are regularly scheduled on the three college campuses ensuring access to the local college's students, employees, and community constituencies. Board meeting agendas, supporting documentation and minutes are posted on the RCCD website. (Standard IV.B.3.f)

The District evaluates role delineation and the governance and decision-making structures and processes to assure their integrity and effectiveness in meeting the College mission and educational goals through the District Strategic Planning Committee (DSPC). The membership of the DSPC comes from the colleges and the District. The results of these evaluations are widely communicated and are used as a basis for improvement. To ensure that District centralized services are effective and support the colleges in their missions and operations, the District and the colleges would benefit from an update of the District Strategic Plan, including the addition of measurable objectives that are in alignment with the strategic plans at the college

level. With the renewed focus on measurable student outcomes that lead to success in recent years, specific, updated metrics will improve the planning process. (Standard IV.B.3.g)

Conclusions

The College meets the Standard. The evaluation team has encountered a spirit of engagement, collegiality, and collaboration at Norco College and in the Riverside Community College District. This inclusive culture of decision-making is evident at the Board level and permeates throughout the institution. According to the Board President, “we all get along.” Despite the recent difficult economic times and the challenging reorganization from a single college into a multi-college district, College and District personnel have worked together for the benefit of the students and communities they serve.

The Norco College president is responsible for and oversees planning, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness. He performs these functions by delegating authority to his senior administrative team as well as relying on the participatory governance structure for recommendations. Using the College’s decision-making processes, the president should ensure integrated planning and resource allocation evaluation processes are consistently applied and reviewed for their effectiveness in ensuring the achievement of student learning.

Ongoing work related to the transition into a multi-college district, specifically delineation of roles between the College and the District needs to continue. In particular, resource allocation including fiscal, human, and technology resources need to be based on data-informed planning needs and coordinated between the College and the District. Even where leadership and governance entities effectively communicate, regular evidence-based evaluation needs to be incorporated into processes and policies to ensure ongoing, continuous improvement. Informal communication patterns need to be codified to guarantee continuation of existing practices.

Recommendations

None

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

Riverside Community College District

1533 Spruce Street
Riverside, CA 92507

This report represents the findings of the External Evaluation Team that visited
Riverside Community College District on March 3 – 6, 2014.

Brian King, District Team Chair

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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

INSTITUTION: Riverside Community College District

DATES OF VISIT: March 3-6, 2014

TEAM CHAIR: Dr. Brian King
Chancellor, Los Rios Community College District

The purpose of the Riverside Community College District (RCCD) evaluation visit was to ensure that the functions or operations covered by the standards that are conducted by the RCCD were evaluated during the comprehensive review of the three RCCD colleges (Riverside City College, Moreno Valley College, and Norco College). In preparation for the visit, the District Team Chair reviewed the three Self Evaluation reports for the RCCD colleges.

In addition to the Chair and Team Assistant, representatives from each of the three college teams formed a District Evaluation Team. On the morning of Monday, March 3, 2014, the District Evaluation Team met with a wide variety of leaders at the District Office. The District Evaluation Team attended a regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, March 4, 2014. The Team Assistant coordinated a variety of additional meetings with board members and district officials throughout the visit. On Wednesday evening, March 5, 2014, the District Evaluation Team Chair held a conference call including the three college Team Chairs and the appointed members of the District Evaluation Team from each college team. The participants reviewed and revised the District Recommendations, and also discussed other items for inclusion in this report. The District Team Report will be appended to the College Team Reports.

While RCCD and Riverside City College have been in existence for almost 100 years, two former centers were granted initial accreditation in 2010 (Moreno Valley College and Norco College). Because RCCD is relatively new to functioning as a multi-college district, a substantial part of the review focused on the implementation of the 2013 Functional Map delineating the roles of the District Office and the three colleges in the context of the accreditation standards.

2014 District Office Recommendations

District Recommendation 1: In order to meet standards, compile the various completed elements of technology planning into an integrated, comprehensive district technology plan that is accessible and transparent, including a disaster recovery plan and a plan to refresh aging and outdated technologies. Insure that the district technology plan is based on input from the colleges and is in alignment with college planning processes. (Standards I.B.6 and III.C.2)

RCCD has undergone a substantial amount of planning to address the technology needs of the District and the prioritization of technology resources. RCCD has conducted a technology audit and prioritized Information Services for the District in addition to completing a detailed District Administrative Unit Program Review and Assessment of Information Technology and Learning Services. The District Evaluation Team noted that the various elements of technology planning have not yet been incorporated into a district-wide technology planning document to provide an overarching framework for the evolving college technology plans. The District lacks a comprehensive disaster recovery plan, and could also benefit from a plan that addresses the need to refresh aging and outdated technologies.

District Recommendation 2: In order to meet standards, implement a plan to fund contributions to the District's other post-employment benefits (OPEB) obligation. (Standard III.D.3.c)

The District Evaluation Team, in conjunction with the reviews by the college teams including interviews with executive staff and examination of financial documents including audits, determined that RCCD currently has no clear plan or process to address current unfunded liabilities for OPEB obligation. The most recent actuarial study estimated the liability at approximately \$25 million.

Assessment of Responses to 2010 District Recommendations

2010 District Recommendation 1: The teams recommend that the board of trustees and chancellor develop and implement a district strategic plan that will

- **Align with the district mission statement (Standards 1A.1 and IIId.1);**
- **Provide a framework for the college's/campuses' strategic plans (Standard 1B.4);**
- **Drive the allocation of district resources for the college, campuses, and District Office (Standard IIId.1; Eligibility Requirement 19). The need to connect budget and planning remains unfulfilled from the 2001 accreditation recommendations.**

Summary of RCCD Response:

RCCD asserted it has addressed this recommendation, and the evidence supports the assertion that the District and the colleges have used the strategic planning processes for the 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14 academic years. Most recently in fall 2012, the District began the process to refresh the RCCD Strategic Plan: 2008-12.

2014 District Team Assessment of Previous District Recommendation 1: RCCD responded to 2010 District Recommendation 1 and is in compliance. While the team notes that the District responded to this recommendation by developing a District Strategic Plan, the District and the colleges will benefit from an update of the plan with measurable objectives that are in alignment with the strategic plans at the college level.

2010 District Recommendation 2: The teams recommend that the District and college/campuses develop, implement, and assess a resource allocation model that

- **Is open, transparent, and inclusive (Standards IB and IVB.3e);**
- **Is widely disseminated and reviewed periodically for effectiveness (Standards IIId.2b and IIId.3);**
- **Is linked to the strategic plans at the district, college, and campus levels (Standards IA.1, IIId.1a-d, and IVB.3c). Response:**

Summary of RCCD Response:

RCCD concluded it has implemented this recommendation. The District and the College have used a budget allocation process in its 2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13. The District Budget Advisory Council (DBAC), composed of representatives from all three colleges and the District and charged with reviewing the budget allocation process, has conducted a survey of the committee's effectiveness and has begun discussion to revise the budget allocation process to reflect the changing needs of the colleges and the District. The District implemented the basic framework of the revised model in its 2013-14 adopted budget.

2014 District Team Assessment of Previous District Recommendation 2: RCCD responded to 2010 District Recommendation 2 and is in compliance.

2010 District Recommendation 3: The teams recommend that college, campus, and district administrators and faculty delineate, document, and assess

- **The roles and responsibilities between and among the district's entities (Standard IVB.3; Policy and Procedures for the Evaluation of Institutions in Multi-College/Multi-Unit Districts or Systems);**
- **The roles and scope of authority of the CEOs at the district and college/campus levels (Standard IVA.2);**
- **A feedback loop between and among the entities on key issues, such as planning, staffing priorities, etc. (Standards IVA.2, IVB.3, IVB.4, and IVB.6).**

Summary of RCCD Response:

RCCD asserts it has addressed the recommendation. The RCCD Board received a new organizational model at its January 25, 2011, meeting. On May 2, 2011, the board approved Riverside City College's reorganization of academic departments implementing this new structure. In response to the budget crisis of recent years, the District has addressed the downsizing of the institution in the wake of the state's economic crisis. A three-college district committee reviewed and revised the Function Map that delineates the complete description of the roles and scope of authority for the CEOs of the District.

2014 District Team Assessment of Previous District Recommendation 3: RCCD responded to 2010 Recommendation 3 and is in compliance.

2010 District Recommendation 4: The teams recommend that the district clearly specify personnel selection procedures for district administrators including the position of chancellor. These selection processes must include input from various college/campuses constituent groups (Standard IIIA.1, Standard IIIA.3, and IVB.1).

Summary of RCCD Response:

RCCD concludes that they have implemented this recommendation. The District and the College used the selection processes to hire a new chancellor and to hire a new president at Riverside City College in 2010 and again in 2011. The selection process for a permanent chancellor was underway at the time of the visit.

2014 District Team Assessment of District Recommendation 4: RCCD responded to 2010 District Recommendation 4 and is in compliance. At the time of the visit, a search for a new permanent chancellor was underway. The policies and procedures for the search are included in board policy, and RCCD hopes to have a permanent chancellor hired by the summer of 2014.

2010 District Recommendation 5: As recommended by the 2001 accreditation visiting team, the teams recommend that the board of trustees implement its recently approved process for self-evaluation (Standard IVB.1g).

Summary of RCCD Response:

With the approval and implementation of Board Policy 2745 beginning in 2011, RCCD asserts that they have responded to 2010 District Recommendation 5. The evidence supported the conclusion that the board conducted regular self-assessments, and those annual self-assessments are published on the Board of Trustee website.

2014 District Team Assessment of Previous District Recommendation 5: RCCD has responded to 2010 District Recommendation 5 and is in compliance. The Board now regularly conducts a self-evaluation, and board members interviewed were aware of the board policy and practice for self-evaluation.