

# **EVALUATION REPORT**

## **LOS ANGELES PIERCE COLLEGE**

6201 Winnetka Avenue  
Woodland Hills, CA 91371

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

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited Los Angeles Pierce  
College from March 19-22, 2007

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## SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

**Institution:** Los Angeles Pierce College

**Date of Visit:** March 19-22, 2007

**Team Chair:** Terrence J. Burgess  
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A ten-member accreditation team, augmented with a team assistant, visited Los Angeles Pierce College (LAPC) from March 19-22, 2007. The purposes of the visit were to determine whether the institution continues to meet accreditation standards, to evaluate how well the college is achieving its stated purposes, to provide recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement, and to submit recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) regarding the accredited status of the college.

In preparation for the visit, the team chair attended an all-day chair training session on January 18, 2007 and the chair and team members attended an all-day team training session on February 13, 2007 conducted by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (WASC, ACCJC). Team members reviewed the Commission's *Guide for Evaluating Institutions*, the *Accreditation Reference Handbook*, the *Team Evaluator Manual*, and the *Distance Learning Manual*, as well as the college's *Self-Study Report* and related evidentiary documents provided by LAPC. In addition, team members carefully reviewed the team report prepared by the 2001 accreditation team, focused midterm report from 2004, and annual reports from 2001 through 2006. The team chair and assistant conducted a pre-visit meeting with the college president and executive administrators on January 22, 2007 to outline the expectations of the visiting team and to assure that all appropriate arrangements and accommodations would be in order.

The team members were divided into four sub-groups according to the four accreditation standards. For each accreditation standard, one team member was designated Lead Member for coordinating purposes. Two weeks prior to the visit, each team member prepared detailed reports of their review of the entire *Self-Study Report* and the particular accreditation standard to which they had been assigned. Team members also identified individuals with whom they desired to meet while on campus, and this information was conveyed to the college. On March 19, 2007, the Chair and four Lead Members met with members of the district administration and Board of Trustees representatives. Also on March 19, 2007, the entire team met to collectively review the *Self-Study Report* and to outline evidence to be reviewed during the ensuing team visit.

During the three-day visit, the team met either individually or in groups with over one hundred college faculty, staff, students, administrators, and governing board members. In addition, team members held three well-attended sessions open to all members of the college community. The team reviewed hundreds of documents, toured a wide variety of

instructional and student support facilities, visited dozens of classes, examined on-line instruction, and observed the operation of instructional and student support programs throughout the institution.

In general, the *Self-Study Report* was thorough, complete, and well-organized. The document contained an Abstract referencing each of the accreditation standards and the college's responses to them; an Introduction outlining the organization of the *Self-Study Report*, the involvement of college constituencies in its development, and college and district organizational charts; Background and Demographics including a brief history and descriptive background of the institution and its curriculum, student and community demographics, and significant institutional changes and challenges that have ensued since the last comprehensive evaluation in 2001; Responses to Previous Recommendations made by the evaluation team in 2001; and detailed descriptive summary, self-evaluation, and planning agenda for each of the four accreditation standards. The team noted that the *Self-Study Report* was a well-written and candid assessment of the institution and was extremely useful to team members in their institutional review.

The college provided a complete and well-organized set of evidentiary documents cited in the *Self-Study Report* and college personnel both were readily available for interview and candid in their responses to members' questions. The faculty was extremely accommodating to the team in allowing classroom observation.

Lastly, the college's planning agenda is both reasonable in number of activities and significant in importance to the institution. The team has every confidence that LAPC will actualize its planning agenda within the next accreditation cycle to the benefit of students and the institution.

### **Major Findings and Recommendations of the 2007 Team**

The following ten recommendations are made as a result of the March 19-22, 2007 team visit:

#### **Recommendation 1:**

Although the college has created and initiated a new program planning process, there should be a concerted effort to communicate the results of the planning process campus-wide and clearly demonstrate a link between institutional planning and resource allocation. (I.B.1, I.B.2)

#### **Recommendation 2:**

The college has done an admirable job initiating a student learning outcomes process at the course level; however, efforts will need to be made to clarify campus leadership, articulate a vision for the outcomes process as a whole, and develop a coherent and comprehensive system to monitor progress and ensure the quality of Student Learning Outcome (SLO) efforts. (I.B.3)

**Recommendation 3:**

Faculty development programs in instructional technology need to be offered in order to enable faculty to expand the Distance Education course offerings. (IIA.2.d)

**Recommendation 4:**

SLOs need to be developed and assessed for all courses and programs on a regular basis and the results used to improve institutional effectiveness. (IIA.2.b, IIA.2.e, IIA.2.f)

**Recommendation 5:**

The District should provide leadership in supporting the progress toward incorporating and achieving stated SLOs as a component of faculty evaluation. (III.A.1.c)

**Recommendation 6:**

The college, in concert with the District, should develop a comprehensive long-term plan for addressing the backlog of deferred maintenance projects which, if left unattended, may compromise the quality of the student learning environment. (III.B.1a, III.B.1b)

**Recommendation 7:**

The college should build on the current technology proposal with input from all constituencies to develop a technology plan to articulate institutional priorities in addressing technology needs. A primary focus should be expanding the distance education (DE) program, improving student learning outcomes, and providing technical support for faculty and students. (III.C.1.a)

**Recommendation 8:**

The college should closely monitor in future years the success of the District's plan for addressing retiree health benefit liability to assure that out-year obligations are met without significant impact on the financial health of the institution. (III.D.1c).

**Recommendation 9:**

The Board of Trustees should complete the self-evaluation process by discussing and developing a set of Board goals to respond to any issues identified in its self-evaluation. The Board should institutionalize the goal-setting and measuring of accomplishments as part of the self-evaluation process. (IV.B.1.g)

**Recommendation 10:**

Although in practice the evaluation of the college presidents and district chancellor occurs on a regular basis and is an inclusive process, the team recommends that the District develop a written policy that clearly defines the evaluation process. (IV.B.1.j)

## Introduction and Summary

Los Angeles Pierce College (LAPC) was established in 1947 as an agriculture college on 427 acres in the western San Fernando Valley. Today, it is one of nine accredited and comprehensive community colleges of the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD). LAPC received a reaffirmation of its accreditation by ACCJC in 2001, following a comprehensive visit by an accreditation team and subsequent action by the accrediting commission. The college was directed to prepare and submit a focused midterm report to the commission in 2004 addressing in particular two of seven recommendations made by the 2001 visiting team.

A ten-member team, appointed by ACCJC, conducted a comprehensive accreditation evaluation of LAPC from March 19-22, 2007. Team members visited classes; interviewed a broad representation of the college community, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators; held three open community forums; attended a number of campus meetings; met with the district chancellor, vice chancellors and other district administrators, and representatives of the Board of Trustees; and toured both campus facilities and programs of the college in order to acquire a thorough understanding of LAPC's instructional programs, support services for students, organizational culture and climate, and student population.

The purposes of the evaluation were to review evidence in support of assertions of the college, as detailed in the *Self-Study Report*, that the institution meets or exceeds the four standards of accreditation for a comprehensive community college, to determine how well the college had addressed the recommendations of the previous visiting team, to provide recommendations regarding quality assurance and institutional improvement so as to assist the college in strengthening its programs and services, and to enable the team to make a founded recommendation to the accrediting commission regarding the accredited status of LAPC.

One of the college's greatest strengths is its spirit of community. The team was impressed by the enthusiasm and genuine excitement of students, faculty, staff, and administrators to be a part of the institution and to contribute to its success. College personnel were friendly, engaging, helpful, and cooperative in the many interactions team members experienced. Students were satisfied with their college experience and felt that the institution was committed to their academic success and the accomplishment of their academic goals.

LAPC has grown substantially since its last accreditation visit. Throughout this period, the institution has planned and implemented many innovative and effective instructional and student support service programs, engaged in facility planning and construction, and hired many new faculty, staff, and administrators. During these changes, the college has initiated significant dialogue around its mission and purpose, engaged the institutional stakeholders in an inclusive and effective model of shared governance, and sustained and extended its positive and welcoming campus climate.

## **Commendations**

The team found that LAPC generally demonstrates a high level of quality in its educational programs and student services. Specifically, the team found notable strength in the following areas:

1. Within the last year and a half, LAPC has hired a new President, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Administrative Services, and Associate Dean of Research, Planning and Assessment among others. Given this considerable turnover in administration, the college is commended for its effort to integrate the principles articulated in the *Mission Statement*, *Institutional Learning Outcomes*, and the college *Strategic Plan*.
2. The college is commended for integrating quantitative and qualitative data into many of its processes, particularly in the areas of educational planning and enrollment management.
3. The college is commended for conducting an environmental scan and using the results to create curriculum and programs to serve the needs of its changing student body.
4. The college is commended for its inclusive and collegial dialogue regarding program review.
5. The college is commended for its efforts to meet the needs of the changing demographics of its student population which includes students who are not college-prepared.
6. The Student Success Committee is commended for its successful Student Success Mini-Conference and the college faculty's commitment to better serve the changing demographics of the college's students.
7. The faculty is commended for its commitment to teaching and learning in an administrative environment historically challenged by considerable turnover.
8. The faculty is commended for being the driving force behind the implementation of SLOs.
9. The librarians and library staff are commended for their efforts to provide adequate library collections and services despite budgetary constraints, limited staffing, and a challenging facilities environment.
10. The Learning Center is commended for its success in securing grants, and for continuing to provide needed student support services.
11. The Office of Institutional Research is commended on the quality of information provided in the *Pierce College Fact Book* that assists the college in developing effective SLOs.



12. The Academic Senate is commended for its role in developing and adopting faculty hiring guidelines that result in strategic, fair, and equitable hiring of full-time faculty for the benefit of student learning.
13. The college is commended for incorporating SLOs into the formal evaluation processes for faculty members.
14. The college faculty, administration and staff are commended for their perseverance and positive attitude in working together and sustaining the college through challenging times. The team has experienced the tangible pride and joy of the faculty, administrators and staff in working at Pierce College.
15. The college is commended for expanding its enrollment, thereby increasing educational opportunity and access for students.
16. The college is commended for its initial efforts to improve its physical plant, including the development of the botanical gardens, the opening of the college village, the remodeling of the former bookstore, and the imminent ground-breaking for a new science building.
17. The facilities and custodial staff is commended for its extraordinary efforts to create a clean and functioning learning environment in an aging facility.
18. The new administrative team is commended for its commitment to shared governance and its efforts to understand and work within the culture of shared governance of the college.
19. The college is commended for its new leadership team which is focused on improving the college and dedicated to building upon the strong faculty foundation through the shared governance process and the use of data in evaluating the performance of the college.
20. The college is commended for the positive state of health of the college's Foundation and Associated Students Organization which continue to provide strong support of the college's mission to promote student success.

## **Recommendations**

The visiting team found that LAPC has made significant progress since the previous accreditation visit. Notably, the college has substantively addressed the seven recommendations made by the 2001 evaluation team. Nevertheless, the current visiting team concluded that focused attention to the following areas will strengthen the institution as it continues to grow and develop over the next several years:

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

1. Although the college has created and initiated a new program planning process, there should be a concerted effort to communicate the results of the planning process campus-wide and clearly demonstrate a link between institutional planning and resource allocation. (I.B.1, I.B.2)
2. The college has done an admirable job initiating a student learning outcomes process at the course level; however, efforts will need to be made to clarify campus leadership, articulate a vision for the outcomes process as a whole, and develop a coherent and comprehensive system to monitor progress and ensure the quality of Student Learning Outcome (SLO) efforts. (I.B.3)

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

3. Faculty development programs in instructional technology need to be offered in order to enable faculty to expand the Distance Education (DE) course offerings. (IIA.2.d)
4. The college needs to develop a comprehensive system to monitor progress and quality of its Student Learning Outcomes effort so that a larger and significant number of courses will have fully completed the assessment cycle and the results used to improve institutional effectiveness. (IIA.2.b, IIA.2.e, IIA.2.f)

### **Standard III: Resources**

5. The District should provide leadership in supporting the progress toward incorporating and achieving stated SLOs as a component of faculty evaluation. (III.A.1.c)
6. The college, in concert with the District, should develop a comprehensive long-term plan for addressing the backlog of deferred maintenance projects which, if left unattended, may compromise the quality of the student learning environment. (III.B.1a, III.B.1b)
7. The college should build on the current technology proposal with input from all constituencies to develop a technology plan to articulate institutional priorities in addressing technology needs. A primary focus should be expanding the DE program, improving student learning outcomes, and providing technical support for faculty and students. (III.C.1.a)
8. The college should closely monitor in future years the success of the District's plan for addressing retiree health benefit liability to assure that out-year obligations are met without significant impact on the financial health of the institution. (III.D.1c)

## **Standard IV: Leadership and Governance**

9. The Board of Trustees should complete the self-evaluation process by discussing and developing a set of Board goals to respond to any issues identified in its self-evaluation. The Board should institutionalize the goal-setting and measuring of accomplishments as part of the self-evaluation process. (IV.B.1.g)
10. Although in practice the evaluation of the college presidents and district chancellor occurs on a regular basis and is an inclusive process, the team recommends that the District develop a written policy that clearly defines the evaluation process. (IV.B.1.j)

## **Response to Recommendations from the 2001 Accreditation Evaluation based on the 1996 Standards**

### **Standard III: Institutional Effectiveness**

- 3.1** *Now that the College has achieved a new level of financial and enrollment stability, the College should shift its planning and decision-making priorities to ensure that student educational needs and outcomes are the central focus, and that research and information about student characteristics, trends, and outcomes are more thoroughly integrated into the variety of planning processes. (Standards 3A.1, 3B.2, 3C.1).*

There is evidence of an increased commitment to the research function by the hiring of a new Associate Dean of Research, Planning, and Assessment and a full-time Research Analyst. There is a new annual program planning process being initiated that includes data on enrollment trends, class size and other areas, such as FTES and degrees awarded. Additionally, this program planning process includes statements of outcomes and assessment plans at the instructional course and program levels as well as student support services. These outcomes are aligned with the institutional *Strategic Plan*. Moreover, thoughtful institutional outcomes have been developed and published. Changes in student demographics have created a broader attention to the needs of basic skills students and a Student Success Committee has been initiated.

The college has substantially addressed this prior recommendation.

### **Standard IV: Educational Programs**

- 4.1** *Because the College has now strengthened its commitment to providing education extending beyond transfer courses, the College should develop and evaluate strategies to ensure that information about educational programs is communicated, used, and integrated into existing and planned research and the evaluation process. The development and use of this integrated information,*

*which should include credit and non-credit basic skills and ESL programs, will further enhance the College's efforts to strengthen its commitment to providing education beyond transfer courses and programs. (Standards 4A.1, 4B.1)*

The college has incorporated research into the planning process. Increased utilization of data has helped the decision-making process affecting programs from transfer to basic skills and ESL. A district-wide Student Success Initiative has prompted the Student Success Committee to identify under-prepared students and the instructional support services that they need, such as the College Success Seminar and the Summer Bridge Program. The English and Mathematics Departments are working with Student Services to develop strategies for effective student placement. Best practices in these areas are being shared throughout the district through the Student Success Initiative. The Extended Opportunity Programs and Services program has grown significantly and additional staff has been hired.

The college has substantially addressed this prior recommendation.

## **Standard VI: Information and Learning Resources**

**6.1** *The College should develop a plan encompassing all areas of instruction, as well as the Library and labs, to enable students to access, evaluate, and use information effectively. (Standards 6.1, 6.3)*

Institutional Learning Outcomes address the ability of students to have access to both written and electronic information that they will be able to locate, interpret, and appropriately apply. The library provides both written information and electronic information for students and faculty. Computers are available for students in the library as well as in the Learning Center, Writing Lab, and discipline-based computer labs and are supported by staff specialists. Faculty members are encouraged to bring their classes to an orientation session in the library.

The college has substantially addressed this prior recommendation.

## **Standard VIII: Physical Resources**

**8.1** *It is recommended that the College develop a long-term plan for use of its agricultural lands that supports fiscal viability through strategies such as community partnerships, while ensuring that the primary functions of this unique resource remain focused on goals directly linked to the Educational Master Plan. (Standards 8.5, 3B.3)*

The college is in the process of implementing its *Facilities Master Plan*. Related to agricultural resources, this plan calls for the expansion of the Equestrian Education Center, improvements to the college's ecological preserve, the development of a new animal science unit to address the needs of both the community and

instructional needs, a vineyard that will enable the college to address the emergence of viticulture as a significant industry in Los Angeles County, enhanced horticultural facilities, and Agricultural Education opportunities for the general public that will both generate funds for the college and encourage agri-tourism.

The college has substantially addressed this prior recommendation.

## **Standard IX: Financial Resources**

### ***9.1 Consideration should be given to effecting modifications of the District Budget Allocation Model to accommodate and allow for different conditions and needs among the College and the District Office, such as unique salary and personnel impacts, economies of scale, Campus acreage and facilities, and the need to maintain an appropriate District Contingency Reserve. (Standards 9A.2, 9A.4)***

The district has adopted a new budget allocation model that was approved by the Board of Trustees in February 2007. The model uses the state-funding formula to distribute general revenues to the colleges. It allows for further decentralization of resources and functions and includes an allocation for the small colleges over the amount prescribed in the state formula. The college has benefited from this new model. The model provides resources for district-wide services, district office functions, and a district-wide reserve of 3.5% of total unrestricted general fund revenue.

The college has substantially addressed this prior recommendation.

### ***9.2 Long-term financial obligations should be thoroughly identified and a funding plan developed to address these financial liabilities. (Standard 9C.1)***

The significant long-term financial liability of the college is the long-term cost of providing retiree health benefits. The District has entered into a creative collective bargaining agreement to begin addressing this liability district-wide. While this initial and very recent step is a positive development and may prove to be a long-term solution, the college should monitor this situation carefully and regularly to assure that out-year obligations are met without significant impact on the financial health of the institution. (See 2007 Team Recommendation #8)

The college has substantially addressed this prior recommendation.

## **Standard X: Leadership and Governance**

### ***10.1 It is recommended that the Los Angeles Community College District clearly articulate its District-College decentralized governance process, and the specific role of the Chancellor's Cabinet, in policy or regulation. (Standards 10C.3)***

The District, in consultation with the college, has adopted a District Service Decentralization Plan and is in the initial stages of implementation.

The college has substantially addressed this prior recommendation.

## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. AUTHORITY**

LAPC is authorized by the State of California to operate an educational institution and to award degrees.

### **2. MISSION**

LAPC has a clearly defined educational mission which has been adopted and published by its governing board consistent with its legal authorization. The mission is appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education and to the constituency the college seeks to serve. The mission statement defines the college's dedication to a diverse learning community and to the intellectual and personal growth of its constituents.

### **3. GOVERNING BOARD**

The governing board for LAPC is the Board of Trustees for the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD). It is responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of LAPC and for ensuring that the financial resources of the college are used to provide a sound educational program. Its seven-person membership is sufficient in size and composition to fulfill all board responsibilities. The governing board is an independent policy-making body capable of reflecting constituent and public interest in board activities and decisions. None of the board members have employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. The board adheres to a conflict of interest policy that assures that relevant interests are disclosed and that they do not interfere with the impartiality of governing board members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the college.

### **4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

LAPC has a chief executive officer appointed by the governing board who serves full-time in this capacity. The chief executive officer, in combination with the district chancellor, possesses the requisite authority to effectively administer board policies. Neither the chief executive officer nor the district chancellor serves as a member of the governing board.

## **5. ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY**

LAPC generally has sufficient staff, with appropriate preparation and experience, to provide the administrative services necessary to support its mission and purpose.

## **6. OPERATIONAL STATUS**

LAPC is fully operational with students actively pursuing its degree programs.

## **7. DEGREES**

A substantial portion of LAPC's credit educational offerings is programs that lead to associate degrees or occupational certificates, and a significant proportion of its students are enrolled in them. LAPC's non-credit offerings consist of courses and programs to meet basic educational goals of adult learners, improving English skills, preparing for citizenship, learning new job skills, preparing for higher education, and becoming a productive, active participant in American society.

## **8. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

LAPC's principal degree programs are congruent with its mission, are based on recognized higher education fields of study, are of sufficient content and length, are conducted at levels of quality and rigor appropriate to the degrees offered, and culminate in identified student outcomes. Many of the college's degree programs are of two academic years in length.

## **9. ACADEMIC CREDIT**

LAPC awards academic credits based on generally accepted practices in degree-granting institutions of higher education.

## **10. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT**

LAPC defines and publishes for the associate degree the expected student learning and achievement outcomes and it defines and publishes student learning outcomes for its student services. The college is engaged in the process of establishing student learning outcomes at the program and course level. It is also developing its program of regular and systematic assessment designed to demonstrate that students who complete programs, no matter where or how they are offered, achieve these outcomes.

## **11. GENERAL EDUCATION**

LAPC defines and incorporates into all of its degree programs a substantial component of general education designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and

promote intellectual inquiry. The general education component includes demonstrated competence in writing and computational skills and an introduction to the recognized major areas of knowledge. General education has comprehensive learning outcomes for the students who complete it. Degree credit for general education programs is consistent with levels of quality and rigor appropriate to higher education.

## **12. ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

LAPC faculty and students are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as judged by the academic/educational community in general. LAPC maintains an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom and independence exist.

## **13. FACULTY**

LAPC has a substantial core of qualified faculty with full-time responsibility to the institution. The core is sufficient in size and experience to support all of the institution's educational programs. A clear statement of faculty responsibilities exists which includes development and review of curriculum as well as assessment of learning.

## **14. STUDENT SERVICES**

LAPC provides for all of its students appropriate student services that support student learning and development within the context of its institutional mission.

## **15. ADMISSIONS**

LAPC has adopted and adheres to admission policies consistent with its mission that specify the qualifications of students appropriate for its programs.

## **16. INFORMATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES**

LAPC provides, through ownership or contractual agreement, specific long-term access to sufficient information and learning resources and services to support its mission and instructional programs in whatever format and wherever they are offered.

## **17. FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

LAPC documents a funding base, financial resources, and plans for financial development adequate to support student learning programs and services, to improve institutional effectiveness, and to assure financial stability.



## **18. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

LAPC annually undergoes and makes available to the public an external financial audit by a certified public accountant or an audit by an appropriate public agency.

## **19. INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND EVALUATION**

LAPC conducts on-going institutional planning and evaluation to ascertain how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes, including assessment of student learning outcomes. It is encouraged to further develop those structures and processes and to document them. LAPC provides some evidence of planning for improvement of institutional structures and processes, student achievement of educational goals, and student learning. The institution does some assessment of progress toward achieving its stated goals. It should increase the degree to which it makes decisions regarding improvement through an on-going and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation with appropriate resource allocation, and subsequent re-evaluation.

## **20. PUBLIC INFORMATION**

LAPC publishes a catalog for its constituencies with precise, accurate, complete, and current information that includes all of the requisite elements.

## **21. RELATIONS WITH THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION**

LAPC provides assurance that it adheres to the eligibility requirements and accreditation standards and policies of the Commission, describes itself in identical terms to all its accrediting agencies, communicates any changes in its accredited status, and agrees to disclose information required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities.

# Evaluation of Los Angeles Pierce College Using 2002 ACCJC Standards

## STANDARD I

### INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND EFFECTIVENESS

#### Response to Recommendations of the Previous Team related to Standard I

*3.1 Now that the College has achieved a new level of financial and enrollment stability, the College should shift its planning and decision-making priorities to ensure that student educational needs and outcomes are the central focus, and that research and information about student characteristics, trends, and outcomes are more thoroughly integrated into the variety of planning processes. (Standards 3A.1, 3B.2, 3C.1).*

There is evidence of an increased commitment to the research function by the hiring of a new Associate Dean of Research, Planning, and Assessment and a full-time Research Analyst. There is a new annual program planning process being initiated that includes data on enrollment trends, class size and other areas, such as FTES and degrees awarded. Additionally, this program planning process includes statements of outcomes and assessment plans at the instructional course and program levels as well as student support services. These outcomes are aligned with the institutional Strategic Plan. Moreover, thoughtful institutional outcomes have been developed and published. Changes in student demographics have created a broader attention to the needs of basic skills students and a Student Success Committee has been initiated.

The college has substantially addressed this prior recommendation.

#### General Comments

The college's response to this standard was generally well-written and complete. The *Mission Statement* was reviewed and revised in 2006, and a *Strategic Plan* has been developed which is based on the mission statement and the institutional learning outcomes. An increased commitment to research is evidenced in the hiring of an Associate Dean of Research, Planning, and Assessment and a research analyst. With the recent turnover of administration, it is clear that there has been a concerted effort to make the planning process more transparent.

#### Findings and Evidence

##### A. Mission

The Pierce College *Mission Statement* is clearly stated and distributed throughout several key documents around campus. It was reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees

in 2006. This revision addresses the changing needs of students, especially in the area of basic skills. In addition, the *Mission Statement* demonstrates a commitment to student success and includes a statement of college values. The *Mission Statement* is used as a guiding principle and has been used to inform the college's *Strategic Plan* as well as its Institutional Learning Outcomes. (I.A.1)

The team noted that the *Mission Statement* is included in the college catalog and on the website. However, the new *Mission Statement* published on the website differed from the one in the catalog and schedule of classes. The majority of the staff interviewed was aware of the *Mission Statement* although it does not appear that its citation is extensive. (I.A.2)

As noted above, the most recent revision of the *Mission Statement* was in 2005 and 2006. Several drafts were written in the Academic Senate, and the final draft was modified and approved by the PCC. Through interviews and evidence including surveys, reports, the *Pierce College Fact Book*, and the college catalog, the team determined that the college has established learning programs and services that clearly align with its mission and its student population. In various interviews, the terms "underprepared" and "underserved" were used in the dialogue about the changing student population. (I.A.3, I.A.4)

## **B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness**

The LAPC Academic Senate has established thoughtful institutional learning outcomes. There is evidence that the college has engaged in extensive dialogue about the process for establishing student learning outcomes at the course level as well. This dialogue has been aided by the data supplied through the Office of Institutional Research. There have been several professional development activities, and key faculty members have attended conferences on learning outcomes. LAPC has numerous participatory governance committees, such as the PCC, the Educational Planning Committee, and the Faculty Priority Position Committee. However, despite a strong tradition of shared governance, the frequent changes of administrative leadership have contributed to an unclear link between college goal-setting, planning, and budgeting. (I.B.1, I.B.2)

LAPC is currently involved in a concerted effort to more clearly assess its goals and use the results of that assessment in the planning and budgeting process. Perhaps the best example of this is in the newly developed annual program planning process. Because this process has yet to go through an entire cycle, it is too soon to tell if it will be embraced by faculty and staff and serve the purpose for which it is intended. The commitment to integrate assessment and research into the planning process is shown in the recent addition of staff in the Office of Institutional Research. The increased staff in this area has allowed this office to contribute heavily to the student learning outcomes effort and to be able to supply data to the departments and programs for planning purposes. For instance, the data used in this process has recently expanded to include the assessment of student outcomes and community needs. (I.B.3, I.B.4)

LAPC's student learning outcomes effort is currently undergoing some transition. The President of the Academic Senate was the initial appointee to assume responsibility for the beginning of the initiative. However, since the retirement of the past Academic Senate President and the loss of momentum of the SLO-coaching teams, there needs to be newly invigorated leadership in this area. It is admirable that many courses have student learning outcomes clearly stated in the course outlines of record; however, most have yet to be assessed, and it is not clear how assessment results are being used in planning. Service area outcomes are assessed on a regular basis and are a part of each manager's annual goals. Although many different campus constituencies have had input in the student learning outcomes effort and planning processes, interviews have revealed a need to have continued dialogue in this area and to develop a clearer vision of how the college will now institutionalize the outcomes effort and make it sustainable. (I.B.4, I.B.5)

With the hiring of the new Vice President of Academic Affairs, there has been increased attention to the development of departmental objectives that align with the college's goals. The Educational Planning Committee, Student Success Committee, and Diversity Committee have been formed to give greater institutional clarity to the allocation of human resources. Nevertheless, there still needs to be more transparency regarding the relationship between budget and planning.

Dialogue has begun regarding the updating of the *Educational Master Plan* after implementation of the new annual program planning process. The team was assured through the interview process that quantitative and qualitative evidence would be used and that these data would guide planning efforts. As the Office of Institutional Research becomes more established, there will be more opportunity for the campus researchers to explain and clarify their findings to the campus community. (I.B.6)

The Institutional Research Office plays a vital role in the development, implementation, and evaluation of assessment instruments for the purpose of defining service area outcomes in student services. In addition, the annual program planning process allows for a more continual dialogue about student service needs. (I.B.7)

## **Conclusions**

Based on a review of the Self-Study Report and evidentiary documents, and interviews with LAPC faculty and staff, the team concluded that the college is substantially in compliance with this Standard.

The revised *Mission Statement* integrates well with the institutional learning outcomes and the *Strategic Plan*. The *Mission Statement* was revised with dialogue from various constituencies and has been published to the website and other locations. There appears to be a strong tradition of shared governance on the college campus. The *Educational Master Plan* will be updated given information gathered in the program planning documents. The Student Learning Outcomes effort has had a good beginning, but now the campus organizational structure and vision need to be more clearly articulated. With the increased research presence, more assessment results and data are being integrated into campus planning documents.

## **Commendations**

1. Within the last year and a half, LAPC has hired a new President, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Administrative Services, and Associate Dean of Research, Planning and Assessment among others. Given this considerable turnover in administration, the college is commended for its effort to integrate the principles articulated in the *Mission Statement*, *Institutional Learning Outcomes*, and the college *Strategic Plan*.
2. The college is commended for integrating quantitative and qualitative data into many of its processes, particularly in the areas of educational planning and enrollment management.
3. The college is commended for conducting an environmental scan and using the results to create curriculum and programs to serve the needs of its changing student body.
4. The college is commended for its inclusive and collegial dialogue regarding program review.
5. The college is commended for its efforts to meet the needs of the changing demographics of its student population which includes students who are not college-prepared.

## **Recommendations**

1. Although the college has created and initiated a new program planning process, there should be a concerted effort to communicate the results of the planning process campus-wide and clearly demonstrate a link between institutional planning and resource allocation. (I.B.1, I.B.2)
2. The college has done an admirable job initiating a student learning outcomes process at the course level; however, efforts will need to be made to clarify campus leadership, articulate a vision for the outcomes process as a whole, and develop a coherent and comprehensive system to monitor progress and ensure the quality of Student Learning Outcome (SLO) efforts. (I.B.3)

## **STANDARD II**

### **STUDENT LEARNING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

#### **Response to Recommendations of the Previous Team related to Standard II**

***4.1 Because the College has now strengthened its commitment to providing education extending beyond transfer courses, the College should develop and evaluate strategies to ensure that information about educational programs is communicated, used, and integrated into existing and planned research and the evaluation process.***

***The development and use of this integrated information, which should include credit and non-credit basic skills and ESL programs, will further enhance the College's efforts to strengthen its commitment to providing education beyond transfer courses and programs. (Standards 4A.1, 4B.1)***

The college has incorporated research into the planning process. Increased utilization of data has helped the decision-making process affecting programs from transfer to basic skills and ESL. A district-wide Student Success Initiative has prompted the Student Success Committee to identify under-prepared students and the instructional support services that they need, such as the College Success Seminar and the Summer Bridge Program. The English and Mathematics Departments are working with Student Services to develop strategies for effective student placement. Best practices in these areas are being shared throughout the district through the Student Success Initiative. The Extended Opportunity Programs and Services program has grown significantly and additional staff has been hired.

The college has substantially addressed this prior recommendation.

***6.1 The College should develop a plan encompassing all areas of instruction, as well as the Library and labs, to enable students to access, evaluate, and use information effectively. (Standards 6.1, 6.3)***

Institutional Learning Outcomes address the ability of students to have access to both written and electronic information that they will be able to locate, interpret, and appropriately apply. The library provides both written information and electronic information for students and faculty. Computers are available for students in the library as well as in the Learning Center, Writing Lab, and discipline-based computer labs and are supported by staff specialists. Faculty members are encouraged to bring their classes to an orientation session in the library.

The college has substantially addressed this prior recommendation.

**General Observations**

All parts of this standard are fully or partially met. Where the standard is partially met, it is due primarily to the ongoing implementation of SLOs. The college has made deliberate and commendable progress on SLOs. The process being used has been changed since the last team visit to place an emphasis on using the data collected to review programs to determine areas of improvement or change. The college now has a more formal process that will be enhanced by employing a faculty member as a coordinator for SLO development.

A strength of the college is its recognition of a changing student population and addressing its needs in order to produce successful college students. The Student Success Committee has worked to develop different interventions to help students to succeed that

are not college prepared to. A mini-conference that was held to gather support from the faculty was very successful. The conference also addressed several ways to improve instruction for the changing student population. Academic areas beyond English and Mathematics are deeply involved in working to help under-prepared students by working with the Learning Center.

The college has a varied and diverse curriculum that provides the opportunity for students to obtain numerous degrees and certificates. Regular courses, hybrid courses, accelerated courses, and online courses are offered to meet the needs of students. There are only a few distance education courses being offered at this time. Pre-collegiate, developmental, ESL, credit, and non-credit courses are offered, as well as higher-level college courses. The college assures that current and prospective students receive accurate information that is readily available about courses, programs, certificates, degrees, and transfer programs through both printed and electronic means.

Clearly the student services program at LAPC offers the “high-quality . . . student support services . . . and learning support services,” called for in Standard II.B.1. Areas for continued growth may rest in the standard’s requirement to ensure that those services “facilitate and demonstrate the achievement of stated learning outcomes.” An examination of the responses to Standard II.B reveals myriad ways in which student services contributes “to an environment that supports learning, enhances student understanding and appreciation of diversity, and encourages personal and civic responsibility” (Standard II , Preamble). Specifically addressing student services, the standard requires recruitment and support of diverse students, identification of students’ needs, and creation of a supportive learning environment, “characterized by a concern for student access, progress, learning, and success”. The *Self-Study Report* and site visit demonstrate fully that these standards are being met commendably. (II.B)

The *Self-Study Report* states the assurance of quality student support service, “regardless of location or means of delivery,” to “support student learning” and the mission of the college. The descriptive summary presents a vibrant, comprehensive student support service structure, designed to support student success from the moment the application is reviewed in admissions onward through assessment, orientation, and referral to a variety of support programs. A number of satisfaction/effectiveness surveys and data on a variety of rates (persistence, performance, transfer, degree/certificate) gauge effectiveness and guide improvement. The Student Services Division has designed and implemented a very robust, two-year program review process that assures continuous quality improvement. (II.B.1)

The college has launched an institution-wide Student Success Initiative, within which the Student Services Division has a central and pivotal role. From this work, the college has developed a comprehensive Student Success Plan to guide activities, inform staffing decisions, and prioritize budget allocations. (II.B.1)

Overall, the library appears to be meeting accreditation standards via its collections, accessibility, and services. A fifth librarian position was recently added to the faculty

ranks, and a new library building is currently in the planning stages. It is remarkable how much the library has been able to do on a limited budget and with limited classified staffing. Student surveys indicate that the library and its services do meet student needs. Other learning support services, including the Learning Center, are equally ill-funded but able to provide adequate student support nonetheless. Student satisfaction surveys in the Learning Center indicate positive feelings towards the services provided. The media center and computer labs do not have evidence of student or faculty satisfaction and are understaffed.

## **Findings and Evidence**

### **A. Instructional Programs**

In support of its mission, LAPC offers a comprehensive curriculum that includes university transfer, associate degrees, career education, certificate programs, basic skills development, and a range of support services for its diverse population. Evidence of its varied curriculum is present in the college catalog and schedule of classes. Several systems of checks and balances ensure the integrity of the instructional program. The program review process seems extensive and thorough. The standard is met. (II.A, II.A.1)

Hiring of an Associate Dean of Research, Planning, and Assessment, as well as a Research Analyst, indicates the high level of commitment the college has to data analysis. Student learning outcomes, at the course level as well as at the institutional level, have been developed and are slowly being integrated into the curriculum. Some departments have recently completed an entire SLO cycle of assessment. The departments, with data from the research department, conduct program review along with the assessment of SLOs to determine if programs are meeting student needs. The data collected is beginning to shape programs. Approximately 20% of classes have SLOs incorporated into the curriculum. The Student Success Committee along with other groups has developed approaches to help the changing student population. The college has shown change from a mission-driven institution to a data-driven institution. The standard is met. (IIA.1.a)

The college has recognized the need for many different modalities of instruction to meet the needs of its students. Faculty members have adapted their courses to help meet the needs of differing student learning styles. The Student Success Committee has helped faculty to find ways to address the needs of basic skills students. The Mathematics and English Departments have begun to make adjustments in their Fall 2007 schedule to take advantage of information from the committee's findings and mini-conference. The Academic Senate, Academic Policy, Educational Planning, Curriculum, and Technology Advisory are committees that monitor the instructional programs. A formalized mentoring program for new faculty is in place to insure interaction with veteran faculty members. A program to assist faculty in instructional technology would be beneficial so that more online classes could be offered. The Learning Center provides assistance for



students who are in need of additional instruction. Outreach has done an impressive job in reaching potential students that have an interest in attending the college. (II.A.1.b)

An SLO coordinator position and a task force of coaches have been created to guide faculty in development of SLOs. The process has been slow but encouraging as it will take a long-term commitment by both faculty and administration to get SLOs fully into place in academic affairs. There has been an aggressive effort by the new Vice President of Academic Affairs to incorporate assessment of SLOs with planning and budgeting. SLOs and Service Area Outcomes (SAOs) are fully in place within Student Services. (II.A.1.c)

Program review is periodically required of all academic and vocational programs. The review also places a new emphasis on SLOs so that departments can conduct a program assessment that will be the basis for requesting additional resources. With the *Strategic Plan*, a road map has been developed to guide the college through the development of an *Educational Master Plan* by Fall 2008. (II.A.2)

The college recognizes that the responsibility for the development of courses and programs lies primarily with the faculty. New guidelines which place an emphasis on SLOs were discussed in interviews with various constituents. A faculty SLO coordinator has been approved and is working with the faculty. Over 18% of the courses presently have identified SLOs according to the Pierce College SLO tracking sheet. Out of the courses with SLOs, 21% have assessment measures identified and 15 % have conducted assessments. Five percent have analyzed results of the assessment. These guidelines have helped the college to have a greater awareness and understanding which has made SLOs an institutional commitment. (II.A.2, II.A.2.a)

Occupational programs depend on advisory group meetings and the faculty to identify appropriate competencies for students. Course revisions that are approved by the Curriculum Committee now contain measurable course objectives and SLOs. (II.A.2.b)

The quality of instruction is regularly discussed in the Educational Planning Committee, the Curriculum Committee, the Career and Technical Education Committee, and the Deans' Council for both new and existing programs. Faculty members are responsible for insuring the appropriate breadth, depth, and rigor of the courses and programs. Program review is used as a means to involve the academic deans, including a dean overseeing program review, the Associate Dean of Research, Planning and Assessment and the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Articulation Office is also responsible to insure that courses meet the requirements of articulation agreements. (II.A.2.c)

Faculty members use many different modalities of instruction. These include web-enhanced courses, hybrid courses, on-lines courses, as well as traditional courses. The Student Success Committee has encouraged the use of different instructional strategies. Institutional support is needed in maintaining the campus infrastructure, hardware and software that is needed by instructional programs. The college recognizes, and the team agrees, that distance education needs additional support in the area of technology and

instructional design. Additional courses delivered by a distance education mode are needed. (II.A.2.d)

The Curriculum Committee ensures that course outlines and content are regularly reviewed. Program review also provides a periodic review of academic programs every six years and vocational programs every two years. Ongoing implementation of SLOs is taking place. Interviews have shown that there has been a change in this process since the last accreditation visit. This has slowed the implementation of SLOs across the campus. Some courses have completed a cycle and have reviewed data collected from SLO assessment. Program review is used to plan and budget using the new *Annual Academic Program Plan*. Student Services is also planning to use a document similar to the *Academic Program Plan*. (II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f)

Only two departments, Nursing and Computer Science use departmental course or program examinations. Other departments are being encouraged to explore uniform outcome assessments. (II.A.2.g)

The college awards credit for all classes based on an assessment by the faculty of student achievement. Degrees and certificates are awarded by meeting learning objectives. SLOs are presently being put into place to help with the assessment of courses. Institutional Learning Objectives have been put into place by the college. All degree and certificate requirements are listed in the college catalog. (II.A.2.h, II.A.2.i)

Evidence is provided in the college catalog that all students enrolled in academic and vocational degree programs acquire major areas of knowledge including humanities, fine arts, natural sciences, and the social sciences. SLO development for general education courses has been completed or is currently being developed. (II.A.3, II.A.3.a)

The college has a SLO Task Force to examine competency skills across the curriculum. Implementation of SLOs has begun at the course level to address this standard. The college has an Ethics Committee that has addressed ethical behavior of faculty. There is an Academic Integrity Policy that has guidelines for both students and faculty. (II.A.3.b, II.A.3.c)

The college catalog provides a listing of course requirement for each degree. Each includes at least one area of focused study. The number of AA and AS degrees has increased during the last two years according to data provided by the college researcher. (II.A.4)

Vocational and occupational certificates and degrees demonstrate proficiencies through curriculum developed by the faculty with input from advisory groups and external accrediting agencies. Occupational programs are included in the campus-wide development of SLOs. (II.A.5)

Information on courses, programs, and transfer policies are readily available to students in the college catalog, schedule of classes, and the college web site. The college also has

a Transfer Center to assist students, and a transfer web site is also available. (II.A.6, II.A.6.a)

When program review demonstrates that a program is in need of attention, intervention, or support, it will undergo a program viability review. The Registered Veterinary Technician program has recently undergone the review process and a decision was made to continue the program. The standard is met. (II.A.6.b)

The annual college catalog, college web site, Research and Planning web pages, and marketing publications keep college activities well-communicated to the college community. (II.A.6.c)

Academic freedom is discussed in the Educational Philosophy statement of the District's Board Rule 1200. The college also has an Ethics Committee which is a subcommittee of the Academic Senate. A Faculty Code of Ethics has been developed. LACCD has a board-approved Student Code of Conduct which covers the right to learn and engage in a free exchange of ideas. Academic honesty is also included in this code. Reference to the student code is in both the college catalog and schedule of classes. (II.A.7, II.A.7.a, II.A.7.b, II.A.7.c)

The college has no foreign locations. (II.A.8)

## **B. Student Support Services**

The college offers a broad and comprehensive array of student support services, including Admissions and Records, Assessment and Matriculation, Associated Students Organization, a Child Development Center, Counseling, Disabled Student Services, EOPS, CARE, Financial Aid and Scholarships, Health Services, High School Outreach, International Students Program, Transfer and Career Center, and Veterans Program. Through a robust program review process, the college engages in continuous quality improvement. (II.B.1)

The Student Services Division has engaged in the development of SLOs as well as SAOs. The program review process informed the development of SAOs and has led to the creation of a Student Success Initiative and attendant Student Success Plan. College-wide task forces were created to focus on specific elements of the plan, and the final document includes ten measurable goals and associated activities that are expected to increase student success. The college uses the plan as a tool to assist individuals, departments, and the college as a whole to set priorities for staffing and resource allocation. (II.B.1)

The college provides a college catalog for its constituencies with precise, accurate, and current information including general information, degree and certificate requirements, major policies affecting students, and the locations or publications where other policies may be found. (II.B.2)

The college engages in planning and establishes decision-making priorities based on student educational needs, SLOs, and research on student demographics. Vocational programs are reviewed on a two-year cycle and academic disciplines on a six-year cycle.

When undergoing a program review, a “Data and Student Profile” packet is given to each discipline and includes 1) five-year WSCH / FTES trends; 2) student characteristics and 3) enrollment and student outcomes data. This information is used to validate or challenge faculty beliefs about students and their needs. Also noted are areas in which improvements can be made and strategies for possible new directions for the program. Goals are developed and rubrics are incorporated into the assessment process. (II.B.3)

New students may file an application online and indicate which support services they are interested in. All new students participate in an online orientation that introduces them to many aspects of the college and all the opportunities available for assistance. Once classes begin, students are provided follow-up services in the form of early alert notices from their instructors who indicate various problems and make referrals to appropriate services. Students who have not identified majors or who are placed on academic probation are also contacted and referred to counseling services. (II.B.3.a)

Some online student support services are provided for students. The most recent program review of Admissions and Records indicated some issues with the online registration system which have since been resolved. Online services include online application and registration, online orientation, online financial aid support, online advising, and the library web site.

The college offers most of its courses on-site with additional courses offered at fourteen local high schools. (II.B.3.a)

The college offers an Associated Students Organization, student clubs, Personal Development courses, and a service learning program. The college has recognized that a relatively small number of students participate in student activities outside the classroom, and the Student Success Initiative has identified this challenge as a priority to address. (II.B.3.b)

The college counseling program is one of the distinct strengths of the institution. The most recent program review of this department indicates a very strong department with good student success. Counseling services include academic, career, and personal counseling services that promote a successful educational experience for students. The college web site indicates that not all counseling services are available online. For specials populations, the college provides specialized counseling programs, such as EOPS, Disabled Students Program, and International Student Program. (II.B.3.c)

The Associated Students Organization web site aligns with the description in the *Self-Study Report*, indicating a wide variety of chartered clubs and an active student organization. The college has developed a *Student Equity Plan* that needs to be modified and implemented. Written in 2005, this plan incorporates data on student demographics

as well as the *Student Success Plan*. The goals of the *Student Equity Plan* appear to be the same as in the *Student Success Plan*. (II.B.3.d)

Every six years, assessment validations are required to ensure that placement tests given to students are fair, accurate, and contain minimal cultural or linguistic biases. The Assessment Office manages the enforcement of all of the seventy-eight pre-requisites for courses. (II.B.3.e)

The Admissions Office complies with state and district policies on retention and destruction of student records. The California Education Code provides state policy on the classification of student records as permanent or non-permanent and the regulations for destruction of non-permanent records. Each semester, all permanent student records not saved on the district mainframe computer are placed into a document imaging system in use since Fall 1999 and containing a total of 804,550 records with 1,510,088 pages. For additional security, a copy of the records on the document imaging system is maintained by an off-site vendor. (II.B.3.f)

The college evaluates student support services on a regular basis to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. The most recent program review noted both areas of success and of concern. The college is using the data from the program review process, as well as student learning outcomes, to address areas of concern. For example, the college recognizes that data is needed to develop information on program completers who do not transfer. (II.B.3.f)

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

The library collection includes 103,000 print volumes (94,000 titles), over 200 periodical subscriptions, and approximately 11,000 electronic books accessible through the online library catalog. Eleven electronic databases provide online access to thousands of online periodical articles. The library web site is the gateway to library services for campus and remote users, offering online access to print holdings, database collections, and other library instruction services. The majority of the print collection is over 20 years old. The library's collection development plan includes de-selection on a small scale (1,000 volumes per year) so as to avoid overwhelming limited staff. The library facility was built in the 1960s and expanded in the 1970s; it is dated, with open areas sectioned off with the old card catalog and file cabinets to provide secure areas for reference materials. The book stacks have narrow aisles and a small elevator for book trucks and wheelchairs. The library's operational budget is small for expected services and primarily consists of categorical funding. Other learning support services, including the Learning Center, and the Media Center/Instructional Technology area, have recently hired new managers, so no program reviews have yet been undertaken until these new employees gain their footing in a new environment. The Learning Center does distribute a student satisfaction survey twice a semester to gather data on effectiveness. The library has done some collaborative work with faculty on SLOs and has developed them for the Library Science 102 course. (II.C.1)

Librarians regularly solicit input from faculty on curricular needs via newsletters, adjunct orientations, and direct solicitation. A librarian's signature is required for any new or updated curriculum. The library periodically distributes user surveys to indicate student views on adequacy of library collection and services; results are generally positive. The library has begun investigating effectiveness of its instruction sessions by giving pre-and post-tests to certain classes, with instructor collaboration. Beyond piloting assessments for instruction sessions, evidence of the quality of library success in assisting students with research needs is largely anecdotal. The Learning Center solicits input from faculty via announcements at faculty and adjunct faculty orientations, posts in a weekly newsletter, and direct solicitations. The manager overseeing the media center and information technology is a new hire, thus formal evidence of faculty involvement with this unit's activities and services was not available. (II.C.1.a)

In 2003-2004, librarians provided 96 library orientations to classes. These sessions were delivered in an enhanced tour format, or in a campus classroom, as there has been no designated space for such instruction in the library. Library Science 102, Internet Research Methods, is a one-unit course taught once per semester, serving approximately 20 students each session. Library Science 101 (Library Research Methods) has not been taught in some time and is not slated to be taught, despite its appearance in the school catalog. Information competency on campus is addressed primarily through the library, although some courses across the curriculum do have research components. A draft Information Competency Validation document was created years ago by interested faculty, but it was never formally implemented. (II.C.1.b)

Library business hours vary by semester. Spring 2007 hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Fridays, totaling approximately 50 hours per week. There is accommodation for some Saturday hours around exam periods and end-of-term periods. Some students are vocal that business hours are inadequate. The library web page provides remote access to the library catalog, electronic databases, and library instructional resources. The library catalog uses the same software as the LACCD and includes holdings for all nine LACCD colleges; students may use the library's interlibrary loan service to access materials from the sister colleges. Twenty-four library computers near the reference area provide students internet access for research purposes. The Learning Center has a web page listing its services and is open on weekdays. An open computer lab of 65 machines is overseen by the Learning Center, and another open computer lab of 30 machines is slated for installation in the library. (II.C.1.c)

Library security is hampered by insufficient classified staffing, which is necessary to supervise the activities in a large building, and poor building design that includes double door exits on several perimeter walls. In addition, the open architecture has resulted in the reference section having its own secured area, as does the book stack area. Instructional Technology has six staff members besides the manager, covering day and evening hours. The Media Center has one staff member. IT/Media also has two office workers. Faculty members complain about the long wait for IT service. The IT servers are kept in a

relatively low-security area, having locked doors but windows nearby as well as doors to the outside. (II.C.1.d)

The library uses the SIRSI/Dynix library automation system, which provides its public catalog module, circulation module, and cataloging module. This same system is used by all LACCD libraries, and is maintained off-site at another campus. SIRSI/Dynix is a relatively new system recently implemented by the district, and not all modules have been brought online as yet. The library uses the SIRSI/Dynix system to access a catalog record database that enables the technical services librarian to catalog materials into the online library system. (II.C.1.e)

The library issues periodic student surveys for evaluating user satisfaction, and has used the information to accommodate student requests. The library program review from December 2004 indicates an unstable and inadequate budget for materials purchases and licensing for a student body of the size of LAPC. The Learning Center distributes student satisfaction surveys twice per semester, and these have been used to update services and activities to better accommodate student needs. Activities in the Learning Center have been largely funded by grants which have since ended, and institutionalized funding has been increased. (II.C.2)

## **Conclusions**

Based on a review of the Self-Study Report and evidentiary documents, and interviews with LAPC faculty and staff, the team concluded that the college is substantially in compliance with this Standard.

The college has adequately covered all topics in this standard. The college has begun the SLO process and has achieved widespread commitment of faculty members. The process needs to continue and be expanded to all of the areas of the campus including the student services area. Faculty members use many different modalities of instruction, but still need to expand the distance education offerings. Additional training in instructional technology is needed for faculty.

The previous accreditation review noted a concern that the college had scattered physical locations of support services that made for confusing and inconvenient Student Services. Part of the answer to this has been the expansion of on-line support services. Students can participate in an on-line orientation whereby required additional services can be identified through the matriculation process. Another answer has been to redesign the Information Desk located in the lobby area of the administration building. Information is now more visible and the area is staffed with knowledgeable student assistants.

Additionally, Student Services staffing has remained stable over the last several years thus enabling the continuity of high-level programming and increased student retention.

As stated above, the library seems to be adequately serving its student population. It is hoped that the recent addition of a fifth librarian position will aid in information

competency efforts as well as collection development efforts. The new library building should address security issues and ADA compliance issues, provide easier access to the print collection, and provide the formal library instruction area missing in the current structure.

The library budget is very small in comparison to the population it must serve, and is primarily based on categorical funding rather than campus base budget. This does not show campus commitment to building solid print and electronic collections that will effectively serve changing student needs. Notably, de-selection of print materials is done on a small scale so as not to overwhelm the small library staff; this has led to a large number of volumes held, but these may well be too old for student use.

Full-time classified staffing of the library is skeletal at best, numbering half of that found in the other LACCD colleges of comparable size. Absences are covered by devoted employees who adjust their schedules at the last minute to provide service despite gaps in coverage. Increased staffing would enable the library to successfully implement collection development on a broad scale and perform some basic library services, such as covering service desks regularly and providing quality services via telephone.

### **Commendations**

6. The Student Success Committee is commended for its successful Student Success Mini-Conference and the college faculty's commitment to better serve the changing demographics of the college's students.
7. The faculty is commended for its commitment to teaching and learning in an administrative environment historically challenged by considerable turnover.
8. The faculty is commended for being the driving force behind the implementation of SLOs.
9. The librarians and library staff are commended for their efforts to provide adequate library collections and services despite budgetary constraints, limited staffing, and a challenging facilities environment.
10. The Learning Center is commended for its success in securing grants, and for continuing to provide needed student support services.

### **Recommendations**

3. Faculty development programs in instructional technology need to be offered in order to enable faculty to expand the Distance Education course offerings. (IIA.2.d)
4. The college needs to develop a comprehensive system to monitor progress and quality of its Student Learning Outcomes effort so that a larger and significant number of courses will have fully completed the assessment cycle and the results used to improve



institutional effectiveness. (IIA.2.b, IIA.2.e, IIA.2.f)

### STANDARD III

#### RESOURCES

#### Responses to Recommendations of the Previous Team related to Standard III

**8.1 *It is recommended that the College develop a long-term plan for use of its agricultural lands that supports fiscal viability through strategies such as community partnerships, while ensuring that the primary functions of this unique resource remain focused on goals directly linked to the Educational Master Plan. (Standards 8.5, 3B.3)***

The college is in the process of implementing its *Facilities Master Plan*. Related to agricultural resources, this plan calls for the expansion of the Equestrian Education Center, improvements to the college's ecological preserve, the development of a new animal science unit to address the needs of both the community and instructional needs, a vineyard that will enable the college to address the emergence of viticulture as a significant industry in Los Angeles County, enhanced horticultural facilities, and Agricultural Education opportunities for the general public that will both generate funds for the college and encourage agri-tourism.

The college has substantially addressed this prior recommendation.

**9.1 *Consideration should be given to effecting modifications of the District Budget Allocation Model to accommodate and allow for different conditions and needs among the College and the District Office, such as unique salary and personnel impacts, economies of scale, Campus acreage and facilities, and the need to maintain an appropriate District Contingency Reserve. (Standards 9A.2, 9A.4)***

The district has adopted a new budget allocation model that was approved by the Board of Trustees in February 2007. The model uses the state-funding formula to distribute general revenues to the colleges. It allows for further decentralization of resources and functions and includes an allocation for the small colleges over the amount prescribed in the state formula. The college has benefited from this new model. The model provides resources for district-wide services, district office functions, and a district-wide reserve of 3.5% of total unrestricted general fund revenue.

The college has substantially addressed this prior recommendation.

**9.2 *Long-term financial obligations should be thoroughly identified and a funding plan developed to address these financial liabilities. (Standard 9C.1)***

The significant long-term financial liability of the college is the long-term cost of providing retiree health benefits. The District has entered into a creative collective bargaining agreement to begin addressing this liability district-wide. While this initial and very recent step is a positive development and may prove to be a long-term solution, the college should monitor this situation carefully and regularly to assure that out-year obligations are met without significant impact on the financial health of the institution.

The college has substantially addressed this prior recommendation.

### **General Observations**

LAPC has prepared a comprehensive and well written *Self-Study Report* on this standard. The four standard areas contain supporting evidence and are candid. It appears that the college has worked diligently to address Standard III. The college has made significant progress from a fiscal perspective and has hired 21 new faculty members in spring and fall 2006. Faculty members play a significant role in the selection of new full-time faculty members. The Faculty Position Priority Committee has implemented an analytical approach to faculty hiring that is resulting in a harmonious balance among the college disciplines. As articulated in the *Self-Study Report*, the district, the Personnel Commission, and the collective bargaining agreements provide comprehensive personnel policies and procedures which are readily available on the district Web site and are in compliance with state and federal laws. (III.A.3)

The *Self-Study Report* states that the college embraces equity and diversity and actively seeks ways to meet the needs of the faculty, staff and administrators. The college fosters understanding of equity and diversity through the college's staff development programs, departments, Academic Senate, Department Council, PCC, and senior staff. The campus has a *Student Equity Plan* and recently formed a Diversity Committee chaired by the Compliance Officer. The ethnicity and gender of all applicants for faculty and staff positions are recorded on the *Evidence of Effort College Report*. The *Pierce College Equity and Diversity Policies, Practices, Programs and Services* provides comprehensive information for administrators, faculty, and staff, and is contained in *Building a Stronger Community Project* that was prepared by the College Compliance Office in November 2005. (III.A.3, III.A.4)

The college reports that it is moving in a very positive direction with regard to physical resources including facilities, equipment, land, and other assets that support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness. It cites a number of planning efforts, documents, and processes to assert that it meets or exceeds the requirements of this standard. The planned and anticipated construction of the Proposition A and AA local bond projects, State Capital Outlay projects, and the equipment improvements accomplished through Block Grant and other funding means are noted as examples of its acceptable performance with regard to this standard. (III.B.) The college points to the work of its administration, Work Environment Committee, and Maintenance and Operations Department as contributors to a safe and well-functioning

physical environment in general. The college has recently committed a significant amount of funding for the replacement of obsolete and broken equipment. (III.B.1.)

The *Self-Study Report* notes the widespread participation of college and district constituencies in various planning efforts as well as the existence of the *Educational Master Plan*, the *Facilities Master Plan*, the *Technology Plan*, Prop A/AA Bond Program, and block grant allocation by the PCC as proof of meeting this standard. (III.B.1.a)

The Work Environment Committee through its chair directs concerns and recommendations to the President, and the work of the Plant Facilities Department and the LACCD Sheriff's College Bureau are noted in support of the college's acceptable performance on this standard. (III.B.1.b.)

The college has a *Facilities Master Plan* (2000-05), prepares an annual space inventory report for the State, and has submitted a number of IPP's and FPP's to the State Chancellor's Office for future construction based on its projected needs and utilization data. The college cites multiple planning documents, including a *Facilities Master Plan*, as evidence of meeting this standard. (III.B.2.a, III.B.2.b.)

Although the negative reaction of college neighbors and the local community to the college's previous real estate development plans have been mitigated, the college continues to struggle with the complex tensions inherent to this issue, i.e. long-term fiscal viability, community partnerships, and programmatic connection to the goals of the *Educational Master Plan*.

Although the agricultural science department has attempted some programmatic changes and the Enterprise Unit has generated significant grant and enterprise funding to invest in the future of the proposed farm enterprises, there is no agreement on the long-term plan for this land. The surrounding agricultural community appears to be satisfied with the status quo, but it does not appear to have a long-term commitment to financially supporting the costs of maintaining open or agriculturally functioning land at a profitable or balanced level.

Between 2000 and 2006, the college made a significant investment in computer technology in all areas of the college including improvements to the network backbone, new faculty and staff computers, open and departmental computer facilities for students, use of technology as an instructional tool, and training for technology support staff, faculty, and classified staff.

The college has adequately addressed the needs of students for quality training in the effective application of information technology through several means including the Learning Center, Computer Applications and Office Technologies, and Computer Science and Information Technologies. The college further cites training that has been funded and offered through the college's most recent Title III grant. Furthermore, departments with discipline-specific labs as well as the library offer some level of information technology application instruction and training for students.

The *Self-Study Report* identifies the existence of a *Technology Plan* and various funding streams, Block Grant, VTEA, and unrestricted funds that are used to meet the college's obligations under this element of the standard, the systematic planning, acquiring, maintaining, upgrading, or replacing of technology infrastructure and equipment. The *Self-Study Report* identifies the college's Manager of Information Technology, the InfoTech Department, and the college's Technology Advisory Committee as primarily responsible for college-wide planning and action on this standard.

While the *Self-Study Report* identifies a number of opportunities for faculty and staff to be trained in technology applications, it ultimately concludes that "The college would benefit from a more comprehensive assessment of training needs matched with appropriate training resources. The college also needs to develop an integrated training schedule and identify funding resources..."

Within the last year the college has created and filled a managerial position in information technology to increase the overall institutional knowledge and talent in this area. Coupled with the emergence of a relatively new Educational Technology Committee working under the auspices of the Academic Senate, the college appears to be preparing itself to meet the challenges of this standard.

The college has experienced outstanding growth in enrollment and unrestricted budget. It has consistently maintained a sizeable ending balance, while meeting all of its high-priority needs. The college needs to improve its abilities to review its fiscal processes and financial requests.

The college has done a wonderful job in collecting and evaluating information on student achievement. The Office of Institutional Research is commended on the quality of information provided in the *Pierce College Fact Book*.

Under the long-term financial obligations, the multi-million dollar contract with the Los Angeles Metropolitan Authorities has allowed the college to increase its ending balance reserve. Through the District Budget Committee, the district has established a process to make the colleges accountable when a college is in financial duress. The annual goals established by the college are combined with longer range financial plans and budgets for 2006-2007.

## **Findings and Evidence**

### **A. Human Resources**

The hiring process for each group of employees, including full-time and part-time faculty, classified staff, and administrators is clearly defined and structured to ensure the selection of appropriate highly qualified individuals. In 2001-02, the Pierce College Academic Senate adopted faculty hiring guidelines that describe the role of the Faculty Position Priority Committee (FPPC), the process for evaluating employment eligibility, establishment of the hiring committee, creation of the position announcements, and the selection process. The FPPC

plays an essential shared governance role in recommending faculty staffing. Hiring was limited for several years due to student enrollment and budget declines. More recently, the hiring of full-time faculty has started to keep pace with the growth of many campus departments and with faculty retirements. (III.A.1, III.A.1.a, III.A.1.b, III.A.2)

For certificated administrative positions, the college proposes specific hiring criteria. The minimum educational requirement is a master's degree, and most certificated administrative positions require teaching and/or administrative experience. The district develops and maintains class specifications, and the Board of Trustees determines the duties to be performed and prerequisite education and experience. The LACCD Personnel Commission, which operates under the guidelines of the State of California Merit System, oversees the hiring of all classified employees. (III.A.1, III.A.1.d)

The Compliance Officer and the college Personnel Department support departments throughout the hiring process. For faculty hiring, a hiring training session is required of all hiring committee members. The Academic Senate developed faculty hiring procedures and the college President approved them. The District's Human Resources Department established procedures to guide the college's hiring process. The college posts its job announcements on the *California Community College Registry* and in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* as well as in other discipline-specific publications. (III.A.1.a)

The district, the Personnel Commission, and the collective bargaining agreements provide comprehensive personnel policies and procedures which are readily available on the district Web site. The district provides training sessions to all supervisors, managers, department chairs, administrators, and other leaders regarding fairness in employment and related matters. The college hired 21 new full-time faculty during spring and fall 2006. Faculty members have indicated that the new faculty evaluation procedures contained in the 2005-2008 Agreement between the LACCD and the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild Local 1521, CFT/AFT, AFLCIO (Article 19, page 61) are a considerable improvement over the previous system. The faculty evaluation process addresses many of the key elements that help ensure positive student learning outcomes. The November 2005 motion adopted by the Academic Senate further supports the importance of evaluating faculty members based on their contributions to student access. The *Pierce College Faculty Handbook* is published to assist new faculty hires. (III.A.1.b, III.A.1.c, III.A.2, III.A.3, III.A.3.a)

The college has a written code of professional ethics for all of its personnel provided by the Ethics Committee of the Academic Senate. The college fosters ethical behavior in its employees by means of regular meetings of the Ethics Committee, regular department meetings, and training sessions provided by the Compliance Officer. (III.A.1.d)

Under the direction of the College Compliance Officer, the college provides security and confidentiality of employee and prospective employee records. Each employee is informed of his/her right to access his/her personnel records, and the district's new SAP Human Resources system provides an employee self-service component that provides online access to personnel files. (III.A.3.b)

The college embraces equity, diversity, and fairness in all of its employment practices. *The Pierce College Equity and Diversity Policies, Practices, Programs and Services* provides comprehensive information for administrators, faculty, and staff as is contained in *Building a Stronger Community Project* that was prepared by the College Compliance Office in November 2005. The campus has a *Student Equity Plan* and recently formed a Diversity Committee chaired by the Compliance Officer. There is a concerted effort to address the concerns of equity and diversity through the *Student Equity Plan* and the Diversity Committee. The college must work on integrating the equity plan and the diversity report campus-wide at all levels. (III.A.4.a, III.A.4.b)

The college has been successful in establishing and maintaining an attractive, friendly work environment. This “nurturing college” approach has helped institutionalize the college’s commitment to provide an attractive and inviting learning environment. The district, Personnel Commission, and union agreement clauses provide extensive guidelines and requirements in support of employee rights and fair treatment. (III.A.4.c)

Faculty and staff find the professional development opportunities useful and enriching. The Professional Development Committee and administration provide activities and training based on evaluations, faculty requests, and information gained from department meetings. There is an ongoing dialogue between the Professional Development Committee and administration to ensure that the professional development activities meet the needs of the faculty and staff. Faculty members attend discipline-specific workshops and lectures, present academic research, and participate in conferences. The administrators and classified staff participate in numerous orientation and training programs, conferences, and special meetings that increase their knowledge, and provide essential technical training. (III.A.5.a, III.A.5.b)

The college has a well-defined hiring system for new faculty, staff and administrators. The PCC reviews all hiring proposals, and it considers requests in conjunction with departmental needs and fiscal resources. The Academic Senate, the PCC, and the administration work as a team to determine the best combination of staffing within available financial resources. (III.A.6)

## **B. Physical Resources**

A tour of the campus, a review of the major planning documents, and numerous conversations with college personnel and students provide evidence of an aging inventory of instructional, student service, and administrative buildings including open spaces like the agricultural lands, botanical gardens, roads, and parking lots in need of major remodeling or renovation; yet it is apparent that the college makes excellent use of its aging physical plant. (III.B)

After what appears to have been a number of years of very minimal capital improvements as a result of enrollment losses and financial crisis, the college is moving in a very positive direction with regard to physical resources including facilities, equipment, land, and other assets that support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness. The college is in the midst of numerous construction projects to improve its performance on this standard. While it has a long way to go, some new

buildings such as the College Services building, a remodeled and well-functioning Learning Center with an open access student computer lab, the Equestrian Center, the Botanical Garden expansion, the renovation of the former bookstore, the “in progress” Police Services building, parking lot renovations, and the much anticipated ground breaking for a new science complex are some of the tangible indicators that the college meets this standard. (III.B.)

The college has spent approximately \$400,000 over the past two years on campus-wide equipment needs, primarily replacing unsafe and unusable existing inventory. An open interview with the PCC confirmed that it annually reviews equipment requests. (III.B.1.)

There appear to be ongoing planning efforts and notable participation of the various college and district constituencies in these planning efforts as demonstrated by the existence of the *Educational Master Plan*, the *Facilities Master Plan*, the *Technology Plan*, Prop A/AA Bond Program, and Block Grant allocation recommendations by the PCC, but the interconnectedness of the various planning efforts is less obvious, and the currency of some of these plans is questionable. (III.B.2.a)

The most recent bond measures have brought a significant infusion of capital funding to the college. The college also allocates unrestricted, restricted, State Block Grants, and State Capital Outlay funding in discreet or combined means to meet this standard as verified by shared governance leaders, budgets, and committee minutes. (III.B.1.a.)

The Work Environment Committee through its chair recommends directly to the President as confirmed by the meeting minutes and an interview with committee members. The college is in the midst of constructing a new building to house its contracted police function. (III.B.1.b)

The college has numerous planning processes in various degrees of development and coordination that direct the acquisition, development and maintenance of its physical resources including facilities, equipment, land, and other assets for the purpose of supporting student learning programs and services and improving institutional effectiveness as evidenced by the dated but most recent versions of the *Educational Master Plan*, the *Facilities Master Plan*, the *Technology Plan*, the Prop A/AA Bond Program, and sundry other plans. (III.B.2, III.B.2.a, III.B.2.b)

One of the college’s most concrete early responses, the Equestrian Center, has been significantly reduced as a result of operational and fiscal issues. The college has yet to benchmark the financial performance of its multiple instructional and enterprise activities on its agricultural acreage making any long-term financial analysis impossible. In short, the agricultural lands, their functions, costs and revenues are not viewed as a single measurable cost center. Regrettably, interviews with key stakeholders revealed that the college has a new source of tension around its agricultural lands, internal competition and conflicts among various college stakeholders who hold different visions for its future. (III.B, III.B.1.b, III.B.2)

### C. Technology Resources

Under the direction of the Manager of College Information Systems, the Information Technology Department (InfoTech) manages the instructional and administrative network backbones and computers. The Manager of College Information Systems and the Vice President of Administrative Services are responsible for planning and implementing major computer technology projects, researching equipment and software, and maintaining technologies. (III.C.1)

Interviews with key staff, review of network and equipment, and visits to critical tech rooms revealed a number of technology planning and infrastructure issues, but the college through its committee structure, including the newly constituted Senate Educational Technology Committee, is moving to a more coherent campus dialog and plan for technology solutions. Advancements in classroom technologies have been provided by the college's Title III staff and funds. This support will end in September, 2007. (III.C.1)

Between 2000 and 2006, the college undertook major infrastructure projects such as installation of a new core switch and repeater switches, and fiber between switches, installation of cable TV and internet access, and upgrades to the video conferencing station. Since 2000, the number of computers on campus increased from approximately 400 to almost 2,200. Most full-time faculty and staff now have access to the network via a computer at their worksite, new labs were built, and existing labs were expanded and upgraded to extend the reach of technology for students. There are plans to replicate the smart classrooms and mobile carts that have been added to various buildings and departments around the college. Planning efforts that were cited in the report were verified by staff and documents on campus. (III.C.1)

The college provides students, faculty, and staff a broad range of technological equipment, software applications, services, and resources. The Educational Technology Committee (sub-committee of academic senate) is currently working on developing a process/plan to help provide support for Distance Education and technology needs across the campus. Development of expanded online and distance learning programs is a high priority for the college. (III.C.1.a, III.C.1.b)

Visits to various instructional labs, the library, and the Learning Center, confirm that students have access to quality instruction, instructors, and support staff who provide quality training in the effective application of information technology. Plans to make additional Learning Center space and computers available in the library enjoy staff and student support. Most faculty, staff, administrators, and students reported the need to increase the number of computer stations and support available to students at the college. (III.C.1.b)

While the *Self-Study Report's* description of the availability and accessibility of student training is easily verified, it appears that the quality and availability for staff and faculty training is more problematic. While the quality of what has been offered was evaluated positively, most agreed that the training and access to it has been more random, less available, and not as well planned. The college accurately advises itself to adopt "a more



comprehensive assessment of training needs matched with appropriate training resources. The college also needs to develop an integrated training schedule and identify funding resources...” (III.C.1.c)

The recent hiring of a new manager in the InfoTech area and the emergence of a fairly new Educational Technology Committee under the auspices of the Academic Senate are relatively new developments that may change how the college attempts to meet the challenges of this standard. Interviews with the new manager of InfoTech revealed that he has a clear sense of the information technology application training challenges at the college. Nevertheless, in all corners of the institution college personnel shared statements about the need to develop an operational plan to deal with technological needs on the campus to help provide a successful distance education program and improve technical efficiency. (III.C.1.d) (III.C.2)

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

The college needs to improve its abilities to review fiscal processes and major financial requests. As a solution it is reestablishing the college budget committee. The college has established its *Strategic Plan* and is working on a plan for 2007-08 to integrate the planning with the resources needed to address it. The budget committee has been formed but their first meeting was during the visit of the accreditation team. They have yet to establish their goals and objectives. (III.D)

The college *Strategic Plan* was developed in 2007 coordinating the eight State goals and those of the LACCD. Eight college goals have been identified: excellent programs, student readiness/success, cultural and pedagogical diversity, effective use of technology, enhance community relations, fiscal stability, campus facility master plan, and effective governance. (III.D.1)

The yearly college goals are based on the President’s and Vice Presidents’ goals and objectives in conjunction with the different departments of the college. The college is in the process of implementing, in conjunction with program review, a process to integrate planning and budgeting. The PCC is the shared governance body that assures that appropriate budgetary processes and recommendations occur. (III.D.1.a)

The college prepares its annual budget based on the allocation that it receives from the district office. Each college is allowed to carry over its ending balance. The college balances its budget using part of the ending balance from the prior year. The college has experienced considerable growth during the last few years and this has allowed it to have a healthy ending balance and the resources necessary to address its educational goals. The college administration prepares monthly financial statements and tracks its enrollment as well as college finances. The financial updates are shared with the PCC. (III.D.1.b)

Short-range financial plans should consider long-range financial priorities to assure financial stability. The college has been able to liquidate its long-term debt with Proposition AA. The college has an adequate ending balance and has been able to

support student learning and enrollment growth initiatives. The college has self-identified the need for operational plans to be established at the departmental level. (III.D.1.c)

The district has approved a new budget allocation model in February of 2007 for the development of the yearly operational budget. The intention is to be able to maximize revenue through enrollment management and to be able to implement a multi-year enrollment management and fiscal plan. This plan was developed by the different constituencies in the district and has been approved by the Board of Trustees. Furthermore, the district changed its financial and human resources software. The district and colleges are working on obtaining more reports. The financial system has been stabilized. (III.D.2, III.D.2.a)

The audits for 2001-02, 2002-03, and 2004-05 were issued and were analyzed by external auditors. This is a great achievement for an institution of the size of the LACCD. There were minor compliance findings for some special projects and the district addressed them as it deemed appropriate. A management letter is incorporated in the audit and the district moves to implement the suggestions each year. For the 2004-05 due to the implementation of the new financial and human resources software, several issues common to new implementations are still to be addressed. The audit for 2005-06 will be presented to the Board on March 21, 2007 and was not available for review. (III.D.2.b)

The district is self-insured for workers compensation claims under \$750,000 for each workers' compensation claim. The district is also self-insured for \$500,000 for each liability claim and \$1,000,000 for employment practices. The district has established sufficient reserves to cover its claims according to annual reports provided by the third-party claims administrator for workers' compensation and property liability. By policy, the district has increased its contingency to 3.5% for unforeseen occurrences and at the same time has established a 1% reserve in the individual colleges, thus producing at least a 4.5% reserve district-wide. In practice, reserve funds exceed this 4.5% figure. (III.D.2.d, III.D.2.e)

The district contracts with external auditors for the audit of the districts funds; this includes financial aid, grants, externally funding programs, contractual relationships, and bookstore and student activities. The college has received unqualified audit reviews for the last three years. In the compliance audits, due to the numerous requirements for special funds, a series of recommendations were issued by the external auditors. The auditors did not deem the recommendations material, so they did not alter their unqualified opinion. The district contracts for and conducts audits on the bond series of Proposition A and AA. The district has received an unqualified opinion on the utilization of the bond proceeds. The college hires an independent auditor for the college Foundation. (III.D.2.d)

The internal control processes in the district and college are sufficient to maintain the integrity of the college. The college is in compliance with district regulations, policies

and procedures. The annual audit also reviews the completeness and accuracy of the information provided. (III.D.2.e)

The college has authority to approve purchase orders up to \$5,000. The district has procedures to route all other purchase orders through a regional procurement specialist which provides services for three colleges within the district. Any amounts that need to go through the bidding process are handled by the district office, and complies with district standards. (III.D.2.f)

The institution has been able to evaluate all of its financial management processes during the implementation of the SAP financial and human resources systems. The district and the colleges meet regularly. At the college level, the PCC also meets on a regular schedule. (III.D.2.g)

The college and the district have engaged in an analysis of their business practices for operational success. Evidence for the level of decentralization or delineation of functions for financial planning and budget development has been addressed through the new budget allocation model. A list of bond projects for the college totaling approximately \$300 million for facilities construction and improvement was provided. The district has settled bargaining agreements for 2006-07, including the establishment of a unique long-term reserve derived from a portion of the cost-of-living adjustment designated to address retiree health benefit liability. The district's total liability as of July 1, 2005 was \$623,247,741. (III.D.3)

## **Conclusions**

Based on a review of the *Self-Study Report* and evidentiary documents, and interviews with LAPC faculty and staff, the team concluded that the college is substantially in compliance with this Standard.

The team encourages the college to develop a technology plan that articulates institutional priorities in addressing technology needs, especially the growth in its distance education program. The college's plans and commitment to technology have been slowed by past enrollment and fiscal issues, but the faculty has demonstrated a new level of interest in this area of the college. The college appears to be ready to engage in serious long-term planning and technology investment as a result of faculty interest and available funding. In addition, the college must work collaboratively to improve and develop needs assessments for additional faculty positions to help increase the number of full-time faculty at the college to help maintain and support academic/instructional/vocational programs efficiently.

The college made significant strides in considering options for its significant agricultural lands, but it needs to continue the dialog to test the long-term financial viability of the plans. The college, as a whole, in collaboration with the various stakeholders needs to adopt a commonly understood plan of action. Assessing the financial status of the current instructional and enterprise functions on the property is a necessary first step to reaching a common plan. The considerable land holdings are both an institutional asset

and liability that warrant close examination and transparent planning by the college community.

The college is at an early stage of coordinating the availability and training opportunities for information technology, and because its attention is divided among numerous college-wide initiatives, some clear agreement on how to coordinate and direct the planning and work of the various governance committees and operational units that have a stake in information technology and training is advised to ensure continued progress on meeting this standard in an efficient and effective manner.

### **Commendations:**

11. The Office of Institutional Research is commended on the quality of information provided in the *Pierce College Fact Book* that assists the college in developing effective SLOs.
12. The Academic Senate is commended for its role in developing and adopting faculty hiring guidelines that result in strategic, fair, and equitable hiring of full-time faculty for the benefit of student learning.
13. The college is commended for incorporating SLOs into the formal evaluation processes for faculty members.
14. The college faculty, administration and staff are commended for their perseverance and positive attitude in working together and sustaining the college through challenging times. The team has experienced the tangible pride and joy of the faculty, administrators and staff in working at Pierce College.
15. The college is commended for expanding its enrollment, thereby increasing educational opportunity and access for students.
16. The college is commended for its initial efforts to improve its physical plant, including the development of the botanical gardens, the opening of the college village, the remodeling of the former bookstore, and the imminent ground-breaking for a new science building.
17. The facilities and custodial staff is commended for its extraordinary efforts to create a clean and functioning learning environment in an aging facility.

### **Recommendations**

5. The District should provide leadership in supporting the progress toward incorporating and achieving stated SLOs as a component of faculty evaluation. (III.A.1.c)

6. The college, in concert with the District, should develop a comprehensive long-term plan for addressing the backlog of deferred maintenance projects which, if left unattended, may compromise the quality of the student learning environment. (III.B.1a, III.B.1b)
7. The college should build on the current technology proposal with input from all constituencies to develop a technology plan to articulate institutional priorities in addressing technology needs. A primary focus should be expanding the distance education (DE) program, improving student learning outcomes, and providing technical support for faculty and students (III.C.1.a).
8. The college should closely monitor in future years the success of the District's plan for addressing retiree health benefit liability to assure that out-year obligations are met without significant impact on the financial health of the institution. (III.D.1c).

## **STANDARD IV**

### **LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

#### **Responses to Recommendations of the Previous Team related to Standard IV**

***10.1 It is recommended that the Los Angeles Community College District clearly articulate its District-College decentralized governance process, and the specific role of the Chancellor's Cabinet, in policy or regulation. (Standards 10C.3)***

The District, in consultation with the college, has adopted a District Service Decentralization Plan and is in the initial stages of implementation.

The college has substantially addressed this prior recommendation.

#### **General Observations**

The College attempts to include all parties in the discussion of the college's operation and future and shared governance is not only supported but is ingrained into the college's culture. There is a positive relationship between the attitude of employees and their being included in such discussions. The long-term stability of the faculty has created a sustained culture in spite of the numerous changes in the college's leadership. The implementation of a planning culture in the college can assist the needs of leadership stability. The current college leaders are committed to improving the stability of the leadership and embrace the campus culture of shared governance.

The use of research data is being accepted by the college under the encouragement of the President and the Vice Presidents. The use of such information is starting to bubble up to

the district level and the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees can support this effort through the inclusion of research reports as part of its Board agendas.

Financial stability and the ability to properly fund student learning programs in the future is not a current concern due to increasing enrollment and a large financial fund balance. However, the district maintains a minimal financial reserve. Additional district investigation needs to be conducted to determine how the district can fund unmet needs as well as future improvements. Board of Trustees' leadership is needed in this matter and the Board's willingness to delay infrastructure improvements for a possible future bond may adversely affect student learning due to classrooms and outside instructional spaces not being properly maintained.

The college Foundation is an important part of the college and is fully integrated in the coordination and cooperation with various college programs, thus facilitating not only fund raising but also outreach and academic improvements. The Foundation participates in and has access to the college administration as well as all departments of the college.

The college's Associated Students Organization is a healthy and well-funded organization with motivated students in the lead. Students are represented on the critical campus committees and are respected members of such committees.

## **Findings and Evidence**

### **A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes**

College leaders recognize and utilize the contributions of its leadership team throughout the organization for continuous improvement of the college. Governance roles facilitate decisions that support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness as evidenced by the college's initiating a planning process. The college recognizes that ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization enables the institution to identify institutional values, set and achieve goals, learn, and improve.

College leaders and faculty have created an environment for innovation and institutional excellence. The college encourages its staff, faculty, administrators, and students, no matter what their official titles, to take initiative in improving the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved. The decentralized approach of the district office to provide services rather than command and control of the college supports this environment and is further supported by the college's leadership team. The culture created by the core of long-term faculty has also benefited student learning successes. (IV.A.1)

The college has various policies & procedures providing for faculty, staff, administrators, and students participation in the decision-making processes. Shared governance is part of the college's culture. The college is very inclusive in its decision-making process. The faculty, administrators, students, and staff have a substantive role in institutional governance and exercise a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning, and

budget. The lines of communication between various groups need to be clarified. The college relies on faculty, its academic senate, the curriculum committee, and academic administrators for recommendations about student learning programs and services. (IV.A.2, IV.A.2.a, IV.A.2.b)

The District's Board of Trustees and the college's administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the college. These processes facilitate extensive communication among the college's constituencies through numerous advisory committees. (IV.A.3)

The college agrees to comply with the Accrediting Commission standards, policies, and guidelines, and Commission requirements for public disclosure, *Self-Study Report* and other reports, team visits, and prior approval of substantive changes. The college has attempted to respond to previous recommendations made by the Commission and provided complete information for the team visit. (IV.A.4)

The Board of Trustees and the college's administration and recommending committees are regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness. Evidence of the evaluations was supplied to the team and are available for public inspection. However, the Board of Trustees has not developed a plan for self-improvement based upon the findings of its self-evaluation. (IV.A.5)

## **B. Board and Administrative Organization**

The District has recently and clearly defined the organizational roles of the District and the college by establishing a decentralized plan for college administration and the District providing service centers for the colleges in the District. (IV.B)

The Board of Trustees has established policies to assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services, and the financial stability of the District and the college. The Board of Trustees through its Committee on Student Success has initiated discussions on Student Learning Outcomes and academic performance results to determine if its standards of quality are being achieved. Although the Board has established policies for the financial integrity of the District, the Trustees only provide for a financial reserve for the District of three and one half percent and has not established financial benchmarks to monitor the budget and expenditures. The Board of Trustees has a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the District's Chancellor and the college President. The Board of Trustees does not have a clearly defined policy for evaluating the District's Chancellor and the college President. (IV.B.1)

The Board of Trustees is an independent policy-making body that reflects the public interest in its activities and decisions. The Board of Trustees supports the decision as a whole. The Board of Trustees has established policies consistent with the *Mission Statement* to ensure the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them. (IV.B.1.a, IV.B.1.b)

The Board of Trustees has published its bylaws and policies specifying the Board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures. The Board of Trustees has acted in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws as described in the results of the evaluation of the Board by others. The Board of Trustees annually evaluates its practices, but there is no indication of the Board establishing goals for revisions identified in the self-evaluation. (IV.B.1.c, IV.B.1.d, IV.B.1.e)

The Board of Trustees has adopted a basic policy for board development and new member orientation. While the policy meets the minimum accreditation standards, it could be amended to include mentoring and a description of desired training for new members. (IV.B.1.f)

The Board of Trustees' self-evaluation processes for assessing board performance is clearly defined and published in its policies or bylaws. Although the Board performs such self-evaluations, the Board has not taken action to develop a set of self-improvement goals resulting from the self-evaluation. (IV.B.1.g)

The Board of Trustees has adopted a code of ethics and recently amended the policy to include a clearly defined policy for dealing with behavior that violates its code. (IV.B.1.h)

The Board of Trustees is involved in the college's accreditation process and has taken action to respond to past accreditation recommendations. (IV.B.1.i)

The Board of Trustees does not have an adopted policy for the selection and evaluation of the Chancellor, but through practice the Board has conducted such reviews as well as reviewing and commenting on the college presidents' evaluations. The Board of Trustees has delegated full responsibility and authority for the Chancellor to implement and administer board policies without board interference and holds the Chancellor accountable for the operation of the district and for oversight of the college presidents. (IV.B.1.j)

The college's President has demonstrated effective leadership in planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness. The President is developing a culture of evidence in consideration of existing and new programs. The President's leadership has included the development of plans for the future of the college. The development of a current *Educational Master Plan* is needed as the college has developed a *Strategic Plan* and a *Facilities Master Plan*. The *Educational Master Plan* was prepared in 2000 prior to the last college accreditation and has not been maintained nor used to set goals for the college's *Strategic Plan*, nor the *Facilities Master Plan* or other college plans. The President has delegated authority to other college administrators consistent with their responsibilities. (IV.B.2, IV.B.2.a)

The college's President is guiding the institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment in accordance with the standards prescribed by the Accrediting



Commission. This is evident from the President's use of research data about student success to inform decisions about new initiatives and interventions. (IV.B.2.b).

The college's President is implementing statutes, regulations, and Trustee policies and assuring that the college's practices are consistent with its mission and policies. (IV.B.2.c)

The college's President effectively controls budget and expenditures and has developed a substantial budget reserve for future college development. The college is innovative in its use of its Foundation to generate non-state funds for support of college programs and student scholarships. (IV.B.2.d)

The college's President is working and communicating effectively with the communities and community councils adjoining the college. The President and the Executive Director of the college Foundation have an effective community outreach program and have successfully sponsored college activities that have brought many new people to the college facilities. (IV.B.2.e)

The district provides primary leadership in setting and communicating expectations for educational excellence and integrity throughout the district and assures support for the effective operation of the college. The district has established clearly defined roles of authority and responsibility between the college and the district. (IV.B.3)

The district has developed a decentralized plan for service to the college that clearly delineates and communicates the operational responsibilities and functions of the district from those of the college. The district provides effective services that support the college in order to accomplish its mission. Recently the district has restructured its budget allocation system to provide a fair distribution of financial resources to the college. The district has in place effective controls to monitor the expenditures of funds by the college. (IV.B.3.a, IV.B.3.b, IV.B.3.c, IV.B.3.d)

The Chancellor has delegated the full responsibility and authority to the college's President to implement and administer the college in accordance with district policies without the Chancellor's interference and holds the President accountable for the operation of the college. (IV.B.3.e)

The Chancellor and district staff act as the liaison between the college and the Board of Trustees, although the President is present at and takes part in the Board of Trustees' meetings on matters affecting the college. The Chancellor utilizes effective methods of communication in order to exchange information with the President in a timely and effective manner. (IV.B.3.f)

The district regularly evaluates its service role to the college to assure integrity and effectiveness in assisting the college in meeting its educational goals. The district widely communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement. (IV.b.3.g)

## **Conclusions**

There is a strong culture of shared governance at the college that is fostered by the college's administration and maintained by the college's very stable and dedicated faculty. The impact of this stable faculty is that they serve as the gatekeepers of the college's culture. The culture is one of being very inclusive in its discussions of college issues prior to a final decision being made in matters affecting the future and operation of the college. An improved clear description of the coordination and roles of the various advisory committees would help improve the understanding of the college's shared governance process. The additional impact of the college's strong faculty culture is that the college accomplishes its mission in a highly satisfactory manner as evident by the performance of the students.

The past accreditation report describes a problem of instability of the college's leadership. While this problem persists, the presence of a very stable faculty has off-set the impacts of the past leadership changes. The college's new leadership team is focused on improving the college and dedicated to building upon the strong faculty foundation through the shared governance process and the use of data in evaluating the performance of the college. The Board of Trustees could assist the situation by supporting the stability of the leadership team.

The college's Foundation and Associated Students organizations are healthy and continue to provide strong support of the college's mission associated with student success. Representatives of the Foundation and the Associated Students are represented on the critical college committees and are respected for their contributions to the college.

## **Commendations**

18. The new administrative team is commended for its commitment to shared governance and its efforts to understand and work within the culture of shared governance of the college.
19. The college is commended for its new leadership team which is focused on improving the college and dedicated to building upon the strong faculty foundation through the shared governance process and the use of data in evaluating the performance of the college.
20. The college is commended for the state of health of the college's Foundation and Associated Students Organization which continue to provide strong support of the college's mission to promote student success.

## **Recommendations**

9. The Board of Trustees should complete the self-evaluation process by discussing and developing a set of Board goals to respond to any issues identified in its self-evaluation. The Board should institutionalize the goal-setting and measuring of accomplishments as part of the self-evaluation process. (IV.B.1.g)

10. Although in practice the evaluation of the college presidents and district chancellor occurs on a regular basis and is an inclusive process, the team recommends that the District develop a written policy that clearly defines the evaluation process. (IV.B.1.j)