

APR 29 2013

EVALUATION REPORT

Los Angeles Pierce College
6201 Winnetka Avenue
Woodland Hills, California 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
Pierce College from March 11-March 14, 2013

Peter Garcia, Chair

Visiting team roster

Mr. Peter Garcia (Chair)
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Diablo Valley College

Mr. Pedro Avila
Vice President of Student Services
West Hills Community College

Dr. Lisa Conyers
Associate Professor of Spanish
Moreno Valley College

Dr. Arnulfo Cedillo
President, Board of Trustees
Chabot-Las Positas CCD

Mr. David Keebler
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Ms. Kim Morrison
Library Coordinator/Information Literacy
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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

INSTITUTION: Los Angeles Community College District

DATES OF VISIT: March 11-14, 2013

TEAM CHAIR: Peter Garcia, President, Diablo Valley College

An eleven member accreditation team visited Los Angeles Pierce College (Pierce College) from March 11-14, 2013, for the purpose of evaluating how well the institution is achieving its stated purposes, analyzing how well the college is meeting the standards of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), and providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement. After the visit, the team submitted recommendations to the ACCJC regarding the status of the college.

In preparation for the visit, the team chair attended the team chair training at the Oakland Airport Hilton Hotel February 7, 2013, and nine members of the team attended an all-day training session on February 8, 2013, conducted by the ACCJC staff. At the session, the team studied the Commission materials prepared for visiting teams. Two additional members of the team completed their training separately. Team members read carefully the college's self evaluation report, including the recommendations from the March 19-22, 2007 visiting team, and assessed the evidence provided by the college.

Prior to the visit, team members completed written evaluations of the self evaluation report and began identifying areas for further investigation. The team chair and the team assistant conducted a pre-visit meeting with the college president, Kathleen Burke-Kelly, on February 28, 2013, to outline the expectations of the visiting team and to ensure that all appropriate arrangements and accommodations would be in order. On Sunday, March 10, 2013, the team chair and two members of the Pierce College visiting team met in Burbank with the chairs and selected representatives of the LA Mission College and LA Valley College visiting teams to coordinate and prepare for the visit of the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) Office. On Monday morning before the formal college visit, the same three-team subgroup visited the LACCD Office. Later that afternoon, all of the Pierce College team members spent the afternoon reviewing and discussing their views of the written materials and evidence provided by the college.

Over the course of the visit, the team engaged over 120 faculty, staff, administrators, members of the Board of Trustees, and students in individual or small group appointments. More than 30 classes and labs were visited. The team chair met with members of the Board of Trustees, the president of the college, the chancellor of the district, various administrators, the college's constituency leaders, and spent time in numerous classes and offices at the college. The team also hosted three one-hour open meetings that were well attended by members of the campus and local community.

The self evaluation report, 276 pages long, was assessed as thorough, competently written, and accurate by the team. Its treatment of the College's strengths was insightful, and its assessment of the College's challenges was honest.

The College was prepared and ready for the team's visit. College staff members and students were very accommodating to team members and available for interviews and follow-up conversations. In general, the team room functioned well, team logistics and needs were met, and the supporting evidence was readily available and organized effectively. The College provided electronic copies of all evidence, and the team's requests for hardcopies of documents were met in a timely fashion.

Major Findings and Recommendations of the March 11-14, 2013, Visiting Team

RECOMMENDATIONS

The team agreed upon the three following college specific recommendations.

Recommendation 1

In order to fully comply with the Standards, the College needs to review, update, and further integrate its various institutional plans, and formalize the integration among these plans as they contribute and align to an overarching institutional plan. (I.B.3)

Recommendation 2

In order to meet the Standard on student learning outcomes, the team recommends that the College thoroughly assess its student learning outcomes processes and make necessary modification to ensure authentic assessments, to demonstrate student achievement, and to provide for widespread institutional dialogue. (II.A.1.c, II.A.2.i)

Recommendation 3

In order to fully comply with the Standard, the College should fully develop, implement, and assess internal control mechanisms for the expenditures of grants and specified funds including the Associated Student Organization trust accounts and the Foundation to ensure these activities align with the mission and goals of the college. (III.D.2.d, III.D. 2.e)

COMMENDATIONS

Commendation 1:

The Counseling Department, High School Outreach Office, Matriculation, English Department, Math Department, and Student Success Committee are to be commended for the success of the Summer Bridge program as it exemplifies a program that identifies the learning support needs of students and provides appropriate services to address those needs.

Commendation 2:

Educational Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) is commended for collaborating with the Title 5 HSI grant in the use of a laptop computer loan program that selects 60 EOPS students each semester who are enrolled in an online course and provides them with state of the art technology and supplements this with follow-up monitoring to assure their academic success.

Commendation 3:

The library should be commended for their redesigned website providing students and faculty a user-friendly online experience to access the library's resources.

Commendation 4:

The Academic Senate is commended for ensuring broad faculty participation in governance, and supporting changes in the college to increase institutional effectiveness and student success.

ACCREDITATION EVALUATION REPORT FOR LOS ANGELES PIERCE COLLEGE

Introduction

Los Angeles Pierce College (Pierce College) is a public two-year community college located in the western San Fernando Valley. The College was founded in 1947 through the efforts of Clarence W. Pierce, M.D., and the land for the college was purchased by the Los Angeles City School District (now the Los Angeles Unified School District). Established as the Clarence W. Pierce School of Agriculture, Pierce College was originally an all-male residential institution with 70 students and 18 faculty members. The principal agricultural emphases were crop cultivation and animal husbandry.

Renamed in 1956 to Los Angeles Pierce College, the institution in 1969 became one of nine colleges in the Los Angeles Community College District. Pierce College's human and physical resources, including a 426-acre campus with a 226-acre farm, support a comprehensive curriculum offering transfer and career preparation, basic skills instruction, and opportunities for personal growth and development. Pierce College's 19,950 students are able to earn associate degrees in 50 academic areas and 49 certificates. Approximately 1600 students earn a degree or certificate each year and 1200 students transfer to a California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC) campus annually.

Evaluation of Institutional Responses to Previous Recommendations

Recommendations of the 2007 Visiting Team

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)

The team reviewed numerous examples of meeting minutes that Pierce College has initiated several committees which serve to strengthen and formalize the link between institutional planning and resource allocation. It was also confirmed through interviews with college leaders that through these stronger and clearer linkages, communications of planning process results have improved. The College Planning Committee (CPC), the Scheduling Advisement Committee (SAC), the Resource Advisement Committee (RAC), the Facilities Advisement Committee (FAC), and the Enrollment Management Committee (EMC) were all instituted over the past seven years to clarify and strengthen the existing planning process and support its link to resource allocation.

Evidence was provided that annual plans are completed, and every five years, they inform the development of the six-year Educational Master Plan. In turn, the Strategic Plan makes operational those strategic directions identified in the Educational Master Plan. The Strategic Plan's goals and activities are prioritized annually by the College Planning Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Pierce College Council (PCC). Those priorities are approved by the PCC, and then communicated to the campus community, both formally and informally.

To further the link between planning and resource allocation, resource requests made in the annual plans are linked to college goals, and then prioritized by the RAC. Its recommendations are then submitted to the PCC before being forwarded to the college president for consideration. Through all phases of the governance structure and process, efforts are made to align planning with institutional goals and to link planning with resource allocation.

Conclusion: The College has addressed the recommendation; however, as discussed further in Section I.B., the College does not fully meet the Standard.

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)

Pierce College has undertaken several significant steps to solidify the connection between Student Learning Outcomes and institutional improvement. The team discovered as reported by the College that resources were committed to achieving institutional proficiency in all

aspects of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in 2007, including reassigned time for faculty, administrative support from the research office, and, beginning in 2010, a more focused role for the vice president of academic affairs.

After completing all SLOs and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), and after two assessment cycles were completed, the Faculty Accreditation Coordinator took over coordination for Student Learning Outcomes from the previously reassigned faculty coaches. Outcomes “coaches” continued to work directly with discipline experts to ‘close the loop’ on outcomes assessment, reporting, and implementation of identified steps toward improving student learning. The Academic Senate approved Student Learning Outcomes policies aimed at achieving proficiency by 2012, and the college administration implemented the “Outcomes Team” plan to create an online SLO reporting repository. This database has centralized SLO assessment work, and supported SLO coordination.

In 2011, the Outcomes Team derived a total of six General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs) from the existing Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and review teams evaluated the college’s General Education program. These teams were comprised of faculty from across the curriculum, and headed by an outcomes coach.

In addition to course assessment (assessment of all SLOs for a given course), Pierce College has institutionalized program learning outcomes assessment. The first three of the college’s six GELOs were assessed in fall 2011; the second three were assessed in spring 2012, and a cycle has been established to assess all GELOs annually. Discipline-specific programs also assessed program learning outcomes in the 2011-2012 academic year. The College has made a concerted effort to marshal the data from Student Learning Outcomes assessment results for resource allocation requests and institutional improvement, using the college’s annual plan.

Conclusion: The College has addressed this recommendation; however, additional work needed to meet the Standard is discussed in Section II.A., below.

Recommendation 3 – Faculty development programs in instructional technology need to be offered in order to enable faculty to expand the distance education offerings. (IIA.2.d)

Pierce College is completing the objectives of Opportunidad Los Angeles (Project Ola!), its 2007-2013 Title V grant, to meet the obligations noted in this recommendation. In collaboration with West Los Angeles College, Pierce College developed a series of robust online and hybrid courses in three areas (1) basic skills and developmental education, (2) occupational certificates and (3) general education transfer courses. The activities were as follows with #4-5 being particularly appropriate to this recommendation:

1. Develop curricula for distance delivery.
2. Create new opportunities for increased completion rates by augmenting the institution’s infrastructures and developing a shared online learning system for

- delivery of college courses in which students from both colleges can enroll.
3. Enhance the current distance learning infrastructures using Etudes and Moodle.
 4. Create a shared, systematic faculty training program, focusing on web-based learning strategies and supporting technologies to assist instructors in adapting their courses and teaching strategies to fit the online environment.
 5. Support online programs by providing staff training and technical assistance to develop Web-based orientation, tutoring, financial aid, advising, and library resources.

In order to institutionalize the structures initiated by the grant, the College created PierceOnline and a distance education office that assists faculty in developing online courses and preparing for online teaching. PierceOnline has systematically moved the college toward the development of online courses. As a result of their efforts, the College has developed an Associate of Arts degree available fully online and has submitted a substantive change request to ACCJC for approval of this online program. The PierceOnline distance education program staff provides workshops and one-on-one training to faculty. A professional development survey conducted in 2008 guided the development of the training schedule. The workshops are typically publicized as open invitations to faculty interested in developing and/or teaching online classes, whether they are part of the online associate degree program or not. Workshops provided in the last year include Beginning Moodle; Moodle: Accessibility and What It Means to You (508 Compliance); and Podcasting: Easy as 1, 2, 3.

PierceOnline is also the online resource available to faculty and distance education students. The PierceOnline central website contains resources, including tutorials, specifically designed for new students, returning students, and faculty. For faculty, the site contains a listing of workshops available, contact information for receiving individual assistance with Moodle (the college's supported course management system), and tutorials that faculty can use on their own. The site also includes information about making distance courses compliant with ADA 508, which ensures accessibility to students with disabilities. The Educational Technology Committee (ETC), a subcommittee of the Academic Senate established two years ago to usher technological innovations in instructional delivery, has written a handbook for providing quality distance education, which guides faculty through the course approval process and includes information on such issues as ADA 508 compliance. In addition, the Academic Senate approved a DE policy that requires faculty meet minimum standards before teaching online courses.

Pierce College was awarded another Title V grant in fall 2012. Entitled Project IQ (Improving Quality), this new grant focuses on improving the quality of online course delivery and improving student outcomes.

Over the past five years, extensive training and support have been provided by Project OLA!. For all new online courses, an academic development grant (ADG) has been provided to support one or two content expert instructors, who work with the distance education department staff to create or modify a course for online delivery. Each team is also given personal or group training in instructional technology and instructional design for online instruction, and is supported by the distance education staff throughout the development

cycle.

Conclusion: The College meets the Standard referenced in 2007 Recommendation 3.

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)

The team confirmed through interviews and documents provided by the College that since 2007, Pierce College has developed and assessed SLOs for all of its active courses and programs. The results of these assessments are now routinely used to inform planning and decision-making at the course, program, and institutional levels. At present, 100 percent of the college's General Education Learning Outcomes have been assessed, and the College is in a meta-analysis of this evaluation process. Program Learning Outcomes and course level outcomes are also regularly assessed.

Student Learning Outcomes assessment begins at the course level. Course reports are submitted on a regular schedule, according to a departmentally-designated course assessment plan. These reports include action plans, which involve steps for improving the course. Such steps involve resource requests or curricular changes. Resource requests are included in departmental annual plans, and routed through the Resource Advisement Committee (RAC). These plans are part of the College's comprehensive planning cycle, from which the Educational Master Plan is derived.

Conclusion: The College has addressed this recommendation; however, additional work needed to meet the Standard is discussed in Section II.A., below.

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

As reported by the College, the incorporation of SLOs into faculty obligations and evaluation was taken on part of the negotiations for the 2008-2011 collective bargaining agreement. On examination of the faculty evaluation form (Appendix C – 2011-2014), the following was found under Professional Responsibilities for all faculty:

1. Writing SLOs and establishing assessment tools/rubrics [disciplines or departments]
2. Including the officially approved course SLOs on course syllabi [all faculty]
3. Incorporating approved SLOs in teaching [all faculty]
4. Providing the instructor with a copy (electronic or hard copy) of the course outline and any officially approved SLOs [department chairs]
5. Determining a process for officially approving SLOs [determined by the College and usually jointly agreed to by the faculty in a discipline or department and the College's academic senate]

6. Conducting SLO assessments in assigned classes and using the results to make appropriate changes in instruction to improve student learning [all faculty]

There is clearly evidence of leadership among the administration and the faculty union. It is expected this will result in a systematic move toward the development, use and assessment of SLOs across all the colleges in the district.

Conclusion: The College meets the Standard referenced in 2007 Recommendation 7.

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)

The team reviewed evidence that the District has adjusted the allocation model to provide dedicated funding for scheduled maintenance and maintenance and operations. The Plant Facilities Department at Pierce College maintains a master listing via a 5-year plan of all scheduled maintenance project (SMP) type work. The 5-year plan is a living document that is updated once a year. The plant facilities department continuously evaluates the condition of the campus facilities resulting in new SMP projects added to the 5-year plan. The District Office of Facilities Planning and Development has the responsibility to verify that all submitted projects from the college meet state guidelines for an SMP project. Should any of the projects not meet the guidelines the District Office of Facilities Planning and Development works with plant facilities to revise or remove the project from the five-year SMP plan.

SMP projects are distinguished from capital outlay projects. While both types of projects are funded by the state, the dollar value of an SMP project may not exceed \$400,000. Over the past six years, the college has received funding, undertaken, and completed numerous SMP projects:

- Repair of Hazardous Walkways: (Trip Hazardous & ADA Compliance)
- Backflow Device Replacement: (Code compliance)
- Campus Clock-System Replacement: (Replacement of old non-functioning clock system.)
- Renovations of 30 Classrooms: (Construction period was one month)
- Greenhouse Glass Replacement: (Replacement of all broken glass panels)
- Roof Replacements for Geography and Anthropology Buildings.
- Electrical Service Campus Switchgear—maintenance & repair
- New Roll Up Doors at Auto Tech Building
- Transite Pipe Replacement under new mall.
- Remove Replace Transite Pipe Project
- Replace Campus Irrigation Project
- Hazardous Waste Removal of Lead Paint & Possible Asbestos of Sheep Unit
- HVAC Chiller and Cooling Tower Replacement
- Clean/Calibrate/Repair Electrical Feeders 2,3 & Mail 4160 Service, & PAB High Voltage Switch

- Replace HVAC Nursing Skills Lab

In response to the lack of SMP funding from the state and the continued need for this type of funding, the Board of Trustees established a new deferred maintenance fund which is intended for ongoing maintenance of facilities District wide. The Board's stated goal is to set aside 2.5 percent annually from the unrestricted general fund for deferred maintenance. Given the current fiscal conditions facing the District, the Board voted to start with a modest funding level of 0.5 percent (\$2.3 million) which can be spent during FY2013; the funds came from undistributed District wide balances.

Conclusion: The College meets the Standards referenced in 2007 Recommendation 6.

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)

The Pierce College Technology Master Plan informs the implementation of its Educational Master Plan, supports instructional technology decisions, as well as defines distance education. This plan consists of two major components; the first part details the plan for the physical and human resources needed to maintain the functionality of the campus' technological needs, and the second part describes the plan for the curriculum development, faculty and student training, and student support services required to create a robust distance education program. The Pierce College Council, the college's primary participatory governance body, approved the plan in 2010 for campus wide dissemination.

Needed technology has been assessed and infrastructure upgrades have been identified, including for the facilities currently under construction. Continual viability assessments of the existing technology infrastructure and formal discussions at both the Educational Technology Committee (ETC) and the Technology Committee (TC) determine the future technology methodologies applicable to the college. The process ensures that the technical infrastructure strictly adheres to District Board Rules, network policies and procedures, and industry best practices. The College is consistently planning for future expansion and improvements. The Propositions A, AA, and Measure J local bond programs include technology plans developed in cooperation with engineers, architects, technology consultants, and the LACCD office.

The College has developed a distance education plan that includes educational technology staffing, equipment, supplies, Moodle, courses, certificates, and degree inclusion criteria. The plan also notes online student services and packaging and marketing plans for an effective distance education program. The provision for more distance education training was substantiated through interviews with the vice president of academic affairs, the director of information technology, the coordinator of distance education, distance education faculty, library personnel, and others. (III.C.1. a, b, d)

The visiting team confirmed that Pierce College's Educational Technology Committee addresses its technology infrastructure needs and the needs of its distance education program and services. A number of District and College documents that address technology and other educational planning agenda include the "Pierce College Educational Technology Committee Policy for Online Classes" and the "Pierce College Instructor/ Student Contact Policy for Distance Education Courses". These policies address hybrid and fully online classes and student and faculty contact that must happen weekly and cover initiated contact and frequency of contact between student and faculty. Though these two documents define what Pierce College policies are in place for their distance education program, the visiting team did not find the "Handbook for Providing Quality Distance Education" referenced in their self evaluation.

The development and monitoring of the technology plan is being coordinated by three related entities: the ETC, a standing committee of the Academic Senate that directs the academic and instructional technology development of the distance education program; the TC, which is responsible for ensuring that the college's hardware, software, and networking capabilities are adequate to support instructional needs; and PierceOnline, which provides training and support for online curriculum development and pedagogical preparation to faculty under the guidance of the ETC, as well as technical support for instructional media development for online classes.

Conclusion: The College meets the Standard referenced in 2007 Recommendation 7.

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)

The team confirmed through interviews with the College's vice president of administrative services that the College is closely monitoring this issue. The LACCD took significant steps to address the issue of its unfunded liability for retiree health care in fall 2006 by negotiating an agreement, approved by the District's six unions and the Board of Trustees, to begin pre-funding a portion of its unfunded obligation. The District annually directs 1.92 percent of the previous fiscal year's full-time employee payroll into an irrevocable trust, managed through CalPERS. In addition, an amount equivalent to the District's annual Medicare D refund is diverted from the District's operating budget into the trust. As of June 30, 2012, the balance in the trust was \$39,751,541 and its Fair Market Value was \$41,694,651. In 2009, while facing a state budget crisis and enormous increases in health benefit costs, the District's Joint Labor-Management Benefits Committee (JLMBC) took action to reduce the cost of health care coverage for both active and retired employees. The Board approved the move to health care plans administered by CalPERS, which took effect January 1, 2010. Because of the significantly lower retiree benefit costs under CalPERS, the District was able to reduce its GASB obligation by \$97 million.

Conclusion: The College meets the Standard referenced in 2007 Recommendation 8.

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 goal-setting and measuring of accomplishments as part of the self-evaluation process. (IV.B.1.g)

The Board of Trustees adopted a Board rule on October 17, 2007 that established the setting of Board goals as part of its annual process of self evaluation. At its annual retreats, the Board scores its performance, reporting on its self-assessment and the summarized evaluations of constituency representatives who sit at the resource table during Board meetings. The Board establishes new goals for the following year, both to address District priorities as well as any issues that have arisen as a result of the self-evaluation.

In 2010 the Board adopted a District Effectiveness Review Cycle, which aligns annual Board and CEO goals with District Strategic Plan (DSP) goals. The annual cycle includes Board evaluation, Board retreats, college activities in support of goals, institutional effectiveness reports, and District effectiveness reports that align with the DSP.

Conclusion: The College meets the Standard referenced in 2007 Recommendation 9.

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)

To address this recommendation the District's Human Resource (HR) division drafted a formal written policy, the Performance Evaluation Process for college presidents, which clearly spells out the evaluation process that has been and continues to be followed. The description is now included in the packet with the evaluation forms used.

Regarding the chancellor's evaluation, the Chancellor's Office issued a directive (Chancellor's Directive #122) that spells out the procedure that has been and continues to be followed. The Board solicits input from constituencies and collects data to evaluate performance on a number of criteria. In July 2010, the evaluation processes for the Chancellor and the college presidents were integrated into the Board's newly adopted District Effectiveness Review Cycle.

Conclusion: The College meets the Standard referenced in 2007 Recommendation 10.

District Recommendations of the 2007 Visiting Team

District Recommendation 1:

The team recommends that the District should provide leadership in supporting the progress toward incorporating achievement of stated student learning outcomes as a component of faculty evaluation. (III.A.1.c)

As reported by the College, the incorporation of SLOs into faculty obligations and evaluation was taken on part of the negotiations for the 2008-2011 collective bargaining agreement. On examination of the faculty evaluation form (Appendix C – 2011-2014), the following was found under Professional Responsibilities for all faculty:

1. Writing SLOs and establishing assessment tools/rubrics [disciplines or departments]
2. Including the officially approved course SLOs on course syllabi [all faculty]
3. Incorporating approved SLOs in teaching [all faculty]
4. Providing the instructor with a copy (electronic or hard copy) of the course outline and any officially approved SLOs [department chairs]
5. Determining a process for officially approving SLOs [determined by the College and usually jointly agreed to by the faculty in a discipline or department and the College's academic senate]
6. Conducting SLO assessments in assigned classes and using the results to make appropriate changes in instruction to improve student learning [all faculty]

This is clearly evidence of leadership among the administration and the faculty union that will result in a systematic move toward the development, use and assessment of SLOs across all the colleges in the district.

Conclusion: The College meets the Standard referenced in 2007 District Recommendation 1.

District Recommendation 2

The team recommends that 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. (Standard III.D.1.c)

The LACCD took significant steps to address the issue of its unfunded liability for retiree health care in fall 2006 by negotiating an agreement, approved by the District's six unions and the Board of Trustees, to begin pre-funding a portion of its unfunded obligation. The District annually directs 1.92 percent of the previous fiscal year's full-time employee payroll into an irrevocable trust, managed through CalPERS. In addition, an amount equivalent to the District's annual Medicare D refund is diverted from the District's operating budget into the trust. As of June 30, 2012, the balance in the trust was \$39,751,541 and its Fair Market Value was \$41,694,651. In 2009, facing a state budget crisis and enormous increases in

health benefit costs, the District's Joint Labor-Management Benefits Committee (JLMBC) took action to reduce the cost of health care coverage for both active and retired employees. The Board approved the move to health care plans administered by CalPERS, which took effect January 1, 2010. Because of the significantly lower retiree benefit costs under CalPERS, the District was able to reduce its GASB obligation by \$97 million.

Conclusion: The College meets the Standard referenced in 2007 District Recommendation 2.

District Recommendation 3:

The team recommends that 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 their self-evaluation. The Board should institutionalize the goal setting and measuring of accomplishments as part of the self evaluation process (IV.B.1.g).

The Board of Trustees adopted a Board rule on October 17, 2007 that established the setting of board goals as part of its annual process of self evaluation. At its annual retreats, the Board scores its performance, reporting on its self-assessment and the summarized evaluations of constituency representatives who sit at the resource table during board meetings. The Board establishes new goals for the following year, both to address District priorities as well as any issues that have arisen as a result of the self-evaluation.

In 2010 the Board adopted a District Effectiveness Review Cycle, which aligns annual Board and CEO goals with District Strategic Plan (DSP) goals. The annual cycle includes Board evaluation, Board retreats, college activities in support of goals, institutional effectiveness reports, and District effectiveness reports that align with the DSP.

Conclusion: The College meets the Standard referenced in 2007 District Recommendation 3.

District Recommendation 4:

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).

The District's HR division drafted a formal written policy, the Performance Evaluation Process for college presidents, which clearly spells out the evaluation process that has been and continues to be followed. The description is now included in the packet with the evaluation forms used.

To address this recommendation regarding the chancellor's evaluation, the Chancellor's Office issued a directive (Chancellor's Directive #122) that spells out the procedure that has been and continues to be followed. The Board solicits input from constituencies and collects data to evaluate performance on a number of criteria. In July 2010, the evaluation processes for the Chancellor and the college presidents were integrated into the Board's newly adopted District Effectiveness Review Cycle.

Conclusion: The College meets the Standard referenced in 2007 District Recommendation 4.

Eligibility Requirements

The team concluded that Pierce College meets the following twenty one Eligibility Requirements.

1. Authority:

Pierce College is two-year community college operating under the authority of the State of California, the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, and the Board of Trustees of the Los Angeles Community College District. The Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) have continuously accredited the college since it received initial accreditation in 1952.

2. Mission:

The College mission statement was last revised and adopted by the LACCD Board of Trustees on April 11, 2012. The statement is included in the Pierce College General Catalog and is posted on the college's website. In addition, it is now referenced in college plans and is posted in selected meeting areas of the college. The College's commitment to student learning is clearly noted in the language of the mission statement, as it reads:

“Los Angeles Pierce College is a student-centered learning institution that offers opportunities for access and success in a diverse college community. The college dedicates its resources to assist students in identifying and achieving their educational, career, and personal goals. Our comprehensive curriculum and support services enable students to earn associate degrees and certificates, prepare for transfer, gain career and technical proficiency, and develop basic skills. We serve our community by providing opportunities for lifelong learning, economic and workforce development, and a variety of enrichment activities.”

3. Governing Board:

The Board of Trustees (Board) is composed of seven members who are elected at large by the qualified voters of the LACCD and one student member who is elected annually by the students of the District. The term of office for the student member, whose vote on agenda items is advisory, is from June 1 through May 31 each year. The voters elect the board members for four-year terms in staggered elections held on the first Tuesday in March of each odd numbered year. Three Board members are chosen at one election and four members at the other. The Board elects its president and vice president for one-year terms at the annual organizational meeting, which is usually held in July.

The eight-member Governing Board of the LACCD is an independent policy making body that ensures that the District's educational mission and the missions of the nine constituent colleges are implemented. The Board also ensures the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the colleges and the District office. The Board adheres to its conflict of interest policy and board members have no personal financial interests of any kind in the District or its colleges.

4. Chief Executive Officer:

On August 1, 2010, the current chief executive officer was appointed by the Board of Trustees to lead the college. Prior to her position at Pierce College, the president served as a vice president of academic affairs. She has been an employee of the LACCD since July, 2001. The College reports that the president is deeply committed to the role community colleges play in providing access to quality higher education for diverse populations, and is well versed in the policies and procedures of leading a community college in a multi-college district.

5. Administrative Capacity:

The College employs eleven administrators with the appropriate credentials, preparation, and experience needed to support the College. While the total number of administrators is down from fourteen in June 2011 and thirteen in June 2007-June 2010, the team appears to be sufficient for the College's mission. The majority of administrative officers were selected through an open and competitive process based on educational background and experience.

6. Operational Status:

The College has operated continuously since it was established in 1947. Although student enrollment dropped from 22,164 students per semester in fall 2008 to 19,951 in fall 2012, the College awarded 1,615 degrees and certificates during the 2011-2012 academic year.

7. Degrees:

Pierce College currently offers courses in over 60 disciplines. As of 2012, the College offers 89 degrees (AA and AS) and certificates. According to the results of the spring 2012 Student Survey, 3.5 percent of students indicate their educational goal is to earn a vocational certificate, 6.9 percent indicate their intention to earn an AA or AS degree, 52.9 percent plan to earn an AA or AS prior to transferring to a four-year institution, and 28 percent indicate they intend to transfer to a four-year institution without applying for an AA or AS.

8. Educational Programs:

Pierce College offers three associate degree options including two plans for associate degrees with specific majors and a third option for a transfer associates degree in liberal arts. Degrees are awarded in 50 higher education fields of study ranging from Addiction Studies to Theatre Arts. All three degree options require a minimum of 60 units, are two years in length, require the completion of general education that range from 18-31 or 18-45 credit hours, and require demonstrated competency in English

and mathematics. The College noted that the most recent economic climate led to schedule rotations which have, in some cases, prolonged the time to completion of 2-year programs to 3 and 4 years.

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) for these programs are currently described in the catalog under general comprehensive statements about the purposes of transfer, occupational, and general education. Some of the specific associate degree majors and most of the certificates describe student learning outcomes in the catalog under their discipline headings.

9. Academic Credit:

The Curriculum Committee, a standing committee of the Pierce College Academic Senate, holds primary responsibility for ensuring the College follows generally accepted practices for determining academic credit requirements. Each unit of credit represents one hour-per-week of lecture; a longer number of hours is required for each unit of credit awarded for laboratory or other exercises not requiring additional outside preparation. The awarding of academic credits is consistent with other institutions of higher education. Each course outline of record and the college catalog specifies hours required and units awarded for each course offered by the College.

10. Student Learning Achievement

A review of the college catalog revealed that it contains descriptions of program learning outcomes. Institutional student learning outcomes were established by the college community in 2007, then reviewed and revised to appear as General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs) in 2011. A cycle of student learning outcomes assessment and review is continuing at the course and program levels. Regardless of delivery method, courses and programs must meet requirements established in the course outline of record.

11. General Education:

Pierce College's Curriculum Committee determines and approves all courses that are eligible for general education status. Also, the Curriculum Committee confirms that all associates degree programs require from 18-31 or 18-45 units of general education. The general education program includes courses in a variety of disciplines including natural sciences, social and behavioral sciences, arts and humanities, and health and physical education. Communication and computational proficiency are developed through required courses in English and mathematics.

12. Academic Freedom:

The Pierce College Academic Senate Faculty Ethics Statement delineates the primary responsibility of faculty members to support one another and their students in seeking and stating the truth as they understand it. The statement emphasizes respect for both students and colleagues in pursuit of academic inquiry and scholarly standards. It acknowledges that faculty members have the rights and obligations of all citizens, but that they avoid creating the impression that they speak for the College when they speak or act as private citizens.

13. Faculty:

In 2011, the College employed 208 full-time faculty and 508 part-time faculty. The selection of college faculty is guided by the college's Hiring Policy, Board rules, district human resources guides, and applicable provisions of the California Education Code and Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations. Specific duties and responsibilities for full-time faculty are included in the Academic Senate Faculty Ethics Statement; the College's Governance Agreement, which includes the responsibility for developing and reviewing curriculum and assessing learning; and, in the collective bargaining agreement between the District and the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild.

14. Student Services:

Pierce College provides a wide range of student services that support student learning and development. These services include assistance in the admissions application process, assessment for placement in English and math, orientations for new and returning students, counseling services, assistance for students with academic and physical disabilities, financial assistance through state and federal grant loan programs and scholarships, health services, child care, tutorial services, and academic workshops. Additional services from other resources, including specially funded programs such as Title V that provide support in the area of math and counseling, assist in meeting the academic needs of our students.

15. Admissions:

Pierce College is an open-admissions institution serving all students who wish to pursue an education. The College admits California residents with a high school diploma, residents who are 18 years of age or older who are determined to be capable of benefiting from the instruction and programs offered, K-12 students under special circumstances, as well as international and non-resident students.

16. Information and Learning Resources:

The College has a 45,000 square foot library. As of fall 2013, the Center for Academic Success (CAS) and library will be housed together in a new 90,000 square foot Library Learning Crossroads building. Currently, there are networked computers available in both the library and CAS for student use. In addition to these resources, there are computer laboratory classrooms equipped with computers that support specific instructional programs, along with a variety of online resources, library database, PierceOnline, and the Online Writing Lab (OWL). Both PierceOnline and OWL are operated through Moodle, the current learning management system. (LMS)

17. Financial Resources:

Each year the College prepares a financial plan which projects operational needs for the next fiscal year. Preliminary budget allocations provide the basis for the expenditure plan. The current fiscal year (FY) allocation is \$55,950,252. The college and the District currently rely on enrollment growth to generate new revenues to cover cost increases and new initiatives.

18. Financial Accountability:

The Los Angeles Community College District conducts annual financial audits by an external certified public accountant. The Board of Trustees reviews these audit reports in public session and discusses management responses to any exceptions. The District files audit reports with the Los Angeles County Department of Education and any other public agencies as required. Pierce College is not audited as a separate entity.

19. Institutional Planning:

The college developed an Educational Master Plan that was approved in 2012. Unit Assessment has been completed for instructional programs and the assessment of student services programs is continuous. General education student learning outcomes (GELOs) and course-level SLOs have been assessed.

Institutional planning processes integrate assessments at all levels with resource allocation requests. The Resource Advisement Committee (RAC) was developed to prioritize annual requests in order to support program improvements.

20. Public Information:

Pierce College publishes a catalog once every two years. The catalog contains general information including the official college name, address, telephone numbers, and the web address. In addition the catalog contains the following general information: college history; mission, vision, values, theme, and goals statements, including a description of general education student learning outcomes; course offerings, program and degree requirements and approximate length to their completion; academic freedom statement; student financial aid availability including Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, the Cooperative Agencies and Resources for Education (EOP&S/C.A.R.E.), and federal and state financial aid programs; descriptions of the Center for Academic Success, and the library; names and degrees of administrators and faculty, and a listing of staff members in a variety of campus offices; and, the names of governing board members and the district executive staff.

Student requirements explained in the catalog are: admissions, matriculation, and attendance requirements; descriptions of all student fees including resident and non-resident tuition, health services fee, parking fee, associated student organization fee, transcript fees, class audit fees, and the enrollment fee refund policy; descriptions of the requirements to complete associates degrees, certificates, and graduation and transfer requirements.

Other major policies affecting students that are described in the catalog are: academic probation and dismissal, standards of student conduct and disciplinary action, the district nondiscrimination policy, grievance and complaint procedures, and the sexual harassment and the drug-free environment policies.

21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission:

Pierce College and the LACCD ensure that they adhere to state regulations and to Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges eligibility requirements, standards, and policies. The College describes itself identically to all its accrediting agencies, communicates changes in status, and discloses required information to all accrediting bodies. All disclosures by the college are complete, accurate, and honest.

STANDARD I

Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

A. Mission

General Observations:

The mission statement of Pierce College was last reviewed through the College's participatory governance process, approved by the Pierce College Council on October 27, 2011, forwarded to the LACCD Board of Trustees for final consideration, and ultimately adopted on April 11, 2012. (I.A.2) The institution's College Council is the over-arching participatory governance organization and reserves voting seats for each of the college's constituent groups with the expectation that the appointees will represent the will of their appointing bodies, the discussions covering the review and revision of the mission were inclusive. The College dialogue on continuous improvements in student learning is structured and guided by the Pierce College Council and the Academic Senate Committee. Formal recommendations for improvements are routed to the college president for consideration. (I.A.4)

The mission statement identifies the College's educational purposes as being a "student-centered learning institution" that provides "opportunities for lifelong learning, economic and workforce development, and a variety of enrichment activities." The mission statement is focused on student learning and is appropriate for the diverse student population served by the college, articulating educational purposes that are consistent with both the general expectations of post-secondary education and the more specific demands placed on community colleges. Pierce describes its "community" in its self evaluation and in interviews as the western San Fernando Valley and its proximate Los Angeles zip codes which account for over sixty percent of its enrollments. Programs are developed and enhanced with this population in mind, while acknowledging that Pierce College attracts students from beyond this geography. With one eye on the mission, the college assesses its effectiveness through its program review and annual planning processes.

According to the College's Comprehensive Planning Cycle chart, the mission statement is reviewed via the institution's governance process, every six years "as a part of the overall planning cycle". (I.A.3) The mission statement is referenced and reinforced through the college's Educational Master Plan, which is currently the overarching planning document for the institution. The mission statement is published in the college catalog, available through the college web site, and displayed on plaques around campus. (I.A.4)

Findings and Evidence:

The College's mission statement asserts that the educational programs at Pierce College are designed to be student centered, offering opportunities for access and success within its institutional community. Resources are to be dedicated to assisting students in pursuit of their varying goals, with their educational programs and services as the primary vehicles for student success. Although the mission statement does not clearly identify the College's intended student population, the self evaluation narrative for this Standard identifies the

College's student population as being primarily "students who reside in the College's geographic area of the west San Fernando area" and surrounding communities. (I.A)

Evidence (Pierce College Council minutes) illustrates that the College has had discussions regarding the relevance of the mission statement, and that the key constituency groups were afforded the opportunity for participation (suggestions were forwarded to the Accreditation Steering Committee). (I.A.1) Furthermore, this evidence shows that the Educational Planning Committee, at their May 29, 2010 meeting, recommended no change. It was the Pierce College Council that recommended some revision, which is a practice that is consistent with the College's governance and decision-making process. The explanation contained in the Draft Strategic Plan shows that the revised mission statement was driven by California's fiscal condition and the State Chancellor's Office narrowing of the system mission to emphasize transfer, career technical education, and basic skills.

Interviews revealed that in the intervening time between the submission of the self evaluation and the team visit, the Pierce College Council entered into discussions after reviewing its process for periodic review of the mission statement. (I.A.3) It was determined that the review cycle for the mission statement would be more effectively aligned with the institutions strategic planning review cycle (three years) as opposed to its Educational Master Plan review cycle (six years). The only part of the process that changed, however, is the timeline. The process itself will still work through the institution's governance and decision making process.

The College documents its decision-making processes and defines its participatory governance committees in the "Decision-Making and Planning Handbook". Throughout the handbook, there are numerous references to the mission and how college processes align and link to the mission statement and clearly demonstrates that its mission is central to program and department planning, and decision making. (I.A.1)

The College reviewed and updated its mission statement in 2011 and ensures it is central to planning through the program and department's annual plans. A more considered review of the mission may clarify the College's intended student population. Furthermore, a timeline to regularly review the mission statement needs to be clearly established and documented. Some of the College's planning documents have not been updated to reflect the revised mission statement (e.g., the mission in the Educational Master Plan is different from that in the Facilities Master Plan, which is different from the one in the self-evaluation). (I.A.4)

Conclusions: For continuous improvement, the college needs to update some of its planning documents to reflect the most current mission statement and to ensure that institutional planning documents are promptly updated and disseminated to facilitate their use in decision-making processes.

The College meets the Standard.

Recommendations:

None

B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

General Observations:

Pierce College has dedicated significant time and effort to establishing several institutional plans, as well as regular and systematic review and revision processes, over the past few years. The institutional governance structure, divided between committees of the College and committees of the Academic Senate, creates an avenue for focused dialogue regarding various matters relating to institutional effectiveness and improvement. Much of this structure has been established within the last four years, so there are significant changes in organizational procedures and operating criteria—as opposed to minor, incremental adjustments—on a year-to-year basis. Reporting forms are modified regularly to reflect these changes. Various other modes of communication are also used to inform the institution of these changes.

The Pierce College Council, Academic Senate, and their various sub-committees serve as channels for the dialogue on continuous improvement of student learning. Additionally, the Student Success Committee, the Achieving the Dream Initiative, and the SLO/PLO/Assessment Salons have helped drive the College dialogue on student success and improvements. (I.B.1) The institution appears to have a relatively solid program and committee level planning and assessment process in place that involves evaluation and resource allocation of programs and services. Programs and departments complete annual evaluation reports that summarize what goals were met and identify priorities for the following years. (I.B.2.,3)

Findings and Evidence:

Pierce College has primarily conducted its dialogue around the institution's committee/governance structure. The College largely understands the purpose and value of focused dialogue in the course of improving institutional effectiveness, and has embraced the model employed. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning compiles and provides data to the College's various governance structures, which in turn reinforces the meaningful nature of data and research in today's "culture of evidence" (I.B.1). Participation in College planning at Pierce College occurs primarily through its committee structure. A review of the appendices of the College Decision-Making and Planning Handbook illustrates that the structures are in place to allow for broad involvement; however, interviews led to questions regarding classified staff and students' ability to actualize these opportunities. These concerns will be further discussed in Standard IV.A. (I.B.4)

The College's numerous committees provide ample opportunity for the various constituents to participate in the College planning process. Broad involvement is guaranteed by inclusion of representatives from each constituency in the college's participatory governance committee, but some classified and student leaders reported dissatisfaction with the level of actual participation. The College conducts "open meetings" that allow any college constituent or the general public to attend and participate in the dialogue. The College utilizes annual plans from its various areas to determine resource allocation priorities. A list of College priorities is generated by the Resource Advisement Committee. During the 2011-

2012 academic year, while enduring budget cuts, the College demonstrated its commitment to this process by allocating \$100,000 to fund resource allocation requests. (I.B.1, 4)

Institutional goals are developed through a review of “current conditions affecting College,” both internally and externally. These goals are presented to the college at the “Opening Day” sessions and emphasized at the institution’s annual “Leadership Retreat.” Additionally, these goals further permeate the institution by virtue of the fact that they serve as the basis for the institution’s relatively new committee self evaluation process. In this process, committees are to establish their annual goals—which are to contribute to the institution’s annual goals—at the beginning of the year, and then submit a progress report relative to these goals (the “self evaluation”) at the end of the year. This allows the full institution to evaluate and assess its progress relative to its overall institutional goals. (I.B.2)

The College has various institutional plans and is working to improve its integrated planning model and protocols. Through both evidence and interviews, it was demonstrated that the institution regularly and systematically reviews the operational elements of its planning processes and changes have been made to improve its effectiveness. Thus progress has been made. However, aspects of the planning process still need to be addressed, particularly relating to the integration of the various plans and the protocols to assure that institutional planning is firmly and fully connected to strategic resource allocation. While there are significant hurdles to overcome before its planning processes are truly integrated, i.e. making all of the discreet college plans current and aligned with the Educational Master plan, the College’s designated overarching plan, the major planning components are in place, and the college leaders are determined to put an effective planning model in place. (I.B.3)

Since its last accreditation, the College was operating under its 2006-2012 Strategic Plan. The plan included a mission statement, college values, institutional learning outcomes, institutional goals and objectives, and an action plan template. Based on interviews with College staff, it appears that due to turnover in leadership, the plan was never fully implemented. There is no evidence that metrics were developed to measure how well the college met its goals. In 2012, the college closed its strategic planning cycle by conducting a qualitative evaluation of its plan but it did not include a quantitative measures. (I.B.1) The team did not find evidence that the College was engaged in significant ongoing review and assessment of its strategic goals prior to 2012. Additionally, there is no evidence that results from its strategic planning efforts were widely communicated to students and the general public including local community members. (I.B.5)

The college has recently introduced a number of new plans and initiatives. For example, it has developed a new Educational Master Plan (EMP) and recently updated its Strategic Plan. Also, the college made a recent decision to designate its Educational Master Plan, moving away from its Strategic Plan, as the plan that provides direction for overall institutional planning. The evidence provided illustrates that the College recognizes that this approach is “nontraditional” (see 2012 draft strategic plan). A plan of such significance to a college should provide strategic direction for many areas (which Pierce’s EMP does) as well as provide linkage and alignment with the college’s processes and operational activities. Currently, the College’s planning processes are aligned to the college goals that reside within

the strategic plan. The College has ongoing work to realign its overall planning from its strategic plan to its EMP to fully realize the next generation of broad based, inclusive, and integrated planning to which it aspires.

In an effort to assess issues pertaining to the overall quality of the institution, Pierce College collects information regarding student characteristics, student outcomes, and broader community information. These data elements are made available to the community through the institution's web site for Institutional Effectiveness.(I.B.5) The College's Office of Institutional Research publishes an annual fact book that contains historical trends on student characteristics, enrollments, student performance indicators, special programs, feeder high schools, community, and employer information. Many, but not all, of these documents do not include analysis that would assist the college and its committees to review the information in a meaningful way.

The College Planning Council (CPC) monitors the college's overall planning process. This same committee is also responsible for reviewing and modifying the planning processes and ensuring the alignment of goals to the strategic plan. Annual program planning documents and program review documents are utilized by the college to inform the planning process and influence the resource allocation process. During the past five years the college planning process has been modified to establish regular reporting cycles from sub-committees back to CPC. Also, the College established a Resource Allocation Committee (RAC) that handles annual resource allocation recommendations for the institution. (I.B.6)

The self evaluation mentions that college programs regularly review their progress toward program and institutional goals. Also, there is mention about departments completing "regular reviews" that drive resource allocation requests. Programs utilize different methods to collect and "reflect" on data such as student surveys, focus groups, and assessment results from SLOs and PLOs. The examples provided by the college focus on alignment of goals and resource allocation. It is unclear if the College has established an evaluation process that allows the College to measure how well its evaluation mechanisms work at driving institutional improvements. (I.B.7)

Conclusions:

Evidence demonstrates that the College has a course and program level review process which is sustainable, has become part of the institutional culture and appears to be undergoing continuous quality improvement. At the institutional level, while the College has developed, or is in the process of developing, several plans (e.g., Strategic, Facilities, Educational Master, Technology, and Enrollment Management plans), and has constituted a subcommittee of its institutional governance to monitor the progress of these committees as they contribute to the achievement of their strategic goals, there are still gaps in the integration between the plans and the various institutional structures that serve them.

The College partially meets this Standard.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1

In order to fully comply with the Standards, the college needs to review, update, and further integrate its various institutional plans, and formalize the integration among these plans as they contribute and align to an overarching institutional plan. (I.B.3)

STANDARD II

Student Learning Programs and Service

A. Instructional Programs

General Observations:

Pierce College offers instructional programs on campus and various courses at a number of high schools in the San Fernando Valley. The College offers courses in over sixty disciplines, eighty nine AA/AS degrees and state-approved certificates. The College's Curriculum Committee ensures all programs and courses, regardless of location or means of delivery, align with the College's mission, and faculty, along with academic administrators, recommend areas of study offered at Pierce College. Evaluation and recommendations for new course and programs rely on various resources such as faculty professional knowledge, institutional learning outcomes, transfer institutions, advisory committees, industry and employment trends, grants, student interests, and financial and physical resources. Course outlines of record are reviewed every six years (every two years for career and technical education programs), and program review is conducted for all programs every six years. Annual updates are completed in the years when comprehensive program reviews are not required. This Standard was verified via resources and interviews. (II.A.1)

Pierce College offers pre-collegiate, developmental, transfer coursework; career and technical education courses; short-term, credit-based training programs; and community and continuing education offerings (not-for-credit courses in Community Services/Extension) as well as a service for international students. To ensure quality and improvement, all courses undergo a regular cycle of program review every six years and every two years for career and technical education courses. A review of the annual plans demonstrates that faculty assess the previous year's goals, establish the next year's goals, list any new curriculum, show progress on SLOs and their assessment, provide data on student achievement, and include information in the environmental scan (appropriate to the discipline). The annual reviews serve the ongoing decision making and allocation needs of the college in the years when program reviews are not required. (II.A.2; III.A.2.a)

Pierce College widely disseminates clear and relevant information to students through various college publications and systemically reviews the information for accuracy. Policies on academic freedom, faculty ethics, and student integrity guide faculty and students and are widely published.

In its self evaluation, the College relates its instructional programs and student learning outcomes to the College's mission, and address the quality of its programs. The team found that since the College's last accreditation visit in 2007, it has made progress in recognizing the importance of linking the results of learning outcomes to the planning structure of the college and the allocation of resources.

Faculty members are responsible for writing, officially approving, assessing, and using the results of SLOs in their courses. They are charged with incorporating approved SLOs in teaching and notifying students of the SLOs in course syllabi. They have mapped course

SLOs to Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and use course outcome results to assess PLOs. They have also mapped course SLOs to one or more related General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs) and use course outcome results to assess GELOs. The team found much of this in its examination of the College's direct response to 2007

Recommendation 4. Pierce College publicizes information about course requirements, learning outcomes, and policies and assures the academic integrity of the teaching-learning process.

Faculty at Pierce College now post the student learning outcome reports on the Student Learning Outcomes Database. The database houses course SLOs and PLOs. The 2012 ACCJC College Status Report on Student Learning Outcomes Implementation states that all course and program SLOs have been assessed. All six of the College's General Education Learning Outcomes have completed an assessment cycle. (II.A.2.b; II.A.2.e; II.A.2.f)

Findings and Evidence:

Although some of the College's research as noted in Standard I lacks sufficient analysis to be used easily in decision making, the college collects data on academic and demographic trends, which it uses to inform conversations and decisions to meet the educational needs of its students. Data include student success measures such as access and retention, basic skills completion, degree and certificate completion, and transfer. Validated English and math placement exams are used to determine the preparedness of students. Over the past 4 years, the Summer Bridge Program, a response to poor persistence and retention rates of incoming first time students, has improved its participants persistence and time of completion in the required English sequence. The Pierce College Fact Book 2009-10 prepared by the Office of Institutional Research summarizes data on student profiles, historical trends, student performance indicators, and effectiveness of special programs. The team found that College has made considerable efforts in determining how better to serve students through research presented in The Achieving the Dream (AtD) Data Team Full Report, which outlines and analyzes student persistence. (II.A.1.a)

Funded by a 2007 Title V grant, Project OLA, the College created PierceOnline, the distance education office, and hired a full-time Distance Education Coordinator. Faculty have received help from expert instructors to prepare courses for online delivery and personal or group training in instructional technology design, online pedagogy, and the use of educational technology. A 2012 Title V grant entitled Project IQ (Improving Quality) will focus on improving the quality of online course delivery and student learning outcomes. Dialog occurs at the department level and in committees such as Academic Senate, the Scheduling Advisement Committee, Departmental Council, and the College's Curriculum Committee to ensure that this standard is met. (II.A.1.b)

Collaboratively, discipline faculty determine SLOs and their assessment methods, discuss results, and determine curricular changes based on results. The Office of Institutional Research provides assistance. Twice a year, beginning in January 2012, the Pierce Assessment Day allows an avenue for faculty to receive assistance with the SLO cycle and documentation of SLO results and subsequent recommended changes. Courses and programs are on an assessment cycle, which is published online. PLOs and GELOs are assessed

through a review of SLO reports for courses mapped to particular PLOs and GELOs. The Student Learning Outcomes Team measures the GELOs based on assessment of courses mapped to each of six GELOs. The team provides feedback via GE Assessment Reports, and the Academic Senate is responsible for disseminating and monitoring the recommended changes. Deans meet with department chairs (a department chair duty as identified in Article 17 of the LACCD & AFT Agreement 2011-2014) and faculty to discuss the Program Assessment Reports to determine the effectiveness of the PLOs. The SLO Database is the central repository for course, program, and general education assessment reports. Although Pierce has made substantial progress toward developing and assessing student learning outcomes, there is no formal process to determine the robustness of outcomes or the reports. In addition, because the assessment cycle for all levels of learning outcomes is relatively new, a number of processes are still in the developmental level of implementation, rather than at the proficiency level. This presents the College with some ongoing development challenges in order to meet this Standard. (Standard II.A.1.c)

The dean of career and technical education has confirmed that each occupational program has an advisory committee that discusses with faculty the skills and competencies it seeks in new employees. These competencies are incorporated into SLOs and PLOs. Career and technical education (CATE) programs, as other courses and programs at Pierce College, follow the assessment cycle. These measures provide evidence that the College is engaged in best practices around this standard. (II.A.2.b)

Faculty is responsible for the quality of instruction and initiating curricular actions. The Electronic Curriculum Development is a district curriculum tracking system used to approve curriculum and ensure the approval process is used. The faculty initiator describes to the Curriculum Committee the nature and fit of the course. The Scheduling Advisement Committee analyzes the balance of courses in the curriculum based on student demand. Committee members and administration have confirmed that the processes are working to ensure the rigor of curricular offering for on campus courses as well as distance education courses. (II.A.2.c)

Departments and faculty use data on course success and completion from the Office of Institutional Research to meet the needs and learning styles of its students. Spring Convocation and various workshops have been offered as professional development opportunities in response to assessment findings. In addition to a limited number of online and hybrid courses, the college uses diverse teaching methodologies, including a variety of educational technology and assessment methods. Their schedule of classes identifies varying delivery modes: scheduling classes on and off campus in daytime, evening, and weekend time blocks. Pierce College offers several learning communities workshops, Programs for Accelerated College Education (PACE), Summer Bridge, and Algebra Success at Pierce (ASAP). (II.A.2.d)

Pierce College evaluates courses and programs regularly through the Pierce College Comprehensive Planning Cycle, which includes the Annual Plans and Program Review. Quantitative data, advisory committees, college meetings, emerging technologies, and other data determine currency, appropriateness, and relevance of courses and programs. Based on

SLO assessments discussed in annual plans, faculty members analyze their courses and programs and make recommendations for improvements. The annual plans are the foundation for prioritizing college hiring and serve as a basis for resource allocation through a prioritization process. The team found that the Program Reviews serve as a vehicle to evaluate the past six years and determine future needs and plans. (II.A.2.e)

The College seems to undergo ongoing and integrated planning. Through Annual Plans and Program Reviews, faculty systematically evaluated programs. Enrollment patterns, educational goals, and institutional measures of success are available on the research web page. The Educational Planning Committee, a standing committee of the Academic Senate, is responsible for integrating the results of program review into the Educational Master Plan and overseeing viability review of educational programs as well as developing and monitoring the Educational Master Plan. (II.A.2.f)

Only the Mathematics Department has a Math Exit Test, which is used for SLO assessment. Annually, the math faculty develops, evaluates, and modifies common exams and identifies specific problems to measure course SLOs. Faculty members are randomly assigned to a review panel, and exams are randomly assigned for grading. (II.A.2.g)

Course Outlines of Record with identified student learning outcomes document course content. Faculty assesses student mastery of outcomes and awards credit based on student performance. Credits awarded are monitored through faculty evaluation, curriculum review, and articulation. A review of sample course outlines reveal hours and credits are aligned well. (II.A.2.h)

The College has developed Program Learning Outcomes for all degrees and certificates of achievement. Faculty members have mapped applicable course outcomes with the program learning outcomes; they then analyze the course assessments to determine the effectiveness of the program outcomes. Deans and chairs review the program outcomes reports for necessary recommendations. At present, the College ensures achievement of programmatic learning outcomes through grades (and thus credit for courses). Elements of this Standard seem to be partially met. (II.A.2.i)

Academic and vocational degree programs are based on a philosophy clearly stated in the Catalog. Page 64 of the 2012 – 2014 Pierce College Catalog displays the general education philosophy statement approved by the Academic Senate in 2012 (verified by Senate Minutes) with a commitment to review it every fall semester.

The faculty determines the appropriateness of each course for inclusion in the general curriculum by examining the stated learning outcomes. Comprehensive student learning outcomes include an understanding of the knowledge domains of humanities and fine arts, natural sciences, and social sciences; the skills of oral and written communication, information competency, computer literacy, scientific inquiry and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis/logical thinking, and the acquisition of knowledge through a variety of means; and an appreciation of ethical principles and civic responsibility. (II.A.3)

Students in academic and career and technical degree programs are required to complete a general education degree component for which Pierce faculty has developed a comprehensive set of general learning outcomes (GELOs). These six general education learning outcomes (GELOs) have been assessed: three in fall 2011, and three in spring 2012, with a cycle established to assess all GELOs annually. (II.A.3; II.A.3.a)

Faculty typically confers in department meetings, ad hoc work groups, and districtwide meetings to determine the content and methodology of traditional knowledge areas in general education. Local general education plans are approved for placement within the general education areas through the curriculum process. As appropriate, faculty requests support for Intersegmental General Education Transfer (IGETC) or the CSU General Education Plan from the college articulation officer. Two SB 1440 degrees are currently offered. Each general education course is associated with at least one general education learning outcome (GELO). Learning outcomes assessment for general education courses is implemented according to departmental course assessment cycle plans and twice-yearly GELO reviews conducted by cross-disciplinary committees. (II.A.3.a)

Course-to-outcome mapping has been developed to determine if general education students have achieved the goals of being productive individuals and lifelong learners. A six-year cycle of course outlines of record review and revision of the GELOs, overseen by the Curriculum Committee, seeks to ensure that expected skill levels are included in the CORs. General education course assessments are carried out by a variety of methods (including written exams, research papers, oral presentations, class projects, portfolios, demonstrations, and performances) and evaluated by GELO committees. Faculty monitors student preparedness in sequenced courses to ensure that exit skills align with entry skills for subsequent study. Likewise, career and technical programs monitor study achievement and informally track student achievement rates. As of fall, 2012, the Career Center, using the College Central Network, assists career and technical faculty and advisory committees to report job placement. The College reported in its self evaluation and in discussion with faculty leaders that it is satisfied with these measures, but more time is needed to determine the long term impact of the GELO assessment cycle. (II.A.3.b)

The general education learning outcomes concerning ethical behavior and effective citizenship are embedded across the curriculum in various course outlines (for example, and as confirmed by evidence, Philosophy 20, History 41, and Political Science 19). Students can demonstrate aesthetic sensitivity and respect for cultural diversity through the "Arts and Cultural Awareness" general education learning outcome. The Academic Senate Ethics Committee maintains a standing item on Academic Senate agendas. (II.A.3.c)

Degree programs include at least one area of focused study or an interdisciplinary core. The team confirmed through its evidence review that there are four options for the associate degree: transfer to CSU, transfer to UC, career and technical option, and general studies non-transfer option. Introduced in 2011, Senate Bill 1440 required all California community colleges to have two degrees approved and in place by summer 2012. Pierce College has met that requirement with two state-approved degrees (Business Administration and Math). This senate bill will require additional degree changes as well; approximately 80 percent of the

College's 51 associate degrees offered must be developed as transfer curriculum by fall 2013, and 100% by fall 2014. (II.A.4)

Career and technical degree and certificate recipients demonstrate technical and professional competencies that meet employment and other standards. Input from occupational advisory committees and labor market research guide the approval of career and technical majors and certificates. Perusal of advisory committee minutes; interviews with career and technical faculty, administrators and students; classroom and laboratory visits (Nursing, Veterinary Technology, Horse Science, and Agriculture); and an interview with a representative advisory committee member (Automotive Service Technology) support the College's claim that technical and professional competencies meet employment and other applicable standards. (II.A.5)

Various programs, such as Nursing, are subject to review by external agencies. Licensing exam passing rates are compiled and employer surveys carried out. For example, in order to maintain programmatic accreditation, the Nursing Department must meet mandated pass/fail cutoffs from state and national boards. Its most recent graduates tested in 2012 and pass the state boards at seventy five to ninety percent, assuring the program's continued accreditation. In turn, these data are broken down and used by the Department in determining strengths and weaknesses of required areas of instruction. Nursing Department Committee minutes, student pass rates, Valley Nursing Education Council agendas containing hospital data, and sample Board of Nursing communiqués were scrutinized as evidence. The College enlists multiple measures to meet requirements set by employers, licensure, and certification by external agencies. (II.A.5)

The documentation of students completing career and technical programs and getting employment is planned to be completed in spring 2013. The dean of career and technical education has been and will continue to meet with the eight other CATE deans of the Los Angeles Community College District colleges to decide on one of two systems to track this information. Once a system is purchased, the College will be able to identify certificate and degree holders and track their employment. (II.A.5)

Currently, there is no listing of members of college advisory committees for career and technical education programs. The dean of career and technical education is planning to have all advisory committee memberships listed online by April 13, 2013. He has a draft copy of an advisory handbook, which needs more revision. The handbook is expected to be completed by June 2013 and submitted to the committee review process during 2013-14. (II.A.5)

The team confirmed Pierce College assures that the information provided to students and prospective students about its programs is clear and accurate by engaging in a quality control process. Discipline experts produce information about their programs, including student learning outcomes, and review it for clarity and accuracy. Catalog information is reviewed annually by department chairs, various committees, the Academic Senate, and academic administrators to ensure education programs listed are current and correctly described in terms of their title, certificates and/or degrees, course work required, and credit hours.

College policy requires faculty to include student learning outcomes on course syllabi and distribute syllabi on the first class meeting. Department chairs verify course syllabi include student learning outcomes. College policy also requires all faculty to submit syllabi copies to department chairs and an online repository. Faculty evaluations include review of the inclusion of SLOs in class syllabi. Information about degrees and certificates is widely available to students. The catalog includes degree and certificate program learning outcomes.

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) for these programs are currently described in the catalog under general comprehensive statements about the purposes of transfer, occupational, and general education. Some of the specific associate degree majors and most of the certificates describe student learning outcomes in the catalog under their discipline headings.

The college catalog, schedule of classes, and services are available on the College's web site. (II.A.6)

The catalog and schedule of classes lists the courses that transfer to the California State University or University of California systems. Transfer courses are also listed on the Assist website. A comprehensive listing of articulation agreements are on the College website. The college's articulation officer develops articulation agreements in conjunction with faculty and academic administrators. The full-time articulation officer is responsible for ensuring appropriate development, implementation, and evaluation of articulation agreements. The LACCC Board rule 6803.10 Rules Relating to Viability details the policy to address elimination of or major changes in programs. The current guidelines for viability review are also listed in the college Decision-Making and Planning Handbook.

Pierce College reviews and updates its catalog and schedule of classes both in print and online. The catalog is reviewed by department chairs, Student Services personnel, administrators, and other College offices to ensure accuracy. Student achievement data is made available to the public on the College's website and press releases. The Office of Institutional Research, faculty, deans, and the marketing and advertising officer are responsible to ensure the information is both current and accurate. (II.A.6.a.-c)

LACCD has approved policies on academic freedom. The Faculty Code of Ethics outlines faculty responsibility for academic integrity and is posted on the academic senate webpage and is incorporated into the Faculty Handbook. The Student Academic Integrity Policy outlines academic integrity expectations and consequences for students. This policy is in the College catalog, in the schedule of classes, and on the College website. The District Governing Board sets the policies regarding academic freedom, integrity, and responsibility. These policies are supported in local college policies and listed in print publications and on the college website. (II.A.7)

Pierce College Academic Senate adopted a code of ethics based on the code developed by the American Association of University Professors. The College has a Faculty Code of Ethics which is reviewed periodically and listed on the Academic Senate's webpage and incorporated into the Faculty Handbook. Through the faculty hiring process and the faculty evaluation process, faculty are reviewed for how they present their views in the classroom.

The College has a process for student grievances against an instructor for violation of ethics codes. The process is detailed in the College catalog. (II.A.7.a)

The College has a Student Academic Integrity Policy Statement included in the College's general catalog, in the schedule of classes, on the library website, and on faculty syllabi. The policy includes the process and consequences. (II.A.7.b)

Pierce College does not try to instill a specific belief or worldview nor does it offer curricula in foreign locations or to students other than U.S. nationals. (II.A.7.c; II.A.8)

Conclusions:

Overall, Pierce offers high-quality instructional programs addressing its students' needs and is faithful to its mission. The College has made progress in establishing a planning process that ties outcomes assessment to college plans and resources. The institution has also made substantial progress in developing student learning outcomes, measuring them, and using the results of measurement to plan and implement institutional improvements. The College has made considerable effort to develop assessment cycles and processes for SLOs, PLOs, and GELOs; to document them; and to link assessment and institutional planning. The progress in this effort has been significant across the campus. To continue this work, the College has to examine critically and modify as necessary its SLO process to increase its effectiveness and demonstrate student achievement of stated learning outcomes. For example, while student learning outcomes (SLOs) for these programs are currently described in the catalog under general comprehensive statements about the purposes of transfer, occupational, and general education, some of the specific associate degree majors and most of the certificates describe student learning outcomes in the catalog under their discipline headings. This should become a consistent and improved practice.

The recent directive from ACCJC in compliance with U. S. Department of Education regulations mandates that (1) institutions set standards for student success (student achievement and student learning) and use data to measure their performance against the institution-set standards (602.16(a)(1)(i)) and (2) institutions will detail their performance in an External Evaluation Report (602.17(f)). There is no evidence that specifically demonstrates credit based on mastery of learning outcomes or that the institution has set standards/benchmarks of satisfactory performance for student achievement.

The College meets most of this Standard. The College does not meet the Standard with respect to student learning outcomes and their use in institutional improvement, because the College does not operate at the proficiency level expected at this time.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 2

In order to meet the Standard on student learning outcomes, the team recommends that the College thoroughly assess its student learning outcomes processes and make necessary

modification to ensure authentic assessments, to demonstrate student achievement, and to provide for widespread institutional dialogue. (II.A.1.c, II.A.2.i)

Standard II.B: Student Support Services

General Observations:

Pierce College offers a comprehensive array of student support services that effectively attract a diverse student population and address its changing needs. The facility bond approved for the Los Angeles Community College district included a new Student Services Center at Pierce College which was formally opened in 2009. The new center centralizes the key student support programs and functions that were previously scattered across the Pierce College campus. The team observed that the Student Services Center construction priority reflects a strong institutional commitment toward student success by providing an ideal opportunity for students to access resources in an environment that is attractive and designed to enhance cross-referrals. In addition, the adjacency of these programs along the Mall corridor has created a high degree of staff collaboration and efficiency that has become a hallmark of learning and student life at Pierce College. Computer kiosks and wireless capability distributed throughout the center enable students to utilize robust student information system and internet connectivity.

The most recent multi-year budget reductions to Student Services have had a definitive impact on staff morale, both at the professional and operational levels. The unfortunate reality is that the experience at Pierce College is not unlike the financial conditions at most community colleges in California. Although the college did not disclose this as a serious factor affecting student services staff morale in its report, the team's conversations with management, faculty and classified personnel in student services revealed a consistent pattern of dissatisfaction with the budget reduction decisions that they perceive as disproportionate to critical students services. Despite this undercurrent of financial tension, the team also found that the college administration and staff have been resilient in identifying priorities, adapting methodologies and creating performance expectations that maintain a focus on delivering quality interaction with students and the broader community.

Student Services has been recognized by the College as exemplary in developing learning outcomes in regard to both course and program applications. They demonstrate proficiency by utilizing the results of assessment and incorporating their findings in a program improvement cycle that is systematic, continuous and impressive.

In addition to resource losses, organizational change, leadership transitions and staff turnover have also challenged the Student Services division. The vice president of student services position is currently filled by an interim administrator, with valuable district expertise, but only recent Piece College and student service background. The long time and respected dean of counseling just left the college. The director of academic success position was restructured and now reports within Student Services. Staff reductions have required programs to redefine their scope, and in some cases, their strategic planning. In addition, retirements over the past ten years have dramatically shifted the composition of the counseling faculty.

The team noted that the actual evidence available in institutional records and web archives was far more comprehensive than that which was cited. In fact, the self evaluation did not

adequately convey the overall depth of excellence the team found in its interviews with staff, analysis of the extensive data collections, and as revealed in dialogue with Pierce College students.

Findings and Evidence:

Pierce College has developed a sophisticated approach to program planning and program review, and as a result of these processes, assures the quality of its student support services. The team found a complete set of documents for each of the identified programs with relevant assessment commentary and action plans. Annual Plans and Service Area Outcomes indicate alignment with the college mission and reinforce the strategic goals of the division, composed in a conscientious and meaningful manner. (II.B.1)

More importantly, it was evident that Pierce College has renewed its commitment to access and student success by preparing an intentional and inviting pathway through the college experience. The High School Outreach program has sustained vigorous relations with area schools in communicating access efforts and placement test schedules that demystify the admission steps. The Summer Readiness program is a collaborative effort that engages several hundred new students to prepare them with information and basic skills necessary for their successful integration into the college community. The college orientation program includes an online option that is linked to the Pierce College Moodle platform. The team found the online version to be well conceived and easy to navigate. There is a header with key student resource links attached to the approximately 500 courses that use the Moodle platform, a feature that further emphasizes appropriate support for student needs. (II.B.1, II.B.3.c)

The College catalog is now published on a two-year cycle in order to cut costs and conserve resources. It is an attractive publication, with a well-structured format and verbiage that is written in a clear and succinct style. It contains all information required by the Accreditation Standard. Program outcomes are explained with the major requirements in the educational programs section of the catalog. There is also a very detailed explanation of financial aid information and the processing policies that affect the awarding of federal entitlement grants and loans. The team noted an error on page 64, Part 2-Major, where the wrong page is indicated for the reader to find the majors listing. (II.B.2.a.-d)

The team found substantive and multi-tiered research used to identify student needs and deploy appropriate resources to meet those needs. The Student Success Committee performs an umbrella role in the college's integration of Matriculation, Student Equity, Basic Skills Initiative and Achieving the Dream efforts. In particular, Achieving the Dream directed its entire first year to a collection and study of disaggregated data elements as advised by national 'coaches' that promote this educational movement. Six strategies were subsequently identified after a group interpretation of Pierce College student trends. Over time, the College is intent on providing support for each of these strategies in an integrated and sustainable model. Throughout Student Services the team found evidence that satisfaction surveys and need assessments are routinely administered and evaluated. The College's Research Office conducts an elaborate student survey in conjunction with the district Research Office every three years. Pierce completed the most recent survey in fall 2012 with a significant sampling

of nearly 15% of its enrollment by collaborating with faculty in this classroom based survey project. (II.B.3, II.B.3.a - e)

The team found that Associated Student Organization (ASO) is the College's primary organizational body promoting an environment of personal and civic responsibility and intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development for all its students. Interviews with students and review of promotional materials showed that students who participate in the ASO programs are given direct opportunities to participate in dialogue that informs views on what constitutes a good learning environment. ASO members serve their college and community through participatory governance committees including the Pierce College Council, Academic Senate, and Student Affairs Committee, lobbying efforts, and community service projects such as voter registration drives, blood drives, AIDS awareness, and breast cancer awareness events. (II.B.3.b.)

Spot checks of various record sites, interviews with Admissions and Records and Information Technology staff confirmed that the College is meeting the Standard for confidentiality, security, and maintenance of student records. Student academic and registration records for all LACCD campuses are maintained within the LACCD Student Information System by District staff. Data is backed up daily and are recoverable per District protocol. Students access their own information by entering their student identification number and personal identification number (PIN) through the student portal. LACCD employees access student records through the District interface or DEC (named after the company that created the program) using their user name and password. (II.B.3.f)

Conclusions:

Pierce College implements a comprehensive student services division that meets the overall expectations of this Standard. The team was impressed with innovations in delivery practices that reflect a principled and student centered response to the unstable financial conditions in California. The team also noted that Pierce College's reputation among students, local schools and community partners appears to be intact, despite the prolonged period of college wide cutbacks and dilution of services. The College is fortunate to have completed a number of critical facility projects, two of which were earmarked for Student Services, the new Student Center and the soon to be opened library.

The Hispanic Serving Institution eligibility resulted in two Title V federal grants for Pierce College, although the team did not note a wide understanding among staff that the primary purpose of the award was to specifically improve the success of Hispanic students as well as overall institutional effectiveness. The counseling faculty, classified staff and administrative leadership share a collective vision that clearly aligns with the College's mission, supports its strategic plan and is astutely measured by the constituents it serves. The Resource Advisory Committee and Pierce College Council have been charged with the monumental challenge of allocating budget resources that will address new initiatives and, in some cases, the restoration of proven services, as evident in the two new faculty replacements designated to the Counseling department in 2012 and 2013.

The College meets the Standard.

Recommendations:
None

Standard II.C Library and Student Learning Support Services

General Observations:

The Library and Learning support services are provided to students and faculty on site and electronically through the Library's website. On-campus library hours during the semester are just over 50 hours each week. Though student and faculty queries say the library needs to be open more hours during the day, the team found that the remote access to the library's electronic resources is available 24/7. Learning support is also administered at the Center for Academic Success (CAS). CAS also provides a web page with learning support materials such as: reading support materials, interactive PowerPoint, and quizzes to help students with English grammar and writing techniques and an online writing tutorial, Online Writing Lab (OWL). Directions on how to use online resources off campus is provided on the library's website. Library and learning support services accommodate disabled students with accessible furniture and specialized equipment.

Pierce College Library offers access for students and faculty to a collection with the normal amount of depth, breadth, and variety to support the curriculums offered at the college. Their collection is comprised of e-books, print volumes, current periodical subscriptions, reserved text books, and several databases for on and off campus research. They offer student study space, and access to computers. Online library support is provided via databases, email, a new juvenile/ children's section, online library tutorials, and 24/7 chat reference.

The new library building spanning 90,000 square feet and opening up spring 2013 with over 350 study carrels for students with electric outlets, more than 120 computer workstations, group & individual soft chair study spaces, as well as a new library instructional smart classroom with over 40 student computers, wireless printing, a state of the art reference desk area with dual face reference computers and many more upgrades, brings the Pierce library into the 21st Century.

Along with the new library comes a new revamped library website. The new dynamic and more user-friendly website was developed by the Pierce College librarians using Libguides, a web application. It contains information left out of the old one, and it allows students and faculty direct online access from their homepage to: electronic books, publication by title, library policies, information on library staff, mission statement for the library, information on copying and printing, online reservation for group study rooms, borrowing, renewals, fines, services for faculty and subject guides (library resources) developed for specific individual classes and disciplines.

Faculty and students can also do a quick book search from the new library webpage and use the new book section created by using "Library Thing" a system of Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) enhancements, designed to make your library catalog more engaging and informative. Features like ratings and reviews, and book suggestions to name just a few available options are also among these new features. It also gives the librarian the opportunity to use monthly topics to feature books held in their collection. (II.C - II.C.1.d)

Findings and Evidence:

Pierce College Library is definitely in a growth period with the library staff in energetic dialogue about this growth (resources and new staff). Even though their operating budget has not increased with these new implementations, they have received funds from the Distance Education program to purchase new resources. Lottery Funds are to be identified for the purchase of new library materials. Librarians reported that they were uncertain whether the new funds are one-time or will be repeated.

While awaiting the opening of the new library this semester, the current library provides 250 carrels, wireless access, 47 open access networked computers, and an additional 20 networked computers in the reference area. There is one microfilm reader/printer, along with two associated networked computers. While the self evaluation did not mention any audio visual items or equipment for viewing audio visual materials, the team saw sufficient resources of this type as well. (II.C)

The library's selection of material is guided by course curriculum and departmental needs. They provide a book request form to faculty. Students do not appear to be solicited for new requests. The faculty book request are compiled and vetted by library faculty and then used to purchase and update materials. Course approval by the curriculum committee also guides collection development in providing sufficient material for new class offerings.

The library offers an Instructor Reserve Section where faculty members provide copies of their textbooks to students for use within the library. These textbooks range in the many disciplines offered at Pierce College. Every course outline must be reviewed and approved by a librarian that adequate resources are available to support curriculum offered. (II.C.1.a)

Collection of material is guided by consulting bibliographic resources and reviews provided by the *Library Journal*, *American Libraries*, *College and Research Libraries*, *Choice*, various publishers' catalogs, Amazon reviews, and other reviews. Databases are purchased through the California Community College Consortium. The librarians noted that additional funding would allow for the purchase of specific databases covering cultural diversity topics.

The entire library collection has been weeded in preparation for moving to a new library spring 2013. Potential materials to replace and strengthen resources for students and faculty have been identified.

Library orientations are provided to address information literacy for several classes, along with workshops, on-demand, informal, and one-on-one instruction at the reference desk. Instruction in Information Literacy is also conducted in the Library Science 102 class offered each spring. The library provides outcomes related to Information Literacy competency and assesses student competence in SLO Report Library Science. Assessments are done with a pre-test, i-search journal, final project, post-test, and forum questions. Faculty using the Library Orientation classes completes a pre- and post-assessment of students during orientations (Standard II.C.1.b)

The library has sufficient maintenance and security for computers, and the resources housed within along with other learning support services. Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputies monitor the library's security system stationed on campus. There are two security gates at the circulation desk and one within the reference area. All library books are embedded with security strips. There was no mention in the self evaluation about security for audio visual materials. The Deep Freeze software is provided to prevent viruses and off campus hacking.

The following is provided for students with disabilities: Large monitors, Refreshable Braille display keyboards, elevating computer desk, Magnisight Explorer, along with software such as: Jaws, Zoomtext, Dragon, Kurzweil. Exterior alarm system and gates provide security. (II.C.1.d)

Pierce College librarians participate in intra-library loan system for books with eight other district libraries. Embedded external link to their Library intra system loan policy was provided. Librarians also participate in monthly meetings of library chairs for opportunities for collaboration. The library also uses the California Community College Library Consortium (CCL) for the purchase of most of its electronic resources. (II.C.1.e)

The library conducts surveys regularly to evaluate the effectiveness of its services and uses these surveys to develop plans for improvement. Surveys and pre- and post-tests provide statistics that enable the library to evaluate their services. The self evaluation provided evidence of annually compiled statistics detailing number of collection resources, both print and online, number of searches performed in all online databases, number of reference questions asked, number of circulated items, number of orientations taught, and number of students that attend orientations. The numbers were not clearly separated to identify online versus in-person reference questions.

Evaluations from students and faculty are used to decide hours of service and satisfaction with various resources. Surveys are administered each spring in student surveys, and faculty orientation surveys. Access to actual surveys was provided in the self evaluation. The library orientations conduct student learning outcome assessments to measure student information competency skills.

Similar to the library evaluation, the Center for Academic Success (CAS) surveys students at the end of all in-class presentations and workshops to collect feedback about tutoring services. The CAS faculty uses this data to adjust and improve content for future and ongoing presentations, and student tutoring. (II.C.2)

The librarians introduced an effective faculty pre- and post-assessments of students during Library Orientations. It is quite evident from the self evaluation that both the library and CAS are not only collecting useful data for their programs and services, they are using this information to improve their services.

Conclusions:

The Pierce College Library provides an impressive depth and breadth of library and support services to faculty and students. The College used several sources of bond and grant funding

to add vibrant new and remodeled facilities to support student learning. The new library is state of the art and a definite improvement.

One issue worthy of attention is the concern voiced by some of the library staff about the absence of a plan for stable future funding. This should be addressed in Recommendation 1.

The College meets the Standard.

Recommendations:

None

STANDARD III

Resources

A. Human Resources

General Observations: -

Through interviews at the District Office and college, and in review of numerous human resources policies and procedures, the team found ample evidence that the college employs qualified personnel to support student learning and institutional effectiveness through the college departments and programs. The District Human Resources Committee with representatives from Pierce College and the Personnel Commission works to support the needs of Pierce College, the other 8 LACCD colleges, and the LACCD District Office. (III.A.2)

By design, the recruitment process varies from employee group to employee group, tailored to each employee group's work functions to allow the selection of the most qualified staff. The foundation for all staff recruitments (classified and academic) is clearly defined in the LACCD's Human Resources Guides. The hiring process for each group of employees, including classified staff and full-time faculty, is defined and structured to ensure the selection of highly qualified individuals who, as such, can contribute to fulfilling the college's mission (III.A.1, III.A.1.a)

The evaluation of managers, including college presidents and vice presidents is described in LACCD Administrative Regulations Link (http://www.laccd.edu/admin_regs/). Faculty are evaluated every year while on probation leading to tenure (tenure eligible in the fourth year). Classified staff are evaluated periodically during the first year, then once a year thereafter. The District maintains the evaluation records for all employees. Systems, Applications and Products (SAP) software is used to track all classified staff evaluations and provides a proactive notification when an evaluation is due. All faculty evaluations are tracked by the vice president of academic affairs' office. Tenure and adjunct faculty are evaluated at least every three years. (III.A.1.b)

The College faculty and administrators support the student learning outcomes process from development to assessment and action both in terms of integrating outcomes into course and program planning and in terms of self evaluation. While reviewing LACCD's response to 2007's District Recommendation 1, the team confirmed that it is documented on faculty evaluation forms, both tenure-track and comprehensive, that achieving stated SLOs is a component of faculty evaluation. (III.A.1.c)

The institution fosters ethical behavior in its employees in several ways. The LACCD has defined the required code of ethics in Board Rule 1204 for all employees. At the College level, standards of conduct and ethics for classified staff are detailed in the Classified Employee Handbook which is distributed to new employees. Minutes of the Pierce College Professional Ethics Committee, a subcommittee of the Academic Senate, show that it looks to achieve objectives relative to reviewing, promoting, and maintaining a high standard of

ethical conduct among faculty. The Professional Ethics Committee (PEC) meets regularly to review issues and develop literature to raise awareness of ethical issues. (III.A.1.d)

The Personnel Commission, collective bargaining agreements, and Human Resources Guides provide comprehensive personnel policies and procedures which all staff can access. The college provides input to these policies through representation on the Human Resources Council and other District wide organizations. The College has established local procedures, guidelines, and documents to implement the district wide policies effectively and interfaces with the District Employer/Employee Relations Department (EER) on a routine basis. (III.A.3)

All interview panels have an EER representative on them whose role is to ensure fair questions are asked and each candidate is asked the same set of questions. All the collective bargaining unit contracts have language to ensure fairness in treatment, and employees can address their concerns through the District's Office of Diversity Programs or through their collective bargaining unit grievance procedures. The District EER provides training to the college to ensure district policies are applied consistently and fairly. (III.A.3.a)

The College makes provisions for keeping personnel records secure and confidential. Paper copies of employee personnel records are physically housed at the district office where employees can view them. Electronic personnel records are housed in the SAP computer system. The confidentiality of applicant records is ensured by the execution of confidentiality agreements by all members of selection/hiring committees. Under the direction of the equal employment opportunity officer, during the faculty hiring process, the college provides security and confidentiality of employee and prospective employee records. All employees are informed of their rights of access to their personnel records, and the District's SAP Human Resources system provides an employee self service component that provides online access to each employee's personnel information. (III.A.3.b)

The College follows both external mandates, such as those found in Title 5, and internal policies and procedures, such as employee surveys and relevant committee work. The College determines the type of support its personnel need is through the district wide Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Committee which has representatives from each college. Committee members consult on workshop topics focused on sensitizing employees to issues of diversity and equality. These workshops are sponsored by the District's Human Resources Division and coordinated by the colleges' Human Resources Departments. (III.A.4.a)

Policies and procedures about the treatment of personnel are developed, implemented, and evaluated regularly at the College and the District through the collective bargaining units and the Personnel Commission. Employee handbooks, collective bargaining agreements, personnel policies, administrative regulations, and Board Rules all provide the college with appropriate structures to ensure that all employees are treated fairly. Policies regarding student treatment are documented in the college catalog and schedules of classes. Student participation is valued in all aspects of the college. Students participate in the governance process and are invited to be members of many governance committees such as the PCC. The

College has formal and informal procedures to address student grievances. For issues involving employee conflict, the District EAP provides counselors to facilitate a collegial work environment. Student, faculty, and staff grievances are resolved in a progressive manner at the college. There are two kinds of grievance process: formal and informal. These processes are detailed on the college website and collective bargaining unit agreements. In special circumstances, problems are coordinated through the District Office of Diversity Programs. (III.A.4.b,c)

The Professional Development Committee (PDC), a sub-committee of the Academic Senate, meets routinely to plan, develop, and assess professional development at Pierce College. The District provides professional development opportunities through the EAP lectures and tuition reimbursement for classified staff. Pierce College identifies professional development needs and develops activities to meet them, but recognizes a need for more support of staff development opportunities. (III.A.5.a)

The College strives to support the most appropriate professional development programs for all college employees with available resources. The greatest share of these programs is offered to academic staff as required Flex hours. In collaboration with the LACCD EAP Committee, the College is able to access professional development workshops for all classified and academic employees. Additionally, classified staff has the benefit of applying for tuition reimbursements and work schedule relief to obtain college degrees. (III.A.5.b)

The college wide professional development plan to be completed by the PDC by the end of 2013 is expected to articulate a relationship between professional development and short and long-term institutional planning. This will be accomplished through the integration of classified staff with existing PDC membership and a classified professional development needs assessment. (III.A.6)

Findings and Evidence:

The Personnel Commission has established job classifications to achieve two ends: to respond to College and District needs and to solicit the broadest possible pool of qualified candidates. Extensive testing procedures are in place to ensure that candidates who are placed on eligibility lists have the required skills to guarantee the integrity of programs and services. Pierce College's Academic Senate, guided by the District policy on minimum qualifications for academic positions, identifies and analyzes the appropriate criteria for faculty recruitments. Through extensive deliberation and discussion, the Academic Senate developed the Pierce College Faculty Hiring Procedures. This document provides the framework for academic employee recruitment. (III.A.1.a)

Evidence that the hiring process for all employee groups follows strict guidelines established either by the College or the LACCD District office and Personnel Commission was found in LACCD Human Resources Guide 100 Link (3.001), Pierce College Faculty Hiring Procedures, and LACCD Minimum Qualifications HR Guide 100 Link (3.010). (III.A.1.b)

Surveying the evaluation processes, procedures, and forms for classified, faculty and management personnel established that the College has a clear understanding of its evaluation obligations. Selected interviews with participants on both sides of the evaluation process convinced the team that Pierce College is current on all of its evaluations. (III.A.1.c)

While many at the college expressed a desire and belief that additional full-time and adjunct human resources across categories would improve services to students, the team did not find evidence that the current resources were insufficient for the college's mission. (III.A.2)

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

Recommendations:

None

B. Physical Resources

General Observations:

Pierce College was founded in 1947 and is located on 426 acres on the Western San Fernando Valley. The College houses almost 100 disciplines and serves close to 20,000 students. The College originated as an agricultural college and to date still maintains a 226 acre farm located on the west side of the campus. The College is currently in the middle of major construction and renovation projects. Based on projected demands, new facilities are being constructed to house programs that are expected to grow and renovations are being conducted for a number of other buildings. These facilities projects are funded by the LACCD out of multiple bond measures. Due to emerging concerns about cost of ownership and sustainability, the District recently placed a temporary moratorium on new construction projects, but the moratorium has since been rescinded.

The institution recently established the Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) that has helped improve the integration between physical resources and institutional planning. The College utilizes the FAC as the mechanism to evaluate the needs of its facilities. The FAC committee “reviews all college facilities program plans for alignment with Educational Master Plan (EMP) and Facilities Master Plan (FMP)” and makes recommendations to the Pierce College Council for approval of facilities program plans. Additionally, the FAC “Develops campus-wide standards for classroom size, office size and appropriate support spaces based on state-wide and local standards for these types of space.” Those Standards take into consideration enrollment planning goals and health and safety. (III.B)

The College updated its Facilities Master Plan in 2010. The College’s Facilities Master Plan establishes the physical framework for the campus in support of the College’s mission. The development process of the Facilities Master Plan gave careful consideration to the geographic locations of students and communities primarily served by the College, transportation and access routes, historic context, sustainability, enrollment history, campus character, and many other factors.

In its review of the college, the team examined the Plant Facilities Program Review 2011-12, toured the facility, and interviewed plant facilities personnel. The team found that Pierce College evaluates the safety of its facilities by several criteria, both externally and internally mandated. Campus facilities are regulated by state safety standards (California Building Standards Commission Link: [3.068](#)). All college buildings must be up to code, and all renovations and new construction are inspected for safety. The College’s Plant Facilities staff regularly monitors the buildings and relevant equipment to ensure they are in working order. Requests for facilities repairs may be reported through a web site interface in the form of an online work request as well as through daily observation by maintenance staff, students, faculty, staff, and administration. In addition, the Plant Facilities unit completes routine maintenance and inspections according to existing timetables and researches new methodologies for executing maintenance and safety goals. Routine scheduled maintenance and work orders also address specific issues that may develop from the relevant faculty and staff according to program policies and state agencies. (III.B.1.a)

The Faculty Staff Resource Center is located in the Library and provides resources and services to assist faculty to develop and teach online courses. Moodle Online was implemented to support Pierce College's online presence and to encourage instructors to move to a digital environment. The College's Resource Allocation Committee (RAC) reviews annual plans from programs and departments to identify facility needs. The College's long range capital plans are addressed by its Facilities Master Plan; however, the College did not provide evidence that demonstrates it conducts total cost of ownership planning that would influence budget planning. (III.B1, III.B.2, and III.B.2.a)

California state and local bonds A, AA, and Measure J have allowed the College to build much needed new facilities and renovate older facilities. New facilities and accompanying landscaping alone will have added almost 200,000 square feet to the current facilities, and there are plans for additional buildings in the near future. The bond guidelines allow bond funds to be used for future maintenance/warranty of equipment, and the College has taken advantage of this option in some cases as a way to cover future costs for computer hardware and multifunctional devices. The college has employed a calculation used for total cost of ownership. All facilities are built to the stringent safety expectation of the Field Act ensuring that students' health and welfare is protected. (III. B.1 a, III.B.2.a)

The college has successfully linked its resource and institutional planning to ensure its physical resources. All resource allocation recommendations are made in concert with the College Strategic Plan and the College Master Plan. All annual plans are submitted to the RAC for consideration. Every resource request from every area of the College is prioritized and recommendations are sent on to the PCC and then submitted to the college president. (III.B.2.b)

Findings and Evidence:

Team members toured the College's extensive 426 acres by foot and motorized vehicles, entered all of its new and older facilities, visited active classes in nearly every classroom facility, observed services in many other buildings, interviewed staff who use the facilities, and held open sessions that were attended by community members. The team found significant evidence that the Pierce College's facility construction and planning are integrated and driven by its mission. The new Facilities Master Plan focuses on new projects, renovations, sustainability, and various other construction projects. The goals of the Facilities Master Plan are aligned with the college's mission, strategic plan, and driven by public comment sessions with Pierce community members. While a moratorium on new bond construction was temporarily called, it was recently rescinded. The team found that the district's and college's discussions during the moratorium centered on connecting to the college's new plan given the changing circumstance of LACCD bond finances.

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

Recommendations:

None

C. Technology Resources

General Observations:

The College owns and operates a significant academic and administrative network infrastructure, along with numerous computers, peripherals, and district-owned mobile devices, all managed by the Information Technology (IT) Department. The team found that it also has comprehensive long-term staffing and equipment planning along with existing IT structures and staff.

The College identifies technology needs through a formal collaborative process among faculty, administrators, and IT specialists. This process is designed to meet the needs of learning, teaching, college wide communications, research, and operational systems. The Pierce College Technology Master Plan informs the implementation of its educational master plan, supports instructional technology decisions, as well as defines distance education. This plan consists of two major components; the first part details the plan for the physical and human resources needed to maintain the functionality of the campus' technological needs, and the second part describes the plan for the curriculum development, faculty and student training, and student support services required to create a robust distance education program. The Pierce College Council, the College's primary participatory governance body, approved the plan in 2010 for campus wide dissemination.

Needed technology has been assessed and infrastructure upgrades have been identified, including for the facilities currently under construction. The provision for more distance education training was substantiated through interviews with the vice president of academic affairs, the director of information technology, the coordinator of distance education, distance education faculty, Library personnel, and others. (III.C-III.C.1.b)

Continual viability assessments of the existing technology infrastructure and formal discussions at both the Educational Technology Committee (ETC) and the Technology Committee (TC) determine the future technology methodologies applicable to the College. The process ensures that the technical infrastructure strictly adheres to District Board Rules, network policies and procedures, and industry best practices. The College is consistently planning for future expansion and improvements. The Proposition A, AA, and Measure J local bond programs include technology plans developed in cooperation with engineers, architects, technology consultants, and the LACCD office. The College has developed a distance education plan that includes educational technology staffing, equipment, supplies, Moodle, courses, certificates, and degree inclusion criteria. The plan also notes online student services and packaging and marketing plans for an effective distance education program. (III.C.1.d)

Findings and Evidence:

Departmental needs for technology are articulated among faculty, staff, and department chairs. Career and technical department needs are informed, also, by advisory committees which meet at least yearly as noted in a review of their meeting minutes. Resulting funding

requests are routed to the Resource Advisement Committee (RAC) for prioritization. In turn, RAC submits its prioritized lists to the Pierce College Council (PCC). Guidance is provided by the LACCD office to assure that equipment and operating systems comply with District connectivity and performance. Locally, survey data, proposals, and justifications based on program reviews, education code, and input from the Technology Committee (TC) are reviewed by the PCC to assess effectiveness. The Academic Senate considers the adoption of policy as presented by the Educational Technology Committee (ETC). Administrators review requests and recommend priorities. (III.C.1)

The academic and administrative network infrastructure, along with all computers, peripherals, and District-owned mobile devices, is managed by the IT Department. The implementation of major computer technology projects, equipment and software research, and technologies maintenance is the responsibility of the Information Systems Manager and Vice President of Administrative Services. Comprehensive long-term staffing and equipment planning are carried out following the procedures of the College Technology Plan and the College IT Proposal. Data from the Educational Master Plan and Facilities Master Plan identify technology needs, which can be aligned with possible funding sources related to infrastructure, support for renovated and new buildings, and future communications systems. Bonds, unrestricted general funds, block grants, Vocational and Technical Education Act (VTEA) monies, and grants are examples of funding sources which have been identified and integrated. (III.C.1)

The college regularly reviews its technology procedures, seeking to maintain congruency with industry best practices and state chancellor's office concepts. The team found that the College adheres to the guidelines of the state Telecommunications and Technology Infrastructure Program (TTIP) as its approach to total cost of ownership for its technology planning and implementation. The library automation and digital resources are supported by the College, with new databases having recently been deployed for students' online use. (III.C.1)

The College provides and maintains technology services, professional support, facilities, hardware, and software designed to enhance its operation and effectiveness. Survey data submitted to all College personnel, and routed through institutionalized planning processes, is used to assist in making recommendations to the Pierce College Council (PCC). Distance learning programs have been enhanced by federally funded programs, including the institutionalization of Online Writing Lab (OWL) and a contractual arrangement with Remote Learner (the provider of Moodle). The provision for more distance education training was substantiated through interviews with the vice president of academic affairs, the director of information technology, the coordinator of distance education, distance education faculty, library personnel, and others. Several computer and network systems are maintained for district and college applications, and the IT department works in collaboration with the Plant Facilities Department, which is responsible for the installation of electrical systems and other IT-related systems like Voice Over IP (VoIP). (III.C.1.a-b)

Training in the effective application of information technology is provided to students and employees, with the need for training assessed in several ways. Faculty members are

surveyed annually to identify areas in which training is needed, providing input for assessment on email, Internet, websites, and classroom instruction. Departments identify their technology needs in detail in their annual plans, which are then prioritized by the Resource Advisement Committee (RAC) and forwarded to the Pierce College Council (PCC). Distance education and the Learning Management System are coordinated by PierceOnLine staff and the Coordinator of Distance Education. Training needs are identified through faculty surveys, faculty requests, Moodle's Student Help Ticket submissions, vendor recommendations, intra-district coordination, and informal focus groups. PierceOnLine staff attend conferences and workshops to stay current with technologies. Introductory to advanced training for students is provided by the Computer Application and Office Technology (CAOT) and Computer Science and Information Technology (CSIT) academic departments. (III.C.1.b)

Acquisition, upgrading, and replacement of equipment and infrastructure are carried out to meet institutional needs by way of the College's Technology Plan, in coordination with the District's Strategic Technology Plan. While the College has been challenged by the addition of smart classrooms and new facilities, systematic planning efforts to identify IT needs, prioritize requests, and develop alternative funding sources are ongoing. For example, the College deploys network infrastructure equipment with a lifetime warranty to reduce liability of maintenance costs, and is committed to deploying a lower maintenance thin-client methodology to fulfill student and staff computer lab needs. Printer maintenance is outsourced on contracts. A four-year replacement cycle for the College's computers is in place at approximately \$200,000 per year. Student data collected within the LACCD student information system is maintained at the district level; health center systems, student academic assignments, staff files, and email stored on the local area network are maintained by the College within a secured data center. (III.C.1.c)

The visiting team confirmed that Pierce College's Educational Technology Committee addresses its technology infrastructure needs and the needs of its distance education program and services. A number of district and College documents that address technology and other educational planning agenda include the "Pierce College Educational Technology Committee Policy for Online Classes" and the "Pierce College Instructor/ Student Contact Policy for Distance Education Courses". These policies address hybrid and fully online classes and student and faculty contact that must happen weekly and cover initiated contact and frequency of contact between student and faculty. Though these two documents define what Pierce College policies are in place for their distance education program, the visiting team did not find the "Handbook for Providing Quality Distance Education" referenced in their self evaluation. (III.C.1.d)

Program reviews at the departmental level feed into the Educational Master Plan, which is made operational by the Strategic Plan. Annual plans, program reviews, and items set forth in the Technology Plan and IT Department tactical plans are discussed to assist with the assessment of the effective use of resources. The Technology Master Plan (2010) identifies projects and establishes service-level benchmarks. Although the Technology Master Plan (2010 – 2012) is to be updated every two years, it was noted by the team that there is no update on file. (III.C.1.c)

The College has made several provisions to ensure the distribution and utilization of technology resources to support the development, maintenance, and enhancement of its programs and services, guided by the participatory governance process. At the department level, resource requests are submitted to the Resource Advisement Committee (RAC) via annual plans, which are then prioritized per the College's goals and objectives and forwarded to the PCC. College wide technology proposals are reviewed by the Technology Committee (TC). The TC and Senate Educational Technology Committee (ETC) make policy recommendations to the Academic Senate and to the Pierce College Council (PCC).

The College's significant investment towards the improvement of technology has resulted in more than 90 percent of all network switches being connected by high-speed fiber. Software and hardware are used to monitor network performance, enabling the analysis of work flow and network reliability. Technology plans have been developed and reviewed in cooperation with engineers, architects, technology consultants, and the LACCD office. (III.C.1.d)

The administration, faculty, and staff use program reviews, annual plans, and other performance standards to establish priorities and then approve and implement college wide and departmental technologies. The College evaluates the effectiveness of its technologies through assessments such as surveys and completion rates of strategic and tactical projects in order to make effective use of its various current and future funding resources. (III.C.1) The provisions of Propositions A and AA and Measure J bond funds have provided opportunities to develop a robust and expanded technical infrastructure for students, faculty, and staff. (III.C.1.d) The sequential milestones resulting from a College taskforce formed in spring 2006 to develop a distance learning program plan have been met. These included educational technology staffing, equipment, and supplies; Moodle; course, certificate, and degree inclusion criteria; online student services; and packaging and marketing plans for an effective Distance Education Plan. (III.C.1.d) Technology planning and institutional planning are integrated by the linkages provided by the College Educational Master Plan and Strategic Plan, providing opportunity for systematic assessment and ongoing improvement.

The development and monitoring of the technology plan is being coordinated by three related entities: the Educational Technology Committee, a standing committee of the Academic Senate that directs the academic and instructional technology development of the distance education program; the Technology Committee, which is responsible for ensuring that the College's hardware, software, and networking capabilities are adequate to support instructional needs; and PierceOnline, which provides training and support for online curriculum development and pedagogical preparation to faculty under the guidance of the ETC, as well as technical support for instructional media development for online classes.

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

Recommendations:

None

D. Financial Resources

General Observations:

Pierce College, as one of nine community colleges in the LACCD, is governed by the Board of Trustees and managed by the district administration who are responsible to ensure there are appropriate Board Rules (policies) and Administrative Regulations (procedures) to provide fiscal oversight, practices and controls to protect the College. The District has access to sufficient cash to cover Pierce College's current obligations. The District maintains adequate insurance and the District and College together maintain adequate reserves to cover the College's risks. The District Chief Financial Officer reviews cash flows for the College on a regular schedule. LACCD prepares annual budgets using a published budget development process timeline. This comprehensive process identifies the District and College administrative and governance roles. The sequencing, roles and processes are clearly illustrated in the district's budget development flowchart.

The College's financial planning is guided by institutional planning as evidenced by the agendas, minutes, financial plans, budget reports, and other documents archived by its main participatory governance bodies. These include documents from the PCC, BC, and RAC. The College uses mechanisms for the routine review of its mission, goals, and values, and financial planning is integrated into institutional planning throughout the budget development process.

In the budgeting process, the District Budget Committee (DBC), establishes District goals and agrees on processes and procedures to allocate resources. Pierce College faculty, staff, and administrators participate on the District Planning Committee (DPC) and DBC, and contribute to the dialogue and decision-making. The finance staff and the DBC produce multi-year funding and spending projections. The District also advises the colleges on their obligations to hire full-time faculty to enable the LACCD to meet its long-term goals based on the Faculty Obligation Number (FON).

The team confirmed through interviews with the College's vice president of administrative services that the College is closely monitoring, and the LACCD took significant steps to address the issue of its unfunded liability for retiree health care. In fall 2006, it negotiated an agreement approved by the District's six unions and the Board of Trustees to begin pre-funding a portion of its unfunded obligation. The District annually directs 1.92 percent of the previous fiscal year's full-time employee payroll into an irrevocable trust, managed through CalPERS.

The District's bond program staff created tools to guide the college's strategic planning, such as maintenance and operations staffing models for supporting new campus buildings being delivered by the construction program. The District uses an allocation formula to determine the colleges' annual unrestricted general fund. The allocation formula was recently changed to deal with the issues of facilities (fixed costs that are not FTES driven), scheduled maintenance (a line item allocation to address the need to fund scheduled maintenance projects), college fixed administrative costs, and the other post-employment benefits unfunded liability. Additionally, the District has revised its general fund reserves to include

a 5% permanent general reserve (\$23.5 million) and a 7.5% contingency reserve (\$35.2 million). (III.D.1.a-d, 3.c.d))

The team discovered through interviews with District and College business and accounting staff that the College is currently using a modified “zero-based” budgeting model which includes an integrated planning process for the funds that it receives from the District. The budget planning process begins at the unit level and moves through the department level then school or area level. Information is then provided to appropriate committees. Further prioritization is done at the vice president/president level. The final prioritized budget (resource) requests are then presented to the Resource Advise ment Committee (RAC). RAC has used two prioritization procedures during the last three years. The first was a quantitative rubric and the second, a set of guiding principles. In its efforts to continuously improve, the College is currently considering another procedure which integrates both approaches. The RAC and Pierce College Council evaluated the effectiveness of these procedures and made the recommendations for changes. Reductions in positions (due to budget reductions) are identified by the senior management staff. Pierce College’s FY13 general fund budget is \$55,950,252. This is nearly a \$10 million reduction from the prior year’s budget of \$65,545,658. (III.D.1.d; 4)

The District is responsible, through Board Rules and Administrative Regulations, to provide the structures for internal controls. Pierce College ensures the compliance to these rules and regulations. The District is using an automated financial system (SAP) to manage and present the budget and financial information to the college. Additionally, the president sends out a “First Monday” report eight times a year that disseminates detailed information regarding the financial plan, budget, and current and predicted budget conditions. For example, the September 5, 2012 issue presented a FY2013 final budget update. This update presented the changes to the contingency reserves, general reserves, and deferred maintenance funds. Because financial decisions may impact stakeholders who are not represented by the College’s participatory governance process, the president also seeks input about institutional planning at town hall meetings attended by employees, students, and the community. Presentations to the BC and the PCC, periodic town hall meetings for all members of the college community, as well as reports to the Academic Senate, complement the president’s First Monday Reports. (III.D.2.c)

The District maintains staff to perform internal audits with results sent to the Board of Trustees. Audits may be conducted and reviewed for progress made toward addressing previous recommendations. Audits were conducted in 2011 for Community Services, Payroll, Career and Technical Education, and the Cal Card program. Among the findings of these audits were revisions to the process for appropriately tagging equipment. The College operational divisions maintain oversight and respond to District managed annual external audit and intermittent internal audits. Improvements are implemented as part of corrective action plans (CAPs) submitted and included in the reports. The senior administration meets quarterly with District budget and enrollment management staff to review College financial performance.

The College's grant programs, fundraising efforts, and auxiliary organizations have produced validated audits which demonstrate fiscal integrity. The audits for the Pierce College Foundation are reviewed by the Foundation Board of Directors and the College president with copies sent to the District office and the California State Chancellor's office. Title V and other Department of Education specially funded programs are periodically audited by the funding agency with the last Title V audit performed in the spring of 2010. Although the College has performed well in audits, it recognizes the need to work closely with the District office to fully address District level audit findings. (III.D.2.a-d, 3.h)

Additionally, the College develops practices to maintain the financial integrity for local enterprises including the Foundation and trust accounts. The College is implementing a new fundraising form to ensure proper cash and risk management. Trust funds are being reorganized to include a charter and identify fiscal custodians. (III.D.2.e)

Findings and Evidence:

Pierce College has a history of having general fund ending balances. These balances accumulate and are carried forward into the next fiscal year as college reserves. While the College has attempted to develop and maintain a locally controlled balance of unrestricted general funds, recent changes in District policy have somewhat thwarted this effort. To assist with contingency planning at the District, the District wide contingency reserve was increased from 5 percent to 7.5 percent which required an additional 11.7 million dollars. Some of these funds came from the College, which resulted in the College's cumulative cash reserve balance being substantially reduced. The College has been promised that the funds will be credited when fiscal conditions improve. In the meantime, this shift of funds has decreased the College's ability to develop independent, contingency plans for emergency and or unforeseen events. In addition to the district wide contingency reserve, for the 2012-13 fiscal year the Board of Trustees approved funding a district wide general reserve of \$23.5 million to help maintain cash flow. This reserve, which represents 5 percent of the State allocation for LACCD, was created and also funded using a portion of Pierce College's FY 2011- 12 ending balance. This resulted in the College's beginning FY13 with a \$5.3 million contingency reserve. (III.D.3.a)

Pierce College generally effectively oversees its finances, including financial aid, grants, externally funded programs, contractual relationships, auxiliary organizations such as the Foundation for Pierce College, and institutional investments and assets. The team read in the meeting minutes of the College Foundation that the College ensures programs and services are consistent with the mission and goals of Pierce College. Loans and scholarship accounts are maintained by both the Foundation and the ASO, and these accounts are set up with specific instructions for disbursement of funds with Foundation oversight provided by the Foundation's executive director and the college president. All external funding, either from private funds obtained by the Foundation or by public sources (grants and categorical) received by the College, is subject to procedures established by the College to ensure consistency with the College's mission and goals. ASO oversight is provided by the vice president of student services and the college president. The College noted a need to improve its performance in this Standard. Historically, the College ASO trust account funds and grant

funds have been managed at the program level. Individual faculty or departments have had opportunities to develop plans and expend funds without full consultation and validation that their plans align with College goals. The College recognizes the need to clarify processes in these areas.

The College's financial plan is monitored on a regular basis with monthly updates. These monthly projections are reviewed by the president and senior staff. Each quarter, the College reviews the financial plan with the District office budget staff to ensure that the College projections match those which are computed by the District office budget staff. The College follows policies and procedures established and enforced by the LACCD's District office. All signed legal agreements are maintained at the District office which serves as the central repository. The integrity of the institution is maintained by requiring agreements to contain termination language. The president and vice president of administrative services are responsible for ensuring that all contractual agreements generated by the College are consistent with the College's mission and goals. Once they are approved at the college level, they are forwarded to the Board of Trustees for either ratification or approval. (III.D.3.b-g)

Conclusions:

The visiting team reviewed the status of a number of the planning agenda items for this broad Standard that the College assigned itself. In reviewing these improvement action plans, the team observed that many have been completed. It is apparent the College has identified, and begun developing, implementing and assessing its new processes in its efforts to fully comply with the accreditation standards. There are some instances where the College has not fully implemented nor assessed the effectiveness of these new processes.

The team concluded from the evidence presented and the College's own planning agenda that the College meets a number of the elements of the standard. The team found one aspect of the standard that the college did not meet. Specifically, the ASO trust account, Foundation, and grant program expenditures need to be administratively managed to ensure alignment with the College mission and goals. The vice president of administrative services currently oversees these specific areas, and the Foundation and grant procedures are scheduled to be implemented by the end of 2013. As noted above, because the College ASO trust account funds and grant funds historically have been managed at the program level, individual faculty or departments have had opportunities to develop plans and expend funds without full consultation and validation that their plans align with College goals. The College recognizes the need to clarify processes in these areas. (III D.2.d, III D. 2.e)

The College partially meets the Standard, and the following recommendation identifies how the College can completely meet the Standard.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 3

In order to fully comply with the Standard, the College should fully develop, implement, and assess internal control mechanisms for the expenditures of grants and specified funds

including the Associated Student Organization trust accounts and the Foundation to ensure these activities align with the mission and goals of the college. (III D.2.d, III D. 2.e)

STANDARD IV

Leadership and Governance

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

General Observations:

Pierce College describes and provides evidence of its leadership, decision making and governance, and evaluates how these are utilized to support continuous improvement of the institution and support student learning programs and services in its coverage of Standard IV. (IV.A.1, IV.A.2) As recently as 2012, college committees including College Planning Committee, Resource Advisement Committee, College Outcomes Committee and College Planning Committee have been formed and added. The College is in the early stages of implementation of some of these key committees and will need ongoing assessment to determine the extent to which these committees support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness and how well the work of these committees is integrated into the allocation of resources. (IV.A.3) Pierce College strives to meet ACCJC standards, policies, requirements, and guidelines. When it receives them, the institution moves expeditiously to respond to recommendations made by the Commission. (IV.A.4) In the course of developing its culture of evidence, evaluation, and assessment, Pierce College has established processes for regular review of its governance and decision-making structures to ensure effectiveness and integrity. (IV.A.5)

Findings and Evidence:

The team concluded Pierce College has developed decision-making structures that are designed to facilitate broad participation and communication of goals and progress towards achieving goals. Pierce College Council members stated the College has developed decision-making structures that have formalized conversations leading to college decisions. In addition, Pierce College Council members described a culture of participation that is inclusive and provides broad opportunities for committee participation for all constituencies. Because some college committees have only been in existence since 2012, more time is needed to assess the effectiveness of these new committees. (IV.A.1)

The Pierce College identifies formalized faculty roles and leadership in decision making and planning which are described in the Pierce College Decision-Making and Planning Handbook and in negotiated contracts with faculty. In addition, the College Academic Senate Bylaws describe a well-defined committee structure, substantive and clearly defined roles for faculty to contribute to the overall success of the College. Administrators, due to their positions and clearly defined roles on committees, also have a substantial voice in institutional planning and budget as it relates to their areas of responsibility and expertise. (IV.A.2.a)

The Pierce College relies on faculty, its academic senate, academic senate committees and academic administrators for recommendations about student learning programs and services. The Academic Senate President and Pierce College Council members stated the new faculty orientation and college culture ensures faculty participation and leadership are the college norm. They provided examples of multiple faculty members running for membership slots

on committees. As a result, the Academic Senate established a selection process which includes a Senate vote to select the committee member. Faculty and academic managers have a central role in determining and shaping the College's academic courses and programs and services that support learning. The Academic Senate describes the official responsibilities and authority of the faculty and of academic administrators in curricular and other education matters as described in its bylaws and the Pierce College Decision-Making and Planning Handbook. (IV.A.2.b)

District and College governance structures, processes and practices are in place to facilitate discussion of ideas and effective communication. Roles for Board members, administration, faculty, staff and students have been established with the goal of facilitating discussion of ideas and communication among constituencies. (IV.A.2-3)

Documentation provided by the institution demonstrates that Pierce College has maintained a positive relationship with the ACCJC. In response to the recommendations received as a result of its 2007 visit, Pierce College submitted a timely and appropriate Focused Midterm Report in 2007. In line with Commission requirements, the College has been monitoring its distance education program, and has the required Substantive Change Report to the ACCJC so that its general education degree pattern can be earned fully in the distance education format. The College has responded appropriately to all ten recommendations received from the Commission in 2007. Based on a review of a sample of the publicly-available materials of Pierce College, and supported by evidence and interviews, the institution's communications regarding institutional quality and effectiveness are accurate. Finally, Pierce College has maintained a positive relationship with the U.S. Department of Education, having earned two federal Title V HSI grants. Furthermore, the institution works to maintain compliance with various federal statutes and regulations (IV.A.4)

The various governance and decision-making committees at the College regularly conduct self-evaluations to assess their effectiveness and identify strategies for improvement and goals for the upcoming year. Evaluation cycles are established in the charter of the various committees and councils. The institution also uses periodic faculty/staff surveys, annual staff development surveys, and an informal feedback loop to inform decision making. The data collected from these evaluation and assessment processes are discussed and used to inform institutional improvement (e.g., amending governance committee charters to reflect institutional and operational needs) One item of note, however—through interviews, the team did learn that, while the processes and structures for an inclusive governance process are in place, the institution should work to identify ways in which the participation of classified staff and students can be strengthened and made more effective. (IV.A.5)

Conclusions:

The team found Pierce College is committed to participatory governance and has established roles in contracts, college and district documents. There is ample opportunity for all constituencies to participate in college and district governance. The Academic Senate has the primary responsibility for academic and professional matters and has developed a well-defined committee structure and articulated roles that contribute to the overall success of the

College. The Pierce College Decision-Making and Planning Handbook describe the governance and college committee structure.

The College meets Standard.

Recommendations:

None

B. Board and Administrative Organization

General Observations:

The Los Angeles Community College District comprises nine related colleges, each of which is directly answerable to a seven-member board of trustees, in accordance with Education Code 70902. LACCD board members are elected for four-year terms District wide by voters in the city of Los Angeles and in neighboring cities without their own community college districts. (IV.B.1)

Review of evidence confirms that Pierce College has a governing board responsible for establishing policies to assure quality, integrity and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services of the College, as well as assuring its financial stability. The Board exercises policy-making independence, and there is ample evidence that Board Rules are consistent with the missions of the District and the college to ensure the integrity, quality, and improvement of student learning programs and services. The Board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity, and it publishes its bylaws and policies concerning board size, roles and responsibilities. The Board conducts self-evaluations. The Board also has a program for board development and new member orientation. Overall, the Board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws, and has recently instituted a practice of regular evaluation of its policies and practices. (IV.B.1.a-j)

The Board has an established role in setting and updating policies in order to ensure the effective operation of the District. Oversight of the College's educational programs and services is accomplished by means of board rules and administrative regulations that establish standards for graduation, set policies for curriculum development and approval, and detail the faculty's central role in educational matters in accordance with the District's stated mission.

The LACCD Board of Trustees is an elected governance board, charged with the responsibility of establishing policies to govern a community college district in the public interest. It advocates on behalf of the District, the colleges within the District, and the service area to outside agencies and governmental entities.

The Board has an established role in setting and updating policies in order to ensure the effective operation of the District under the guidance of its mission statement. Oversight of the College's educational programs and services is accomplished by means of Board Rules and Administrative Regulations intended to promote the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services.

The Board monitors the educational quality of LACCD programs through its standing committees. In conjunction with the Chancellor's Office and the Office of General Counsel, the Board is apprised of and assumes responsibility for all legal matters associated with the operation of the nine campuses. The Board bears responsibility for monitoring all aspects of District and college finances. An independent audit of the District's and the Colleges'

financial statements and accounting practices is made annually by an outside agency. (IV.B.1.a.-c)

The duties and responsibilities of the Board are defined externally by state statute, and internally by Board Rules. The Chancellor and General Counsel also play an important role in monitoring board responsibilities. (IV.B.1.d)

In 2007, the Board adopted a regulation stipulating the process for the cyclical, automatic review of all policies and regulations. Rules and regulations are assigned by category to subject matter experts every three years. If they are in need of revision, the appropriate staff member prepares changes. Suggested revisions are reviewed and considered at board meetings. Since April 9, 2010, the Board has adopted 11 new board rules and updated 34 existing ones. The Board relies on the Chancellor, the college presidents, and executive and senior staff to ensure that all rules and regulations are implemented uniformly and effectively across the District. (IV.B.1.e)

In 2007, the Board adopted a formal policy for the orientation of new board members. It also developed procedures for the orientation of student trustees. With the election of two board members in July of 2011, each participated in a nine-hour orientation held on three separate days. These orientations included information about Accreditation Standards and ACCJC expectations that trustees be involved in all aspects of accreditation.

The LACCD Board of Trustees' self-evaluation process is defined, published as a part of the District's governing policies, and has been implemented. In addition, the District Board Rules also contain a "Statement of Ethical Values and a Code of Ethical Conduct" which is followed by a defined policy for responding to violations of this code.

One of the four standing committees of the Board of Trustees is the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. This committee is composed of three trustees, and possesses, in part, the responsibility to monitor the accreditation self evaluation process as it is proceeding at the colleges, and report back to the full Board on this matter (IV.B.1.f.-i).

The president of Pierce College accepts primary responsibility for the overall quality of the institution. This office oversees an administrative structure that includes three vice presidents, a director, and dean, and a marketing and advisement officer. Each of these units is responsible for different areas of the College, and each is expected to serve an appropriate function with the best interests of the institution in mind. (IV.B.2.a, IV.B.2, IV.B.2.c, IV.B.2.d, IV.B.2.e, IV.B.3.e)

Over her tenure at Pierce College, the president has contributed to an institutional culture dedicated to improvement of the teaching and learning environment through her efforts in establishing and communicating institutional goals, promoting decision-making based on research, encouraging integrated planning, and encouraging the establishment of procedures that will contribute to the evaluation of overall institutional planning and implementation efforts. (IV.B.2.b)

As the LACCD is a multi-college district, additional standards require consideration. The District has identified the various operational roles and responsibilities in the *LACCD District/College Governance and Functions Handbook* (IV.B.3.a) and worked to assess the effectiveness of the services that are intended to support the colleges. (IV.B.3.b) Regarding resources, the District has established, reviewed, and revised its system for distribution of resources among the nine colleges, all the while effectively controlling its overall expenditures. (IV.B.3.c-d)

District wide councils and committees, as identified in the LACCD District Governance and Functions Handbook, facilitate the sharing of information between the District and the colleges within. Appointees to these committees are charged with the responsibility of bringing information back to their constituencies/colleges/campuses, and carrying information from those respective entities to the District (IV.B.3.f.).

In an effort to evaluate the integrity and effectiveness of its role delineation, as well as its decision-making processes and structures, the LACCD conducted surveys on each of these topics to inform its assessment process. Furthermore, a template for self-evaluation, to be completed annually by the District-level governance committees, was completed. Results of these assessments are publicly available through the District website and presented to the Board of Trustees. (IV.B.3. e-g.)

Findings and Evidence:

The Board is guided by an 18-chapter manual referred to as their Board Rules. Board Rule 2301 speaks to the governance responsibilities of the Board of Trustees. This policy was last amended in 2006. Amendment dates are listed on the bottom of the policy. There does not appear to be an identified review/revision cycle at the Board Rule level: Rather, it exists in Administrative Regulation (Administrative Regulation C-12). The regulation requires a triennial review of policies. The regulation was initially issued in 2007, and most recently revised in late-2012.

Board Rule 10308 of the LACCD Board Rules establishes the process for the selection of a college president within the District. LACCD's Chancellor's Directive 122 identifies the role of the Board of Trustees in the process of evaluating the chief administrative officer. Board Rule 2302 and Chapter VI of the LACCD Board Rules speaks to the Board's role in matters of instruction. In particular, Chapter VI, Article VIII of the LACCD Board Rules speaks to the goals of the Board in terms assessment of the effectiveness of student learning programs. The mission statement of the District expresses commitment to quality, integrity, and effectiveness through its focus toward "excellent education that prepares [students] to transfer..., successfully complete workforce development programs..., and pursue opportunities for lifelong learning and civil engagement." Furthermore, LACCD's core values of access and opportunity, excellence and innovation, student learning and success, free inquiry, diversity, equity, community connection, and public accountability and transparency all speak to the intent and integrity of institutional actions.

The District's 2012-2017 Strategic Plan identifies four strategic goals (access and preparation for success, teaching and learning for success, organizational effectiveness, and resources and collaboration) that speak to the Board's direction relating to matters of quality, integrity, and effectiveness. (IV.B.1., IV.B.1.b)

The Board of Trustees is elected in at-large elections, as is required of the Los Angeles Community College District by California Education Code § 72031. In interviews, it was determined that it is the position of this Board that at-large elections require that trustees consider the role of the District as it applies to the entire service area, as opposed to expressing an allegiance to any one region of that area. Board Rule 2300 of the LACCD Board Rules states "The Board is an independent policy-making body that reflects the public interest in Board activities and decisions." (IV.B.1.a.)

The Governing Board of the LACCD is an independent publicly-elected board. Within the extent of California law and regulation, its actions are final. Board Rules from Chapters II, VI, and VII establish their final authority in areas pertaining to educational quality (6101, 6800, 6801, 6802, 6803), legal matters, and financial integrity (2300). (IV.B.1.c.)

The Board Rules and Administrative Regulations that govern LACCD are readily available on-line (www.laccd.edu/board_rules and www.laccd.edu/admin_regs). (IV.B.1.d.)

A review of a random sample of Board agendas and minutes (January 30, 2013, November 13, 2012, September 12, 2012 revised agenda, June 27, 2012, December 14, 2011, November 28, 2011 Ad Hoc meeting, February 9, 2011, August 18, 2010 special meeting), indicate that the Board acts in a manner consistent with its Rules and Regulations. The process for evaluating and revising its policies is identified in Administrative Regulation C-12. This regulation was initially adopted in early 2007, and most recently revised in late-2012. (IV.B.1.e)

The Board's program for orientation is identified in Board Rule 2105. This process was initially adopted in early 2007 and subsequently amended 01/06/13. At a minimum, the orientation is to include an overview of District operations, a review of the ethical rules and responsibilities for trustees, and overview of the state laws regarding meeting requirements and political activities, a review of the roles of institutional organizations, and preparation/conduct issues as they are appropriate to an elected official. In terms of Board development, trustees are encouraged "to attend conferences and other educational sessions regarding their responsibilities as Trustees" (2105.11, adopted 01/16/13). Furthermore, the Chancellor, in consultation with the Board president, is responsible for scheduling no fewer than one retreat per year (2105.12, adopted 01/16/13). As determined by a review of the evidence, the last Board Retreat was convened on January 21, 2012; however, the agenda shows that the sole agenda item was a "review of Board of Trustees Annual Evaluation." The minutes of this meeting show that accreditation, leadership values, and Board goals for self-improvement were also topics for discussion. Neither of the Board Rules that mandate orientation and development formally address the need for trustees to be educated regarding the standards and expectations of the ACCJC; however, in interviews with members of the Board, the current Board President informed members of the team that he recognized the

importance of such training and was working to have it identified as a portion of the practice of orientation and development.

Practically, the Board has divided itself into four different standing committees of the Board, and much of the trustee discussion/education regarding accreditation took place during meetings of the LACCD Institutional Effectiveness Committee. This committee met monthly from July 2012 through the end of that year. The LACCD BOT website indicates that this committee last met on February 20, 2013—the agenda is available, but since the committee has not met in the month since then, no approved minutes from that meeting are yet available. LACCD Board Rule 2101 provides that “Elections shall be held every two years, falling in the odd numbered years...and alternating between office Nos. 1,3,5, and 7 and office Nos. 2, 4, and 6.” (IV.B.1.f)

As articulated in Board Rule 2301.10 (adopted 10/17-07), “[e]ach Fall, the Board of Trustees will perform a self-evaluation. The Board’s self-evaluation process may include a formal survey of stakeholders and constituents such as senior District management, College Presidents, the District Academic Senate President, representatives of collective bargaining units, and others. The Board will conduct its annual self-evaluation during a public session during which the Board will review the results of any data collection or survey process, assess its performance during the preceding year, and establish new annual goals.” Per the policy, self-evaluations are to occur each fall; however, the process occurred in February (spring semester) for the 2011-12 fiscal year. (IV.B.1.g)

The Board’s *Statement of Ethical Conduct and Code of Ethical Conduct* can be found in Board Rule 2300.10. In the event that a trustee violates this code, Board Rule 2300.11 establishes a process for sanctioning trustees. Sanctioning a trustee requires a supermajority vote of the Board and may take one of the following forms—reprimand, censure, requirement for the repayment of District funds, bar from reimbursement for expenses, removal from an officer position, or withholding of pay. There is no evidence that the Board has used this process since its adoption on 02/21/07. (IV.B.1.h)

Evidence demonstrates that the development of all seven members of the Board regarding accreditation occurs at Trustee retreats and periodically throughout the year. More intense development is provided to the three trustees who constitute the District’s Institutional Effectiveness Committee. Through interviews, it was determined that the Board of Trustees prefers to act, if possible, after issues have been fully vetted by the various constituencies throughout the District. To this end, the Board works with colleges that strive to operate under the Standards set by the ACCJC, acts in a fashion that is considerate to the work done at the colleges. Additionally, the Board has a committee, the *Institutional Effectiveness Committee*, which “fulfills an advisory, monitoring and coordinating role regarding accreditation, planning, student success and curriculum matters. The committee’s responsibilities include the coordination of accreditation activities, oversight of district wide planning processes and all issues affecting student success, academic policies and programmatic changes. Its specific charge is to:

- i. Review and approve a coordinated timeline for institutional effectiveness and accreditation planning processes throughout the District;

- ii. Review and provide feedback on indicators of institutional effectiveness so that common elements, themes, and terms can be identified, reviewed and agreed upon;
 - iii. Monitor college compliance with the Standards of Accreditation of the Association of Community Colleges and Junior Colleges;
 - iv. Monitor existing planning and evaluation practices relative to student completion initiatives;
 - v. Facilitate the review, update and revision of the long-range strategic plan and goals every five years;
 - vi. Discuss potential new or revised curricular programs and services within the District, and encourage the development of new programs and services as may be appropriate; and
 - vii. Consider and discuss other related matters as may be deemed appropriate by the Committee Chair in consultation with the Chancellor and President of the Board.”
- (LACCD Board Rule 2605.11(b)).

Interviews conducted with members of the LACCD Board of Trustees indicate that the Board orientation and development programs could be benefitted through the inclusion of more information regarding the accreditation standards in general and Standard IV in particular. (IV.B.1.i)

Although there is not a separate written process for conducting a search and selection process for the Chancellor, Board Rule 10307 directs the selection of academic administrators, and 10308 speaks to the process for selecting college presidents. The Board has successfully recruited and hired Chancellors for the district using its historical practices and general hiring processes for administrators. Interviews provided information that leads to the conclusion that the hires of various administrators at Pierce College over the past three years have followed the written Board Rules. While no written policy was provided or found that expressly delegates administrative hiring authority to the chancellor, neither was a history of confusion or problematic hiring processes or decisions found.

After reviewing a sample of minutes from various LACCD Board of Trustees meetings, and noting the review of their Board Rules as they reflect Accreditation, federal statutory, federal regulatory, state statutory, and state regulatory requirements, it appears as though the trustees are effective at remaining focused on policy level issues. The process for the evaluation of the chancellor is contained in Chancellor’s Directive 122 (enacted December 2007), which requires that the District “General Counsel meet with the Board to obtain direction regarding the process for the current year evaluation of the chancellor. The Board will usually solicit input from various constituents, typically including the college presidents, District senior staff, the Academic Senate presidents and Union representatives. At the same time, the chancellor would be expected to prepare and submit a written self-evaluation, based upon his or her stated goals.” (IV.B.1.j)

At the college level, the Pierce College organizational chart illustrates that the Office of the President oversees the Office of Student Services, the Office of Academic Affairs, the Office of Administrative Services, a foundation director, a marketing/public relations officer, and an institutional effectiveness dean. Each of these positions is tasked with responsibilities

appropriate to their role within the institution. It is the responsibility of the president to oversee and evaluate the efforts, individually and holistically, of this structure. (IV.B.2.a)

As noted in Standard I, institutional goals are presented to the College at the “Opening Day” sessions and emphasized at the institution’s annual “Leadership Retreat,” as well as through the President’s “First Monday’s” reports to the College. The Office of the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness (institutional research office) reports directly to the president, and the Dean of Research and Planning and the Research Analyst were physically relocated to be in closer proximity to the president in October 2011. The president has supported the efforts of the College, undertaken through the College’s Decision-Making and Planning Handbook, to link institutional research to decision-making. (IV.B.2.b)

Through regular meetings with key constituent leaders, from both the College and District level, the president works to communicate any and all appropriate revisions to statute, regulation, or local policy and promote the effective implementation of these changes into the current institutional procedures and operations. (IV.B.2.c.)

As evidenced by Pierce College’s “positive ending balances for several consecutive years,” it can be said that the president and the institution effectively and responsibly control their budget and expenditures. (IV.B.2.d.)

The president of Pierce College has become an active and responsible partner for the communities served by the College. The College offers classes on local high school campuses, hosts community events for elected officials on campus, has a representative who serves on a local “neighborhood council” which serves an advisory capacity to the City of Los Angeles. (IV.B.2.e.)

Again at the District level, the LACCD *District/College Governance and Functions Handbook* (adopted Spring 2010) provides a delineation of functions (roles and responsibilities) between the Governing Board, the Chancellor and the college presidents, the District Academic Senate, the Associated Student Organization, and the various bargaining units. This 164-page handbook is available on the LACCD website and was distributed to the colleges and constituency groups. It further discusses the operational aspects of each of these constituencies through various district-level committees and counsels. Since some of these responsibilities are delineated in state statute and/or regulation, such evaluation and assessment is outside of the control of the institution. The District Planning Committee has implemented a cyclical process for self-evaluation in response to recommendations received by other colleges in the LACCD in 2009. This process includes a series of surveys intended to get to the heart of role delineation and district governance processes. Additionally, those aspects that are driven by local directives (Board Rules, Administrative Regulations, Chancellor’s Directives) will effectively be reviewed along the established review cycle for those governing documents. (IV.B.3.a)

To aid in identifying the levels of services which are most effective in supporting the college’s missions and functions, “Customer Satisfaction Surveys” for each major service unit within the Educational Services Center were piloted. To ensure that the information

gathered from these surveys was used, a three-year program review cycle was developed for all administrative units within the center, with a requirement that annual plans be submitted as well. This survey method was subsequently expanded, and broader survey results have now contributed to the establishment of outcomes for all District administrative offices, and these outcomes are being used to measure the effectiveness of support services. (IV.B.3.b)

In June 2012, the LACCD Board of Trustees adopted a resource allocation model that was formulated by the Executive Committee of the District Budget Committee and subsequently vetted through the full District Budget Committee and the Chancellor's Cabinet. The model has two phases: phase I increases the colleges' basic allocation to include minimum administrative staffing and maintenance and operation costs, and Phase II calls for the Executive Committee of the District Budget Committee to study the remaining allocation agenda for allocation changes that identify college needs (including maintenance and operations), provide funding for colleges to deliver equitable access for students, and ensure that colleges are provided with sufficient funding to maintain quality instruction and student services. The District is currently reviewing the data as it informs Phase II of this process. (IV.B.3.c)

College presidents and District vice chancellors are charged with the responsibility to manage their respective budgets. All nine colleges follow standards of good fiscal management that include the development of annual financial plans, preparing and submitting quarterly status reports, setting aside a one-percent reserve, and the obligation to balance the college's budget. Budget and Financial reports and independent audit reports show that the District consistently ends each fiscal year with a positive balance and meets its financial obligations. (IV.B.3.d)

Operational responsibilities for the individual colleges are delegated to the presidents of each of the nine colleges in the LACCD. Presidents are then evaluated for their effectiveness, and these evaluations are reviewed by the District Board of Trustees. (IV.B.3.e)

Through the utilization of the *District Governance and Functions Handbook* and the various organizations identified therein, communication between Pierce College and the District appears to be both effective and efficient. These methods regularly result in clear and timely communications in all directions. Through interviews, it was determined that the constituencies of Pierce College were informed (or at worst know how they could become informed) about system issues, Board actions, and interests that have an impact on their operations, educational quality, stability or ability to provide high quality education (IV.B.3.f)

Conclusions:

There is evidence throughout the self-study, which was confirmed during the team's visit, of the beginnings of continuous quality improvement at both the college and District levels. Under the leadership of their president and their Academic Senate, Pierce College has focused renewed attention on strategic planning, governance, and the delineation of responsibilities among the various college governance structures, management, and the Academic Senate. Since these are relatively new initiatives, they are still works in progress.

Much energy has been given to improving governance and planning structures assuring full inclusion of all participatory governance groups. While the College has instituted planning structures including a six-year Educational Master Plan, a three-year strategic plan, an overall integrated planning process is still under development. A number of the planning processes are still very new and are undergoing early-stage assessment. (IV.B.2.a-e)

In relation to the organizational structure and effectiveness of responsibilities and services performed by the District for the various colleges in the District, the team found the LACCD Governance and Functions Handbook to be a noteworthy step toward the refinement of operational roles and functions of both the District and the colleges. The team also notes that the efforts toward the evaluation of role delineation, governance and decision-making processes, and District services are positive efforts and need to be continued to move toward the ultimate goal of providing better opportunities for the students served by this district. The team verified that the District is engaged in a continual review of its resource allocation processes in an effort to clarify the appropriate distribution of resources to the colleges of the District. The team verified that the District does an appropriate job of controlling its expenditures. Through review of evidence, the team confirmed that the District acts as the liaison between the college and the Board. (IV.B.3.a-g)

The College meets the Standard.

Recommendations:

None