

# **EXTERNAL EVALUATION TEAM REPORT**

**Los Angeles Pierce College  
6201 Winnetka Avenue  
Woodland Hills, CA 91371**

**A confidential report prepared for  
The Accrediting Commission and Junior Colleges  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges**

**This report represents the findings of the External Evaluation Team that visited  
Los Angeles Pierce College on March 6 – March 10, 2016**

**Joel L. Kinnamon, Ed.D.  
Chair**

**NOTE: this page shall be added to the team report noted below, immediately behind the cover page, and shall become part of the final evaluation report associated with the review.**

DATE: July 8, 2016

INSTITUTION: Los Angeles Pierce College  
6201 Winnetka Avenue  
Woodland Hills, CA 91371

TEAM REPORT: Comprehensive Evaluation Report

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited Los Angeles Pierce College March 7 – March 10, 2016.

SUBJECT: Commission Revisions to the Team Report

The comprehensive External Evaluation Report provides details of the team’s findings with regard to the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies, and should be read carefully and used to understand the team’s findings. Upon a review of the External Evaluation Report sent to the College, the Los Angeles Pierce College Self-Evaluation Report, and supplemental information and evidence provided by the College, the following changes or corrections are noted for the Team Report:

1. The Commission notes that references to a business continuity and/or disaster recovery plan should not be capitalized as in District Recommendation 4. The team’s reference is to a general plan and not a specific plan with that title.

## External Evaluation Visit Team Roster

### Los Angeles Community College District – Pierce College Monday, March 7 – Thursday, March 10, 2016

Dr. Joel L. Kinnamon (Chair)  
Superintendent/President  
College of the Desert

Ms. Pamela Hunter (Team Assistant)  
Executive Director, Institutional Advancement  
College of the Desert

Dr. Lee Ballesterio  
Faculty, Political Science  
Moorpark College

Dr. Lori Bennett  
Executive Vice President  
Moorpark College

Mr. Ryan Carnal  
Director of Institutional  
Research and Assessment  
Cuesta College

Dr. Frank Chong  
Superintendent/President  
Santa Rosa Junior College

Mr. Paul Flor  
Professor of Political Science  
El Camino College – Compton

Mr. Ronald Little, II  
Vice Chancellor for Finance and  
Administration/CFO  
Peralta Community College District

Dr. Leslie Minor  
Vice-President, Academic Affairs  
Solano Community College

Ms. Eleanor Svaton  
Associate Professor-English/ALO  
Hawaii Tokai International College

Mr. Chris Vitelli  
Vice President of Student Services  
Merced College

**Los Angeles Community College District Roster  
Monday, March 7-Thursday, March 10, 2016**

**Chair**

Dr. Helen Benjamin  
Chancellor  
Contra Costa Community College District

**Assistant**

Ms. Tammeil Y. Gilkerson  
Vice President, Academic and Student Affairs  
Contra Costa College

Ms. Linda Beam  
Vice President Human Resources  
El Camino College  
Dr. Jannett Jackson  
Chancellor  
Chabot-Las Positas Community College  
District

Ms. Deborah Ludford  
District Director of Information Services  
North Orange County Community College District  
Dr. Jamey Nye  
Associate Vice Chancellor of Instruction  
Los Rios Community College District

Mr. Dustin Johnson  
Trustee  
Los Rios Community College District

Dr. Lynn Neault  
Vice Chancellor Student Services  
San Diego Community College District Office

Mr. Doug Horner  
Director of Facilities and Bond Program  
Chabot-Las Positas CCD

Mr. Fred Williams  
Interim Chancellor  
North Orange County Community College District

Mr. Christopher Tarman  
Senior Dean of Research, Planning,  
and Institutional Effectiveness  
Grossmont Cuyamaca Community College District

## Summary of the External Evaluation Report

INSTITUTION: Los Angeles Pierce College  
DATE OF VISIT: March 6 – March 10, 2016  
TEAM CHAIR: Joel L. Kinnamon

An eleven-member accreditation team visited Los Angeles Pierce College from March 6-10, 2016, for the purpose of determining whether the College continues to meet Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, Commission Policies, and United States Department of Education (USDE) regulations. The team evaluated how well the institution is achieving its stated purposes, analyzing how well the college is meeting the commission standards providing for quality assurance and institutional improvement, and submitting recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, (ACCJC) Western Association of Schools and Colleges regarding the status of the College.

In preparation for the team visit, the team chair attended a training on January 26, 2016 and conducted a pre-visit to the campus on January 25, 2016. During this visit, the chair met with campus leadership and key personnel involved in the self-evaluation preparation process. The entire external evaluation team received team training provided by the staff conducted by the ACCJC staff prior to the visit.

The evaluation team received the college's self-evaluation document several weeks prior to the site visit. Team members found it outlined the process used by the College to address Eligibility Requirements, Commission Standards and Policies. The team confirmed that there was broad participation of faculty, staff, students, and administrators in compiling the Self-Study Report.

Prior to the visit, team members completed written evaluations of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) and began identifying areas for further investigation. On the day before the formal beginning of the visit, team members spent the evening discussing their views of the written materials provided by the college, reviewing evidence provided by the college, and reviewing the comprehensive report completed by the college in January 2016.

On March 7, 2016, members of the team visited the Los Angeles Community College District offices located in Los Angeles, five members toured the main campus and four members attended the Academic Senate meeting. On March 8, 2016, the team was introduced to the College community at a reception held for the team.

The team identified four team leads and members for each standard. Team members carefully read the college ISER and assessed the evidence provided by the college.

During the evaluation visit, team members conducted formal meetings, interviews, and observations involving approximately 120 college faculty, staff, administrators, members of the board of trustees, district chancellor, district administrators, college president, and students. The team attended two well-attended open forum meetings to allow for comment from any member of the campus or local community.

The team reviewed documents and evidence supporting the ISER and the Eligibility Requirements, Standards, Commission Policies, and United States Department of Education (USDE) regulations. The evidence included documents, minutes, policies and procedures, and electronic copies provided to the team.

The team appreciated the welcoming environment experienced during the visit and in every meeting and interaction. The college community knew why we were on campus and showed responsiveness, flexibility in adjusting schedules, and demonstrated openness, honesty, and candor.

The team found the College to be generally in compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and United States Department of Education regulations but issued some recommendations to meet some of the Standards.

## **Pierce College Commendations and Recommendations**

**College Commendation 1:** The team commends the college on its processes of collecting and responding to student feedback to improve and expand Library and Center for Academic Success (CAS) services and resources. (II.B.1, II.C.1)

**College Commendation 2:** The team commends the college for its Distance Education (DE) programming in obtaining resources for staffing, professional development, pilot initiatives, student supplies, increased course offerings, and policy development. (II.C.2, II.C.5)

**College Commendation 3:** The team commends the college for its innovation and commitment to student success and engagement, evident in the reorganization of the Student Services Division. (II.C.2, II.C.3)

**College Commendation 4:** The team commends college on its budgeting process including the prioritization, allocation and monitoring of fiscal resources and its integration with the annual program planning process. (III.D.2, III.D.3)

**College Commendation 5:** The team commends the college for its collaborative planning efforts that resulted in the development of a creative and mission-driven Strategic Master Plan. The team acknowledges the commitment and engagement of the faculty, staff, and administration for these efforts. (IV.A.1, IV.A2, IV.A.3)

## **Pierce College Recommendations for Improvements and Compliance**

**College Recommendation 1 (Improvement):** In order to improve, the team recommends that in regularly reviewing the LAPC mission statement, the College consult both internal and external environmental scan data as well as solicit input from both external constituents such as community, business, and advisory groups, and internal constituents, including students, institutional committees, departments, and other governing bodies. (I.A.1)

**College Recommendation 2 (Improvement)** In order to improve, the team recommends that the College should provide continuing professional development opportunities to faculty and staff on how to incorporate data into the annual program plan for each discipline/service. (IIA.2)

**College Recommendation 3 (Improvement)** In order to improve, the team recommends that the College should expand its outcome process to include a systematic way whereby GELOs and ILOs are presented at established forums throughout the campus. The institution should ensure that it records what improvements and/or plans have been made as a result of dialogue surrounding the outcome data. (IIA.2, IIA.3)

**College Recommendation 4 (Improvement)** In order to improve, the team recommends that the Distance Education program should expand the analysis of Distance Education success and retention data, including disaggregated data, across the institution and by programs. It

should expand on these discussions to include identification of gaps as well as action plans for addressing those identified gaps. (IIA.7)

**College Recommendation 5 (Improvement):** In order to improve, the team recommends that the College, as it noted in its QFE, ensure all Student Service programs develop and assess student learning outcomes and fully integrate outcomes and assessment data into authentic dialogue, reflection, and plans for quality improvement. Further, the team recommends each program thoroughly follow-up on annual planning, with consistent and accurate assessment, evaluation, and documentation of the effectiveness of program changes from cycle to cycle. (II.C.1, II.C.2, II.C.3, ER 15)

**College Recommendation 6 (Improvement):** In order to improve, the team recommends that the College include IT staff in technology planning related to building and construction to ensure appropriate and adequate technology services, professional support, and technology hardware to meet the needs of operational functions, academic programs, teaching and learning, and support services. (III.C.1)

**College Recommendation 7 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the College allocate appropriate fiscal resources and adopt a lifecycle plan for the ongoing refresh and replacement of technology to ensure its technological infrastructure quality and capacity are adequate to support its mission, operations, programs, and services. (III.C.2)

**College Recommendation 8 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the College achieve an adequate level of professional support for students and staff to address service gaps in the information technology department and to fully support technology needs directly related to local instructional and student support services, as well as institutional operations. (III.C.1, III.C.4)

**College Recommendation 9 (Improvement):** In order to improve, the team recommends that the College continue to develop the student's voice and engagement in the shared governance process. Student participation and genuine input can be improved through training and mentoring. (IV.A.2)



# Commendations and Recommendations of the 2016 External Evaluation Team

## LACCD Commendations and Recommendations

### District Commendations

**District Commendation 1:** The team commends the District for exemplary preparation and coordination of the accreditation visit for all nine colleges under the new accreditation standards. (I.C.12)

**District Commendation 2:** The team commends the District for its commitment to professional development and improving the knowledge, skills, and abilities of its employees in support of student achievement. (III.A.14)

**District Commendation 3:** The team commends the technology staff from the nine colleges and the District for their teamwork and collaboration in the areas of shared staff resources, development of standards, collaborative training opportunities and deployment of integrated systems resulting in effective and efficient use of technology resources to improve academic quality and institutional effectiveness. (III.C.1, III.C.4)

**District Commendation 4:** The team commends the District for its substantial support of the internal audit function. (III.D.8)

**District Commendation 5:** The team commends the District for its commitment to continuous quality improvement by building evaluation loops for all its services, decision-making processes, and institutional performance. (IV.D.2, IV.D.5, IV.D.7)

### District Recommendations for Improvement and Compliance

**District Recommendation 1 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the District ensure consistent and uniform guidelines for the search and selection of adjunct faculty. (III.A.1)

**District Recommendation 2 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the District ensure all personnel are systematically evaluated at stated intervals in accordance with the bargaining agreements and Board policies. (III.A.5)

**District Recommendation 3 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the District update the performance evaluations of academic administrators to include the results of the assessment of learning outcomes to improve teaching and learning. (III.A.6)

**District Recommendation 4 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the District and colleges develop a comprehensive Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery plan to ensure reliable access, safety, and security. (III.C.3)

**District Recommendation 5 (Improvement):** In order to increase effectiveness and better assess financial resource availability, the team recommends that the District implement a District position control system to track and budget for personnel costs. (III.D.4)

**District Recommendation 6 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the District comprehensively responds to the recurring audit findings concerning: 1) the internal control weakness in information technology controls over the areas of security and change management; and 2) the state compliance exceptions related to “To Be Arranged” (TBA) hours attendance documentation and course classifications. (III.D.7)

**District Recommendation 7 (Improvement):** In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the District develop and publicize a plan to fully fund the Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB) Liability, which is currently funded at 16.06 percent. (III.D.12)

**District Recommendation 8 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the District develop a process to capture the full impact of the District’s liability for load banking and to record the liability in the District’s financial statements. (III.D.12)

**District Recommendation 9 (Improvement):** In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the District review the membership of institutional governance committees to ensure all employee groups, particularly classified staff, have formal input on institutional plans, policies, and other key considerations as appropriate. (IV.A.5)

**District Recommendation 10 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the Board adopt policies that clearly define the process for the selection and evaluation of the chancellor. (IV.C.3)

**District Recommendation 11 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the Board establish a formal process for approving the review of policies in which no revisions are made and to regularly assess the effectiveness of all policies in fulfilling the District mission. (IV.C.7)

**District Recommendation 12 (Improvement):** In order to improve effectiveness, the team recommends that the District expand efforts to communicate decisions made in the institutional governance process to all stakeholders. (IV.D.6)

## **Introduction**

The Institutional Self-Evaluation Report includes a comprehensive introduction and overview of Los Angeles Pierce College. The college is a public, two-year community college located in the western San Fernando Valley on a 426-acre campus, which includes a 226-acre farm. Established in 1947 as the Clarence W. Pierce School of Agriculture, the school was an all-male residential institution offering a curriculum of crop rotation and animal husbandry.

Clarence W. Pierce School of Agriculture was renamed to Los Angeles Pierce College in 1956 and became one of nine colleges in the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD). The College now offers a wide range of academic and career technical disciplines with 112 degrees and services. Students are provided with comprehensive support services.

## **Certification of Continued Compliance with Eligibility Requirements**

### **1. Authority**

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the institutional accrediting body recognized by the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation and the United States Department of Education, affirms the Los Angeles Community College District's legal authority to operate as a degree-granting institution. Los Angeles Pierce College is one of the nine colleges recognized by the Los Angeles Community College District Board of Trustees. This authority is published annually in the *College Catalog*.

The College operates two educational campuses recognized by the Commission to offer more than half of its degree or certificate programs at locations in Woodland Hills (6201 Winnetka Avenue) and LAUSD Office building (333 S. Beaudry Street, Los Angeles, CA) where Program for Accelerated College Education (PACE) programs are offered in the evenings.

The team affirms that the College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

### **2. Operational Status**

The team confirmed that the college is operational and provides educational services for 22,239 student enrollments within degree applicable credit courses for the fall 2014. The College awarded 1,266 degrees in 2014-2015. The college established a strategic master plan goal to increase student completion of degrees, certificates, college transfer requirements, and licensure requirements. The college performed above the institution set standards and is on target for meeting the respective 2017-2018 targets for this goal.

The team affirms that the College meets this Eligibility Requirement

### **3. Degrees**

Los Angeles Pierce College offers 112 associate of arts degrees, associate of sciences degrees, associate degrees for transfer, and certificates of achievement. Courses are offered in 77 disciplines and the College has 1,135 active courses.

The team affirms that the College meets this Eligibility Requirement.

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

Los Angeles Community College District Board of Trustees appoints the college chief executive officer. Neither the District Chancellor nor the College President serve as a member of the board nor as the board president. The District Chancellor and Governing Board provides appropriate authority to the President to administer college policies and procedures.

The District's current chief executive officer is highly qualified for the position and has served as Chancellor since June 1, 2014. His full-time responsibility is to the District; he possesses the requisite skills and authority to provide leadership for the District.

The team affirms that the College and District meets this Eligibility Requirement

## **5. Financial Accountability**

### **District**

The District Office Accounting Office staff oversees District wide audits and is responsible for coordination of all site visits. The District also has a Central Financial Aid Unit that monitors and helps control the Perkins Loans default rates. The District has Perkins Loans outstanding (over 240 days in default) totaling \$1.8 million, but when compared to total loans outstanding for the District of \$270 million, the default rate is only approximately one percent of their outstanding principal. District staff continue to make collection calls to help reduce the default rates throughout the District. Discussion with staff revealed that the District is phasing out the Perkins Loan Program.

The District annually undergoes an external financial audit by a certified public accountant which is made available to the public. Evidence shows that the audits were completed and are available to review on the District's website. Reports were available for the years ending June 30, 2001 through 2015.

Four colleges had a Perkins Loan default rate exceeding 30 percent for three straight years: West Los Angeles, Los Angeles Harbor, Los Angeles Pierce, and Los Angeles Trade-Technical. The total principal outstanding on loans in default exceeding 240 days for those four colleges (as of February 12, 2015) was \$874,202. The District is phasing out of the Perkins Loan Program and is moving to the Direct Loan Program. The published default rates for the Direct Loan Program are only available through fiscal year 2012. Of the nine colleges, only one (Los Angeles Trade-Technical College) had a rate over 30 percent and had only been in the program for one year. The District meets the Eligibility Requirement.

### **College**

The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) annually undertakes an external financial audit by a certified public accountancy agency. As a member college of the LACCD, Pierce College program audits are determined by annual auditing requirements and the external auditing team. The governing board reviews the results of these audit reports at a regularly scheduled public meeting and discusses management responses to any findings or noted deficiencies. Audit Reports are filed with the Los Angeles County Department of Education, among others.

Audits of financial aid programs of the district's colleges are conducted on an annual basis by an external auditing firm to ensure compliance with Federal programs such as Title IV. The college monitors and manages its funds effectively as evidenced by the fact that no deficiencies were noted in the past years' audits. Pierce College's default rates fall within the acceptable range.

The team affirms that the College meets this Eligibility Requirement

## Checklist for Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Related Commission Policies

The evaluation items detailed in this Checklist are those which fall specifically under federal regulations and related Commission policies, beyond what is articulated in the Accreditation Standards; there may be other evaluation items under ACCJC standards which address the same or similar subject matter. Evaluation teams will evaluate the institution's compliance with standards as well as the specific Checklist elements from federal regulations and related Commission policies noted here.

*General Instructions: The form should contain narrative as well as the "check-off."*

- a. *The team should place a check mark next to each evaluation item when it has been evaluated.*
- b. *For each subject category (e.g., "Public Notification of an Evaluation Visit and Third Party Comment"), the team should also complete the conclusion check-off.*
- c. *The narrative will cite to the evidence reviewed and team findings related to each of the evaluation items. If some content is discussed in detail elsewhere in the team report, the page(s) of the team report can be cited instead of repeating that portion of the narrative.*
- d. *Any areas of deficiency from the Checklist leading to noncompliance, or areas needing improvement, should be included in the evaluation conclusions section of the team report along with any recommendations.*

This Checklist will become part of the evaluation team report. Institutions may also use this form as a guide for preparing documentation for team review. It is found as an appendix in the team and institutional self-evaluation manuals.

### **Public Notification of an Evaluation Team Visit and Third Party Comment**

#### **Evaluation Items:**

- The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comment in advance of a comprehensive evaluation visit.
- The institution cooperates with the evaluation team in any necessary follow-up related to the third party comment.
- The institution demonstrates compliance with the *Commission Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions* as to third party comment. [Regulation citation: 602.23(b).]

#### **Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative (add space as needed):** The team verified that the college complies with all of the Commission’s requirements for timely submission of accreditation documents and reports, as well as public disclosure of required information. The college provided an opportunity for third party comment and noticed the public in December 2015 of the accreditation review and conducted a forum. The college also follows the Commission’s guidelines for initiating substantive changes. Additionally, the team verified that the college demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education, the California Board of Registered Nursing (BRN), etc.

## **Standards and Performance with Respect to Student Achievement**

### **Evaluation Items:**

- The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance across the institution, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. Course completion is included as one of these elements of student achievement. Other elements of student achievement performance for measurement have been determined as appropriate to the institution’s mission.
- The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance within each instructional program, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. The defined elements include, but are not limited to, job placement rates for program completers, and for programs in fields where licensure is required, the licensure examination passage rates for program completers.
- The institution-set standards for programs and across the institution are relevant to guide self-evaluation and institutional improvement; the defined elements and expected performance levels are appropriate within higher education; the results are reported regularly across the campus; and the definition of elements and results are used in program-level and institution-wide planning to evaluate how well the institution fulfills its mission, to determine needed changes, to allocating resources, and to make improvements.
- The institution analyzes its performance as to the institution-set standards and as to student achievement, and takes appropriate measures in areas where its performance is not at the expected level. [Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(i); 602.17(f); 602.19 (a-e).]

### **Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative (add space as needed):** The institution has established and assesses the degree to which it is achieving its institution-set standards for student achievement as well additional standards appropriate to its mission. The institution-set achievement standards are integrated

with the *Strategic Master Plan 2013-17*. The college has established both stretch goals and institution-set standards for several measures, including student success and retention, degree and certificate completion, transfer, job placement, etc. The college's institution-set standards represent minimum standards, equal to 95% of the latest five-year average for each metric. If the college falls below one of its institution-set standards, it is, therefore, failing to achieve the associated SMP target. According to the college's resource allocation process, requests in areas that do not meet stretch targets are prioritized higher than requests in areas that meet or exceed targets. The team verified via the college's *Combined Resource Priority Listing* that resources are being prioritized for areas where targets are not being met. Moreover, program level standards have been established for course success and retention. These data are incorporated in annual and comprehensive program review datasets provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The program planning templates request that faculty and staff identify any metrics that have fallen below the program standards. All program reviews and program standards, in addition to institution-set standards are published on the college's research and planning website.

### **Credits, Program Length, and Tuition**

#### **Evaluation Items:**

- Credit hour assignments and degree program lengths are within the range of good practice in higher education (in policy and procedure).
- The assignment of credit hours and degree program lengths is verified by the institution, and is reliable and accurate across classroom based courses, laboratory classes, distance education classes, and for courses that involve clinical practice (if applicable to the institution).
- Tuition is consistent across degree programs (or there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition).
- Any clock hour conversions to credit hours adhere to the Department of Education's conversion formula, both in policy and procedure, and in practice.
- The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits*.

[Regulation citations: 600.2 (definition of credit hour); 602.16(a)(1)(viii); 602.24(e), (f); 668.2; 668.9.]

#### **Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative (add space as needed):** A student attending and enrolled full-time can complete degree requirements within two years and are in compliance with federal



guidelines (calculations). The enrollment fees are the same for all courses and set by the State of California.

## **Transfer Policies**

### **Evaluation Items:**

- Transfer policies are appropriately disclosed to students and to the public.
- Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to accept credits for transfer.
- The institution complies with the Commission *Policy on Transfer of Credit*. [Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(viii); 602.17(a)(3); 602.24(e); 668.43(a)(ii).]

### **Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative (add space as needed):** Transfer policies are disclosed to all constituents and consistent with the Commission Policy on Transfer Credit. This is stipulated in Board Rule 6703.11.

## **Distance Education and Correspondence Education**

### **Evaluation Items:**

- The institution has policies and procedures for defining and classifying a course as offered by distance education or correspondence education, in alignment with USDE definitions.
- There is an accurate and consistent application of the policies and procedures for determining if a course is offered by distance education (with regular and substantive interaction with the instructor, initiated by the instructor, and online activities are included as part of a student's grade) or correspondence education (online activities are primarily "paperwork related," including reading posted materials, posting homework and completing examinations, and interaction with the instructor is initiated by the student as needed).
- The institution has appropriate means and consistently applies those means for verifying the identity of a student who participates in a distance education or correspondence education course or program, and for ensuring that student information is protected.
- The technology infrastructure is sufficient to maintain and sustain the distance education and correspondence education offerings.
- The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Distance*

*Education and Correspondence Education.* [Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(iv), (vi); 602.17(g); 668.38.]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative (add space as needed):** All class offerings follow the same course outline of record and student learning outcomes regardless of mode of delivery. Students are provided resources for online students that are comparable to on campus services.

## **Student Complaints**

**Evaluation Items:**

- The institution has clear policies and procedures for handling student complaints, and the current policies and procedures are accessible to students in the college catalog and online.
- The student complaint files for the previous six years (since the last comprehensive evaluation) are available; the files demonstrate accurate implementation of the complaint policies and procedures.
- The team analysis of the student complaint files identifies any issues that may be indicative of the institution's noncompliance with any Accreditation Standards.
- The institution posts on its website the names of associations, agencies and governmental bodies that accredit, approve, or license the institution and any of its programs, and provides contact information for filing complaints with such entities.
- The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Representation of Accredited Status* and the *Policy on Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions.* [Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(ix); 668.43.]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative (add space as needed):** There are clear policies and procedures for handling student grievances and complaints. Board rules are accessible online and a description of prohibited discrimination processes are clearly outlined. In addition, these policies and procedures are in the Pierce College General Catalog.

## **Institutional Disclosure and Advertising and Recruitment Materials**

### **Evaluation Items:**

- The institution provides accurate, timely (current), and appropriately detailed information to students and the public about its programs, locations, and policies.
- The institution complies with the Commission *Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status*.
- The institution provides required information concerning its accredited status as described above in the section on Student Complaints.

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1))(vii); 668.6.]

### **Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative (add space as needed):** The college accurately represents the programs and services provided at Pierce College. The college complies with the requirements of the Commissions policies.

## **Title IV Compliance**

### **Evaluation Items:**

- The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program, including findings from any audits and program or other review activities by the USDE.
- The institution has addressed any issues raised by the USDE as to financial responsibility requirements, program record-keeping, etc. If issues were not timely addressed, the institution demonstrates it has the fiscal and administrative capacity to timely address issues in the future and to retain compliance with Title IV program requirements.
- The institution's student loan default rates are within the acceptable range defined by the USDE. Remedial efforts have been undertaken when default rates near or meet a level outside the acceptable range.
- Contractual relationships of the institution to offer or receive educational, library, and support services meet the Accreditation Standards and have been approved by

the Commission through substantive change if required.

The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations* and the *Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV*.

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(v); 602.16(a)(1)(x); 602.19(b); 668.5; 668.15; 668.16; 668.71 et seq.]

**Conclusion Check-Off:**

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative (add space as needed):** Pierce College complies with Title IV guidelines and the district was recertified for five years for the federal financial aid program under the Department of Education.

## **Standard I**

### **Mission, Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness, and Integrity**

#### **Standard I.A: Mission**

##### **General Observations - College**

The Los Angeles Pierce College (LAPC) Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) is of top quality in speaking to Standard I, in a direct and comprehensive way. Generally strong evidence is provided in support of the evaluation and corroborates the pronouncements of the report. Review of all evidence provided on a mobile storage device, including the Self Evaluation Report, 2014-2016 LAPC Catalog, (revised in 2015) 2016 Spring Course Schedule, and 1726 portable documents format (PDF) items were easily accessible. These items include the LAPC Strategic Master Plan 2014-2017, which documents the creation of the LAPC mission statement that supports the revised Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) mission statement born out of the LACCD Strategic Plan 2012-2017. Evaluation of other LAPC documents, such as LAPC Encore and Extension program evidence LAPC Fact Book, and college catalog encouraged the team to conclude that LAPC is meeting the Standard.

Exemplary practices and conditions that confirm this conclusion include Substantive Change Reports filed in 2013 and 2015 with the Commission so LAPC can offer more programs online; LAPC student achievement data, including all required institution-set standard (ISS) metrics; and evidence of LAPC achieving its mission of offering opportunities for access in a diverse community found in data on its diverse and evolving student body.

##### **Findings and Evidence - College**

A review of the LAPC catalog and planning documents show the institution has a clear mission statement that defines the institution's broad educational purpose to dedicating resources in fulfillment of its commitment to advancing educational, career, and personal goals of its diverse student population. The LAPC mission statement is reviewed on a four-year cycle, as outlined in the *Pierce College Integrated Planning Calendar 2013-2026*. It is supplemented by the college's values list of seven statements. The four sentences of the mission statement are sufficiently comprehensive to encompass LAPC's educational objectives and functions. The mission explicitly references its student-centered learning environment that offers opportunities for access and success to a diverse college community (I.A.1).

Central to all planning processes at the college, there is evidence that the mission is routinely reviewed by the various committees, departments, and other governing bodies. The LAPC mission statement was approved by the Pierce College Council (PCC) on October 27, 2011. Consequentially, the mission statement was approved on April 11, 2012 by the Board of Trustees of the Los Angeles Community College District (I.A.4). The mission statement is

carried out by the *Strategic Master Plan (SMP)* and was reaffirmed for *SMP 2013*. Within the *SMP*, and in accordance with the processes described in the *Decision Making and Planning Handbook*, the college sets new or revises previous goals aimed at helping the college achieve its mission. Once approved, the *SMP* goals are incorporated in all annual and comprehensive program reviews, which are completed by all academic, student support, and administrative departments. To assess the degree to which the college is accomplishing its mission, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides each department with robust datasets including information on student enrollment, efficiency, achievement, as well as environmental scan data, etc. On the basis of an analysis of the aforementioned data, each department develops new goals and assesses the degree to which past goals have been achieved. Department level goals that support *SMP* goals, which are derived directly from the College Mission, are then prioritized by the Budget Committee. Second, on a more macro level, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness also maintains a dashboard that tracks the college's progress toward achieving its *SMP* goals, and therefore its mission (I.A.2, I.A.3).

### **Conclusions - College**

LAPC conforms to the quality expected and covered in Standard I.A. This conclusion is supported by the colleges Mission Statement, planning processes, educational program mix and support services. LAPC deserves acknowledgement for prominently displaying the mission statement at key locations on campus. This is testimony of integrating the mission and vision into the college culture.

The college meets the requirements of Standard I.A

### **Recommendations for Improvement and Compliance**

**College Recommendation 1 (Improvement):** In order to improve, the team recommends that in regularly reviewing the LAPC mission statement, the college consult both internal and external environmental scan data as well as solicit input from both external constituents such as community, business, and advisory groups, and internal constituents, including students, institutional committees, departments, and other governing bodies (I.A.1).

### **Standard I.B: Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness**

#### **General Observations - College**

Pierce College provides evidence of regular, structured dialogue about student learning and student achievement as well as about institutional processes for evaluation and plans for improvement. This dialogue is evident in meetings of campus committee meetings, such as the College Outcomes Committee (COC) and the Student Success Committee, both subcommittees of the Academic Senate. There is evidence of a culture and practice that supports continuous improvement of educational quality and a focus on improving student outcomes as described in the institutional planning and decision-making cycle including the strategic master plan and annual and comprehensive program review. Minutes from the

Educational Planning Committee (EPC), Academic Senate, and PCC meetings show there is a campus-wide practice supporting evaluation, planning and institutional effectiveness. It is clear from the evidence provided and validated that the college regularly assesses its academic quality and effectiveness using both quantitative and qualitative data. Based on analyses of these data, the college allocates its resources toward goals prioritized by the Strategic Plan, and in support of accomplishing its mission.

### **Findings and Evidence - College**

The institution engages in substantive and collegial dialogue centered on improving student outcomes and increasing overall institutional effectiveness in improving student learning and achievement. The team examined several annual and comprehensive program plans, which facilitate dialogue among faculty and staff regarding both student learning and achievement data. As evidenced by committee minutes, several college committees; including the College Outcomes Committee, Student Success Committee, Departmental Council, Academic Senate, etc. provide additional venues for substantive dialogue concerning student learning outcomes, student equity and institutional effectiveness in general. The college also engages in dialogue regarding continuous improvement of Student Learning and Achievement. For example, through reflection on disaggregated student outcome data in the college's exemplary *Student Equity Plan*, the college has discussed how best to improve outcomes for identified student subgroups. Furthermore, in the Spring 2015 *Faculty and Staff Survey*, more than 80% of respondents felt they had engaged in dialogue concerning student learning or service area outcomes (91%), student achievement (87%), student equity (79%), and goal establishment and evaluation (81%) (I.B.1).

The institution has defined and assesses student learning outcomes for all of its instructional and student and learning support services. For instructional programs, SLOs are defined and assessed, on a regular basis, at the course, program, general education, and institutional levels. As verified by the team, one-hundred percent of courses, programs and services have defined and assessed student learning or service outcomes. Prior to 2015, the college employed a homegrown static database to collect and track learning outcome assessment data. Beginning in Spring 2015, the college transitioned to the *eLumen* software platform, which not only allows for automatic roll up from course SLOs to PLOs to GELOs and ILOs, but also the ability to disaggregate SLO assessment results by student demographics (I.B.2).

The institution has established and assesses the degree to which it is achieving its institution-set standards for student achievement as well as additional standards appropriate to its mission. The institution-set achievement standards are integrated with the *Strategic Master Plan 2013-17*. The college has established both stretch goals and institution-set standards for several measures, including student success and retention, degree and certificate completion, transfer, job placement, etc. The college's institution-set standards represent minimum standards, equal to 95% of the latest five-year average for each metric. If the college falls below one of its institution-set standards, it is, therefore, failing to achieve the associated SMP target. According to the college's resource allocation process, requests in areas that do not meet stretch targets are prioritized higher than requests in areas that meet or exceed targets. The team verified via the college's *Combined Resource Priority Listing* that

resources are being prioritized for areas where targets are not being met. Moreover, program level standards have been established for course success and retention. These data are incorporated in annual and comprehensive program review datasets provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The program planning templates request that faculty and staff identify any metrics that have fallen below the program standards. All program reviews and program standards, in addition to institution-set standards are published on the college's Institutional Effectiveness website (I.B.3).

The institution relies on assessment data to organize its institutional processes in support of student learning and achievement. At the macro level, the Strategic Master Plan includes several student achievement measures. In order to assess the efficacy of the goals and activities in the Strategic Plan, the college analyzes the aforementioned student achievement datasets, and prioritizes resources based on these analyses. As mentioned throughout, the college also assesses student achievement and learning outcome data at the departmental level through the annual and comprehensive program review process, and allocates resources toward departmental goals that support Strategic Master Plan goals. Although the team found several examples in which the evaluation of student achievement data resulted in changes in organizational processes and resource allocation, the team was unable to find examples in which the evaluation of student learning outcomes resulted in similar changes. Despite this finding, the team found that the college's program review process provides a cyclical (annual and every four or two years for CTE programs), ongoing evaluation of its programs and services based on the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data (I.B.4, I.B.5).

The institution has a long history of disaggregating student achievement data for various subpopulations of students. Moreover, the college has implemented strategies to close identified gaps among subpopulations, and has assessed the efficacy of these strategies. Most recently, through the college's *Student Equity Plan 2014*, student achievement gaps were identified in five areas: access, course completion, English as a Second Language and basic skills completion, degree and certificate completion, and transfer rates. Several performance gaps on various measures were identified across student subgroups. For example, African-American and Latino students who completed the final basic skills English or Math course were significantly less likely to complete a degree-applicable course than White Non-Hispanic students. As a result, the college developed 9 different strategies, funded by *Student Equity* dollars, to address the disproportionate basic skills progression rates.

The College has implemented strategies to remedy the disproportionate basic skills progression rates; however, the metric used to assess the efficacy of these strategies is the CCCCO scorecard remedial rates, which follows students for six years. Therefore, the potential effects of these interventions will not be known for at least a few years. Moreover, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness now includes disaggregated student achievement data within each program review dataset. Programs and services are asked to respond to any gaps between student subpopulations and develop goals to mitigate these gaps. Similarly, with the addition of the *eLumen* SLO assessment software, the college now has the capability and has begun to disaggregate student learning outcome data by student subpopulation. For example, Institutional Learning Outcomes are now disaggregated by student subpopulation as well as some program and course Student Learning Outcomes data (e.g., Math) (I.B.6).



The institution regularly evaluates its policies and practices to assure their effectiveness in supporting academic quality and accomplishment of mission. The team not only found several examples of regular evaluations of college policies and practices, but also evidence that the college had made adjustments to policies and practices based on the results of the evaluations. For example, based on an analysis of how the college collected and stored SLO data, several limitations were cited prompting the college to transition to the *eLumen* software platform in 2015. In addition, based on a thorough review of the college's resource allocation process, the responsibility for the prioritization process moved from a committee (RAC) to a task force (RATF) to, ultimately, the College's Budget Committee in Spring 2015. The team found evidence of similar evaluations and meta-evaluations of committee self-evaluation forms, the annual and comprehensive program planning templates, and a scheduled review of the efficacy of the entire integrated planning cycle and governance process. A review of curriculum occurs on a six-year cycle to ensure the course outlines of record (COR) are current and meet articulation requirements (I.B.7).

The institution broadly communicates the results of its assessment and evaluation activities so that the institution has a shared understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and sets appropriate priorities. For example, the team validated that assessment and evaluation activities are communicated through committee minutes, program reviews, SLO assessment reports, etc. all of which are posted on the college's website. Moreover, the college president also communicates college strengths and weaknesses through *First Monday Reports* (FMR) as well as through opening day ceremonies (I.B.8).

The institution engages in continuous, broad based, systemic evaluation, integrated planning and resource allocation that leads to accomplishment of its mission and improvement of institutional effectiveness and academic quality. As clearly outlined in the college's *2015 Decision Making and Planning Handbook*, the college mission is accomplished via the *Strategic Master Plan*, the goals of which are supported by each department's short-term (developed within annual program plans) and long-term goals (developed within comprehensive plans). Human, physical, technological, and financial resources are allocated according to their relevancy and potential to accomplish Strategic Goals. While the role of the *Strategic Master Plan* within the integrated planning model is clearly articulated and widely understood by faculty and staff, the team found less clarity and understanding among faculty and staff as to what roles, in practice, other college plans—most notably, the Technology plan—play in the integrated planning model (I.B.9).

## **Conclusions - College**

Pierce College demonstrates a strong commitment to assessment, planning, and overall institutional effectiveness in support of its mission. The team found that the college has a clear strategic master plan, which is supported by a robust annual and comprehensive program review process. The team was particularly impressed by the college's analysis of student achievement and learning outcome data used to evaluate the degree to which strategic goals are meeting targets. Moreover, the team found several cases where resources were prioritized and allocated toward goals that were not meeting targets. In addition, there was

clear evidence that faculty and staff engage in substantive dialogue concerning student achievement and learning outcomes data, which are easily accessible on the Institutional Effectiveness website. In sum, the college is to be commended for its comprehensive strategic planning process. The commitment of the faculty, administration and staff is readily evident. The collaboration and engagement of the college community is laudable.

The college meets the Standard.

### **Recommendations for Improvement and Compliance:**

None

### **Standard I.C: Institutional Integrity**

#### **General Observations - College**

For Standard I.C, Institutional Integrity, LAPC assures that information regarding its mission, educational programs, learning outcomes, student services, and accredited status is clearly and accurately provided to students, personnel, and the general public through the college's website and the general catalog. Additionally, LAPC communicates its accreditation status, including outside accrediting and certifying agencies such as the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the California Board of Registered Nursing (BRN). LAPC communicates openly with the U.S. Department of Education and complies with federal Title IV regulations to continue administering financial aid programs.

The LACCD Board of Trustees establishes policies that are consistent with its mission statement and exercises oversight of the colleges' educational programs by means of its Board Rules and Administrative Regulations (Board Rules, Chapter 1, Article 2).

The District and the colleges have numerous relationships with external agencies. The District works in tandem with the colleges to submit all required data and reports to the California Community College Chancellor's Office, the U.S. Department of Education, external agencies, and accrediting agencies. The District coordinates the submission of MIS data requirements to the state along with accurate and timely submission of reports and budgets such as those required for the Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) and Student Equity funding. All required data for IPEDS reporting is also coordinated at the District. Working collaboratively with the colleges, the District's Central Financial Aid Unit complies with Federal Title IV regulations affecting the administration of financial aid programs. This includes regular submission of required data and reports, adherence to federal program reviews and audits, and quickly addressing any noted areas of noncompliance in any findings. The Contract and Purchasing Office in the Business Services Division of the District publicly advertises requests for bids and proposals for qualified suppliers and consultants through the District's website. All open requests, vendor forms and directions, and contact information for District contract and procurement personnel is provided. The District communicates information regarding accredited status through the

Planning and Accreditation webpage. All correspondence from the Commission is posted on the webpage, including the college self-evaluation and follow-up reports and the associated evidence.

### **Findings and Evidence - College**

The team found that the institution provides clear and accurate information to students, staff and other stakeholders. The college's primary means of providing information is through the College's website and General Catalog. The College Mission, information about educational programs, student support, program learning outcomes, and the institution's accreditation status with all of its accreditors is available both on the college website and in the General Catalog. Information regarding course level student learning outcomes is available on the course outline of record, which is accessible online via the Electronic Curriculum Development website, as well as through physical course syllabi (I.C.1).

With respect to the General Catalog for students, the team verified that the college catalog meets all of the catalog requirements regarding General Information, Requirements, Major Policies and Procedures Affecting Students, as well as information regarding where other policies may be located (I.C.2).

Pierce College communicates matters of academic quality to its internal and external constituencies using assessment results of both student learning and achievement. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness publishes myriad reports of student learning and achievement and on its public website. For example, information regarding student success, retention, degree completion, transfer, job placement, licensure pass rates, etc. is available for constituencies view. Moreover, all program reviews, and the results of student learning outcomes assessment are posted to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness' website (I.C.3).

The team verified that the institution describes the purpose, content, course requirements, and learning outcomes for each of its certificates and degrees. This information is available in the college's General Catalog (I.C.4).

The team verified that the college regularly reviews some institutional policies, procedures and publications, while others are revised on an ad hoc basis. Both the college mission and the college catalog are reviewed on a regular schedule—every four years for the mission and annually for college catalog. The team found several examples of recently revised policies and procedures, e.g., *Pierce College Faculty Code of Ethics*, etc. The college has recognized the need for an integrated and systematic cycle of review of its policies, procedures, and publications and plans to establish a complete review cycle by summer 2016 (I.C.5).

The college provides accurate information to students regarding the total cost of education. The team found this information clearly displayed in the Pierce College General Catalog, as well as on the college's financial aid website, both of which are updated annually (I.C.6).

With respect to academic freedom and responsibility, the college uses and publishes LACCD Board Rule 15002, the Pierce College Faculty Code of Ethics, as well as Article 4 of

Agreement 2014-2017 between the LACCD and the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild all of which codify the college's policies and commitment to an atmosphere of intellectual freedom. In addition, the college has established and publishes its policies regarding student behavior, academic honesty and the potential consequences for violating these policies. The team verified that the college has codified these policies in LACCD Board Rules 9803 and 6703.10. Consequences for academic dishonesty are outlined in Board Rule 91101 (I.C.7, I.C.8).

The College's *Faculty Code of Ethics* provides guidance for faculty regarding the distinction between personal conviction and professionally accepted views. The *Faculty Code of Ethics* further describes the faculty obligation to present the subject matter listed in the official course outline of record. Through student evaluations of faculty, students are afforded the opportunity to report the degree to which faculty are objective and following official course content. Based on the results of a recent student survey, more than 90% of students who responded agreed that faculty at Pierce college present data and information fairly and objectively (I.C.9)

LAPC revises and communicates in the catalog and/or appropriate handbooks, i.e. Standards of Student Conduct and Faculty Codes of Ethics, institutional conformity to a pluralism of beliefs or world views. The diverse community of staff, faculty, administrators, and students at LAPC engaged in co-curricular activities receive prior notice of such policies associated to ethics, beliefs, and lifestyle (I.C.10).

Because Pierce College does not operate in foreign countries, Standard I.C.11 is not applicable.

The team verified that the college complies with all of the Commission's requirements for timely submission of accreditation documents and reports, as well as public disclosure of required information. The college provided an opportunity for third party comment and noticed the public in December 2015 of the accreditation review and conducted a forum. The college also follows the Commission's guidelines for initiating substantive changes. Additionally, the team verified that the college demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education, the California Board of Registered Nursing (BRN), etc. (I.C.12, I.C.13).

Pierce College is a not-for-profit public institution, therefore other objectives such as generating financial returns for investors does not threaten the preeminence of high quality education, student achievement and student learning. The team verified that financial arrangements entered into by the College are approved by the governing board and closely monitored by Administrative Services (I.C.14).

### **General Observations - District**

The Board has long-established policies on academic freedom, ethics, and freedom of speech to assure institutional and academic integrity. The District also has policies on standards of student conduct and prohibited practices such as discrimination and harassment that include

elements of academic freedom. A noteworthy practice is the existence of a committee of the Academic Senate on Professional Ethics and Academic Freedom which is charged with “regulating the ethical conduct of faculty and issues of academic freedom.”

The Los Angeles Community College District has well-developed Board Rules that promote academic honesty, responsibility, and academic integrity that *ensure a faculty’s right to teach and a student’s right to learn*. These Board policies are posted on the District and college websites. Board Rule 9803 requires that the college president annually publicize the Standards of Conduct. The District also has a comprehensive policy on student discipline that delineates the process for student due process in the event of a violation of the student code of conduct. This information is available to students in the college catalog as well as online via the college website.

### **Findings and Evidence – District**

The Board is responsible for policy and exercises oversight over student success, persistence, retention, and quality (BR 2100). The Board exercises oversight of the District's educational programs and has established an Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success (IESS) Committee to monitor the integrity, quality, and improvement of student learning programs and services (I.C.14). The Board of Trustees is kept regularly informed on key indicators of student learning and achievement through the IESS. Additionally, Board agendas and minutes provide evidence of regular review of the colleges’ academic quality and institutional plans. The annual review and analysis of the state’s Student Success Scorecard completion data and the resultant Board discussion has focused on strategies for improving student success and academic quality.

The Board’s policy on academic freedom specifies the faculty’s right to teach and the student’s right to learn. The colleges widely publish their commitment to a learning environment that promotes free expression of thought and ideas in the college catalogs and some include it in the class schedule. The District’s faculty contract (AFT) specifies that faculty shall have the *freedom to seek the truth and guarantee freedom of learning for students*. The faculty contract also outlines the policies and procedures for protection of academic freedom. (I.C.7)

The Los Angeles Community College District demonstrates a clear commitment to academic integrity and personal responsibility. The District has established and routinely publishes Board policies and administrative regulations that promote honesty, responsibility, and academic integrity that apply to all constituencies, including students taking online classes (Board Rules 9803-9806 and 91101). Policies include definitions of and expectations for honest and ethical behavior. The District has a student code of conduct which includes academic honesty. The District also has policies and procedures for addressing student discipline and complaints. These policies and procedures are communicated to students in college catalogs and on the District and College websites. In accordance with Board Rule 6703.10, faculty are required to include an expectation of academic integrity for students in their class syllabi. (I.C.8).

## **Conclusions - District**

Los Angeles Community College District meets the Standard. The District has a number of policies and administrative regulations in place to promote honesty, responsibility, ethical conduct, and academic integrity that apply to all forms of delivery and constituencies, including visitors to the campuses. There are several commendable practices pertaining to academic integrity at the various colleges of the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD). LACCD has a Board rule that requires faculty to include a statement in the syllabi about the student code of conduct including academic honesty.

The District meets the Standard and ER 13. The Los Angeles Community College District is committed to principles of academic freedom and ethical behavior. The District assures institutional and academic integrity through adherence to Board of Trustee policies on academic freedom that commit to a learning environment in which intellectual freedom exists for faculty and students to explore and critically examine knowledge. This commitment is reflected throughout the organization in a variety of ways including Board policies, mission statements, institutional core values, faculty contracts and governance handbooks that are readily available. This commitment is communicated to students and the public via college catalogs and websites, along with student evaluations at some or all of the colleges.

## **Conclusions – College**

It is the opinion of the team that Pierce College has embraced the merits of integrity mediating competing values and priorities such as those described in the standard. The Board of Trustees' IESS committee keeps them informed on issues involving academic quality, student achievement, and student learning.

The District and College meet this Standard.

## **Recommendations for Improvement and Compliance:**

None.

## **Standard II**

### **Student Learning Programs and Support Services**

#### **Standard II.A: Instructional Programs**

##### **General Observation - College**

Los Angeles Pierce College (LAPC) presents a robust mission statement, and thoroughly examines its processes and procedures in meeting the goals and mission of the college. The integrated planning process, annual program planning (APP), and assessment cycles are thorough and exceed the minimum in frequency (moving to a four-year cycle for comprehensive program reviews from a six-year cycle), with institution set standards (ISS) integrated into key strategic planning processes (II.A.7, II.A.11, II.A.12).

The Standard II section of the report demonstrates thoughtful effort and high quality. A recent notable change in process has occurred with LAPC's adoption of the *eLumen* software system. *eLumen* is a tool that allows the Institution Researcher to provide disaggregated outcome data to meaningful subsets for instructors and support service staff who can then improve the student experience. (II.A.2, II.A.3)

The institution went through a reorganization in which there was a change in leadership in the research team and with the faculty outcomes coordinator (pg. 93) which hampered the institution's ability to perform GELO assessment on the schedule that it had planned. In addition, the College entirely remapped its institutional planning process (Spring 2014) and created a new integrated planning calendar which shifted from a six-year to a four-year cycle. As a result, the College's QFE focuses on how to realign the GELO/PLO assessment cycle in light of the new calendar.

The transfer of credit policies are established by the District in Board Rules and Administrative Regulations. There is no District oversight in ensuring consistency in the application of these policies. The nine colleges maintain articulation agreements with public and private accredited institutions both in-state and out-of-state. The District does not have any role in the development or maintenance of articulation agreements.

##### **Findings and Evidence - College**

Each of the nine colleges maintained articulation agreements with public and private accredited institutions both in-state and out-of-state. These agreements are contained in ASSIST, the state's recognized articulation database for use by students and employees that advise students. The establishment and maintenance of articulation agreements is the responsibility of the college faculty. The District does not have a role in developing articulation agreements.

As described by the mission, the College offers courses which promote transfer, CTE and Basic Skills. The Board Policy for the College dictates that all new programs align with the state mission (IIA.6) to achieve these goals. Through the annual and comprehensive review

process, active courses and programs are reviewed on a regular basis to confirm currency, and this review allows for courses to be systematically reviewed ensuring continued alignment with the mission (every 4 years; every 2 years for CTE) (IIA.7, IIA.8, IIA.9) (II.A.1, ER 9, ER 11)

All courses are evaluated at least once every six years through the curriculum review process to ensure the appropriate credit type, delivery mode, and location of its courses and program. Through this process, courses are updated to reflect changes in transfer requirements or workforce needs. (IIA.15, IIA.16)

The curriculum review process also allows programs to be assessed for currency, appropriateness within higher education, teaching and learning strategies, and student learning outcomes. Courses offered in an alternative delivery mode (IE distance education) must also receive approval through the curriculum process and include an addendum, which is reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. The addendum process was recently updated to further emphasize the importance of regular, substantive contact between instructors and students. Faculty are asked to describe what types of regular substantive contact they will include in their online classes. (II.A.2)

Faculty also regularly assess SLOs and discuss the results during the annual program planning process. The College instituted a policy of assessment that includes “every course, every instructor, every semester”. In the past, the entering of assessment outcomes fell to the chair, the adoption of *eLumen* allows each faculty member to enter assessment data for their classes. The chair now confirms that every faculty member has entered assessment data for all of their classes. The Educational Planning Committee oversees the program planning process and the Academic Senate oversees the program viability process (IIA.8).

Criteria used during program review include data for learning outcomes at the course and program level, student achievement, success, retention, equity and labor market/advisory (for CTE programs). As part of this process, programs are asked to develop short- and long-term goals and describe curricular changes (II.A.16).

Institution Set Standards are tied to courses and programs in addition to the institution itself and they are reasonable and are linked to historical trends. When goals are not met departmentally, the department sets goals and tracks progress to meet them. (II.A.2)

The College has identified institution-set standards for student achievement which include the awarding of degrees and certificates as part of the strategic plan. In this way the institution ensures that students are achieving their goals. When a program falls below a benchmark established by the campus, they are informed of this in the data given to them during the annual program planning process. Programs then are required to create an action plan that will address the gap in achievement data. Evidence provided to programs for the 2016-2017 program plans is available now and includes success and retention rates for Distance Education classes. (II.A.1, II.A.2, IIA.10, IIA.11, IIA.12)



Faculty are evaluated through peer evaluation on a three-year cycle with a component to ensure continuous improvement. During the faculty evaluation process, faculty are evaluated on areas such as following the COR and promoting an active and positive learning environment.

This process ensures that faculty maintain the quality of instruction. The faculty evaluation form includes the following items under which faculty can discuss the link between learning styles and outcomes as well as the effect of different modes of delivery on student success:

- Is regularly available to students (A7 on the evaluation form).
- Participates in the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Cycle (for classroom faculty, includes approved SLOs on class syllabi) (A9 on the evaluation form)
- Promotes active involvement of students in learning activities (B4 on the evaluation form)
- Teaches course content that is appropriate to the official course outline of record congruent with standards set by the discipline (B10 on the evaluation form)
- Initiates regular, systematic and substantive student contact (B16 on the evaluation form).

The College has course and program level outcomes for all classes and degrees that are assessed regularly, and used to improve instruction. The faculty develop learning outcomes for courses and the Curriculum Committee is responsible for ensuring that the course outline of record includes an SLO addendum for all courses regardless of mode of delivery or type of credit. All faculty distribute a syllabus to the students at the start of the semester that includes SLOs. During the evaluation process, faculty are evaluated on their participation in the assessment of SLOs. (II.A.2, II.A.3, II.A.16)

The College's process of assessing course level outcomes is well-entrenched. Courses are assessed every semester and results are reported out every other year but will be moving to a four year reporting cycle. (II.A.3)

Learning outcome assessment at the course level is the basis of the program level assessments. PLOs are assessed on a six-year cycle aligned with the Educational Master Plan 2012-2018. PLOs were last assessed in 2012. The next scheduled assessment is 2017-18. Data from program level assessments are disaggregated by equity categories and provided to programs for discussion and inclusion in the annual program planning process. All full-time faculty participate when there are course or program level revisions. Those revisions are then taken through the Curriculum Committee in a 'fast track' process provided there are no additional curricular changes to a course. (II.A.3)

The institution is working on assessing GELOs and PLOs on a regular cycle. The institution is setting up a cycle for GELO/PLO assessment in which all GELOs/PLOs are assessed over a four year period instead of a six year period. The adoption of *eLumen* is expected to help the college track all levels of learning outcomes. The College has developed, as part of its QFE, several goals related to GELOs and ILOs. Recent changes to personnel and processes have resulted in a delay in the GELO assessment. The Outcomes Committee is responsible for gathering data for general and institutional outcomes. While general and institutional level outcomes have been reported out at a few campus venues such as the Academic Senate

and the Student Success Committee, there is no plan by which GELO and ILO results are reported out or discussed in a systematic way with the campus community. (II.A.3)

The College does not distinguish between learning outcomes for DE versus traditional classroom experiences. The assessments of learning outcomes are done in all classes, including DE on a regular cycle (see above). Program level data is provided for student success and retention in DE versus non-DE classes as of the 2016-2017 year. This data is not currently broken down by equity categories for programs. However, disaggregated institutional comparison data for DE courses has been provided on the institutional research website. There is no evidence that institutional changes have occurred based upon the data provided for Distance Education.

The College distinguishes its pre-collegiate level curriculum in the Course Outline of Record. It offers pre-collegiate level curriculum in English, English as a Second Language, Math, Learning Foundations and Learning Skills. The College provides support services to students enrolled in pre-collegiate level courses, such as the Center of Academic Success (CAS) and Online Writing Lab (OWL) to provide tutoring for students in English, Math, learning communities in Math, specialized programs during summer, and accelerated ESL programs. (II.A.4)

Board Policy and state law dictate that programs meet a minimum number of units and offer an area of specialization. Degrees and certificates consist of a core of required courses in a single field of study allowing for depth of the subject. CTE programs receive input from advisory boards and students. In both cases the quality, rigor, and currency are evaluated during the curriculum process and adherence to the standards set in the course outline of record is ensured by the faculty evaluation process and the program planning process (annual and comprehensive). (II.A.5, ER 12).

The approval process for DE versus non-DE classes is the same as far as the Curriculum process. However, DE classes are required to fill out an addendum and the college has a policy on when/if a class is offered as DE. Instructors wishing to teach Distance Education classes must be trained and certified prior to teaching classes online. This policy includes the following requirements established by the College's standing committee on Distance Education and Instructional Technologies (DEIT):

1. No class can be scheduled as online or hybrid until the class has been approved by the college Curriculum Committee as an online course and the proper DE Addendum and Certification are attached to the official Course Outline of Record.
2. No class with online hours can be scheduled with STAFF as the instructor in the published schedule.
3. No class with online hours can be scheduled with an instructor who has not been approved to teach online at Pierce.
4. Classes that do not appear in the printed schedule of classes are required to be advertised for 30 days prior to the start of the class.
5. Classes that are offered online shall be offered via the PierceOnLine official Course Management System.
6. PierceOnLine will maintain an accurate list of instructors who are qualified to teach online. The list will be sent out every semester to department chairs and deans.

7. The DE Coordinator will verify the qualifications and report any problems back to the department chair who will be responsible for ensuring the guidelines are met. (II.A.5)

The College schedules courses such that students can complete a program of study in a timely manner. The institution created a standing committee, Enrollment Management Committee (EMC) which is responsible for creating broad institutional goals related to enrollment. Deans and department chairs work with program faculty to schedule classes so students can complete the program in a timely manner. The annual program planning process as well as a comprehensive review provide opportunities for programs to assess using data, the rigor, sequencing and time to completion for their program as well as how well students achieve the PLOs (see discussion of PLO assessment cycle). In order to verify and maintain currency of employment opportunities, CTE programs meet with their advisory boards at least once a year. Specific CTE programs, such as Nursing, prepare students for state-level or industry external exams.

One of the goals of the EMC is to address effective scheduling to ensure student completion. The EMC's membership consists of administration, faculty and union representatives, representatives of the Student Success Committee and various services from around the campus. The committee oversees a holistic review of enrollment including Outreach, Public Relations, non-credit offerings, etc.

The institution schedules classes on campus, online and at off-site locations to meet the needs of its students which is central to the college's mission. The college gathers data on the success and retention of students overall and by special populations such as EOPS and DSPS. The Enrollment Management Committee is responsible for analyzing trends in enrollment and ensuring the institution is meeting the needs of its students to achieve their goals of transfer and CTE completion. (II.A.6, ER9)

The College does not offer correspondence courses, distance education is completely online or hybrid. Instructors have available training in accessibility of materials and successful pedagogy to maximize student success opportunities.

After reviewing the course through PierceOnline every course viewed has multiple ways of assessing student learning including quizzes, discussion posts and writing assignments (access given to all sections available in Moodle and the piloted courses in Canvas). There is a policy in place for the scheduling of DE classes. The College is also a recipient of a Title V grant which provides support for faculty to attend professional development workshops as they relate to Distance Education. In addition, the grant has provided support for a program whereby students can check out laptops to complete their online classes. The College's online program was chosen to pilot the Online Education Initiative, specifically the Tutoring Staging Group. 2016-2017 data provided to instructional programs for planning purposes included information on Distance Education, although it was not broken down by equity categories.

The College offers professional development opportunities for faculty staff on different teaching methods. These workshops provide opportunities to discuss the relationship between teaching methodologies and student performance. The Faculty Professional Development Committee takes the lead in offering workshops to enhance instructors'

understanding of student learning styles. Other committees may also decide to offer workshops to the campus community regarding pedagogical issues (ex: Student Success, Outcomes, etc). One of the action plans for the College is to strengthen its professional development activities. As part of this plan, it is expected that the new committee and position will result in a central location for all professional development activities from across the campus which will better enable faculty to have the most current training available on the needs of students with different learning styles. (II.A.6, II.A.7)

The College uses department-wide examinations only in the mathematics department. These include courses in elementary and intermediate Algebra, Calculus I, and Statway classes. The Statway class is examined on a regular basis by the Carnegie Foundation.

The mathematics department faculty develop the other exams, and use an agreed-upon rubric for grading. They regularly collect and analyze data for each exam question. The department makes adjustments to future questions and improves instruction across the department. In addition, faculty are provided data on how their students performed on these assessments so as to make individual improvements when needed. These processes help ensure the exams help reduce test bias and enhance reliability. (II.A.8)

The College awards credit based upon the Course Outcome of Record and student learning outcomes. Every course that goes through the curriculum process must have learning outcomes associated with the course. These outcomes are reviewed by the chair of the Outcomes Committee to ensure they fit the model of a learning outcome. All instructors are required to have learning outcomes and course objectives in their syllabus and the faculty evaluation process ensures that instructors are teaching to the objectives and outcomes. The College awards degrees in accordance with District Board Rule 6201. The College offers courses consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted norms in higher education. It does not use the clock-to-credit conversion formula. (II.A.9)

The College Catalog describes the institution's requirements for accepting coursework from outside of the institution. Administrative Policy for the District describes what type of credit can be accepted. Board policies are reviewed regularly. The Articulation Officer works with programs to develop articulation agreements with transfer institutions such as the CSU and UC systems. The College does not distinguish in accepting credit between courses taken on-campus or online nor does it distinguish in its transcripts between mode of delivery. (II.A.10)

The College has identified six General Education Learning Outcomes which address developing an understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives and a set of information competencies in all students. The GELOs were developed through the committee structure and included faculty input and is reviewed every year by the Curriculum Committee. Every course is mapped to a GELO and every course's SLOs are assessed on a regular basis. The GELO's are:

1. Communication
2. Critical Thinking
3. Research and Information Literacy
4. Civic Responsibility and Ethical Reasoning in a Diverse Society

5. Quantitative Analysis and Scientific Reasoning
6. Arts and Cultural Awareness

The College also recently separated the GELOs and ILOs. The ILOs are the same as the GELOs with the addition of an ILO that reflects CTE. The Outcomes Committee ensures that GELOs and ILOs are assessed on a regular basis. All degrees include General Education Learning Outcomes. Certificates in the CTE area include these outcomes, as appropriate, along with program-specific skills. The College adheres with state regulation and district board rules. It offers three general education plans to complement its associate degrees (LACCD GE, CSU GE Breadth, and IGETC). Course outlines are reviewed on a six-year cycle, with oversight by the Curriculum Committee. (II.A.11, II.A.12)

The College follows LACCD Board Rule 6201.10. Every associate degree requires a major (one area of focused study) or an area of emphasis. Degrees are awarded upon successful completion of a minimum of 60 units, which includes the area of emphasis, general education, and electives as needed. All degrees have defined PLOs. (II.A.13)

Faculty members in CTE programs meet with industry professionals to discuss programs and provide input regarding industry standards. Student input is also considered in program development and modifications. Several CTE programs, Addiction Studies, Nursing, and Registered Veterinary Technology, align curriculum to prepare students for successful outcomes on licensure exams and are subject to review by external agencies. CTE programs complete a program review process every two years to ensure curriculum is current and meets industry needs. The CTE programs use available state labor market data in measuring employment outcomes and other required reporting elements. However, they depend more heavily on advisory boards and robust student input. (II.A.14)

The College follows LACCD Board Rule 6202 regarding students' catalog rights to complete program requirements and Rule 6803 that allows the college to conduct viability reviews. The College has a program viability process, and has conducted these reviews four times in the past three years. As a result of this review process, cooperative education and service learning were discontinued. However, there were no degrees or certificate programs associated with these, so they did not impact students' ability to complete their programs of study. The College does internally archive classes on a regular basis. Although the College has developed a discontinuance policy, they have not utilized it as they have not discontinued programs. They have used the data to modify existing programs. (II.A.15)

The College regularly evaluates the quality and currency of its instructional programs through a six-year curriculum review cycle (two years for CTE programs), and SLO assessment process, an annual program plan process, and a four-year comprehensive program review process.

The College offers non-credit (Encore) and not for credit (Extension) classes. In the case of Encore classes, the courses are approved through curriculum in the same manner as credit course. Student learning outcomes are included as part of the curriculum process. Outcomes are assessed and entered in to *eLumen* in the same manner as credit courses. Not for credit classes are not part of the Curriculum Committee purview. Classes are created based upon community demand, statewide demand and student feedback. Surveys are administered to students at the end of classes, at least once per year. (II.A.16)

## **Findings and Evidence - District**

The District has well-established policies and regulations in place for acceptance of a wide range of transfer credits including: standardized tests, external exams, International Baccalaureate, military credits, Advanced Placement, courses completed at international institutions, and acceptance of upper division courses to meet lower division requirements. These policies align with state regulations, the policies of California State University, and University of California, and other transfer institutions, as well as with generally accepted practices in higher education.

This information is published in the college catalogs and websites. The awarding of transfer credits is the responsibility of each college and is reflected on the student's permanent record, maintained in the Student Information System (DEC). Each college currently issues its own student transcripts; however, this will change with the new PeopleSoft system where there will be one District transcript reflecting credits taken throughout the District. There is no District monitoring of the consistency of the awarding of transfer credits.

The information presented to students in college publications is thorough and comprehensive. While some colleges specified that they do not specifically examine student learning outcomes in the process of evaluating transfer credits, the acceptance of transfer credits by the institutions implies that the expected learning outcomes are comparable.

## **Conclusions - College**

The College meets the Standard and ER 9, 10, 11, and 12. Transfer of credit policies are clearly communicated to students in various college publications, including the college catalog and websites, to facilitate the mobility of students from one institution to another without penalty. While the District does not specifically assess student learning outcomes of transferred courses since they are not readily available, the college reviews required prerequisites, course content and knowledge gained in transferred courses to determine equivalency. Moreover, by accepting transfer credits in accordance with Board policies, the college has determined that the learning outcomes for the transferred courses are comparable to the courses at the college.

The colleges all have numerous articulation agreements in place and rely on ASSIST as the primary repository of those agreements. The development and maintenance of articulation agreements is the responsibility of the individual college faculty. The District does not have a role.

Pierce College meets all portions of the Standard. There are areas within the Standard where the institution engages in exemplary actions as well as areas where it can strengthen its processes to exceed the Standard.

## **Recommendations for Improvement and Compliance**

**College Recommendation 2 (Improvement):** In order to improve, the team recommends that the College provide continuing professional development opportunities to faculty and staff on how to incorporate data into the annual program plan for each discipline/service. (IIA.2)

**College Recommendation 3 (Improvement):** In order to improve, the team recommends that the College should expand their outcome process to include a systematic way whereby GELOs and ILOs outcomes are presented at established forums throughout the campus. The institution should ensure that it records what improvements and/or plans have been made as a result of dialogue surrounding the outcome data. (IIA.2, IIA.3)

**College Recommendation 4 (Improvement):** In order to improve, the team recommends that the Distance Education program should expand the analysis of Distance Education success and retention data, including disaggregated data, across the institution and by programs. It should expand on these discussions to include identification of gaps as well as action plans for addressing any identified gaps. (IIA.7)

## **Standard II.B: Library and Learning Support Services**

### **General Observations - College**

The Pierce College Library and Learning Crossroads opened a new facility in 2013, offering improved facilities and services to students. The Library operates the upper floor of the building, and the Center for Academic Success (CAS) occupies a portion of the lower floor. The Library is staffed with full- and part-time library faculty, and with staff members. The holdings are current and the library and CAS share both electronic resources and borrowing of resources. The Library offers workshops for students, professional development opportunities for faculty, and individual reference appointments for students engaged in research. They also offer online chat opportunities for students to work with a reference librarian at any time. The CAS is in high demand with tutoring in many areas of instruction, and facilities for group and individual work. CAS tutors include volunteers and interns from graduate and undergraduate programs. Some subject areas use course-embedded tutors as well. Each of the facilities (Library and CAS) offers a credit course with assessed student learning outcomes. Both facilities see high student usage across all academic disciplines of the college.

All the colleges adhere to Board policy pertaining to intra-library loans and have strong collaboration pertaining to providing learning support for students. When the institution relies on or collaborates with other institutions or other sources for library and other learning support services for its instructional programs, it documents that formal agreements exist and that such resources and services are adequate for the institution's intended purposes, are

easily accessible, and utilized. The institution takes responsibility for and assures the security, maintenance, and reliability of services provided either directly or through contractual arrangement. The institution regularly evaluates these services to ensure their effectiveness.

### **Findings and Evidence - College**

The College in 2013 opened a new 59,000 square foot Library and Learning Crossroads building. The Library occupies the upper floor of the building and is fitted with over 800 seats, eight group-study rooms, a 40-computer instruction room, an open access lab with 110 computers, 20 computers in the Reference Desk area, copy stations, and a task room for students with disabilities. The Library is open 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Friday, and 10:30 – 3:30 Saturday when classes are in session, for a total of 62.5 open hours per week. This is an increase over the 54 hours per week reported in the college Institutional Self Evaluation Report, and is in response to student need and student request as ascertained from student surveys and staff usage observations. The Library is staffed with seven full-time faculty librarians including the Library Department Chair, additional adjunct faculty librarians, and library staff including an assistant, library technicians, and instructional assistants. This staffing represents the recent addition of two library faculty members in recent years, one to focus on social media, and the other to focus on outreach to students.

The library staff believes the library collection is of sufficient breadth, depth and variety to support the learning programs of the College. The collection includes print volumes, online books, and electronic holdings. Distance education students have access to a wide variety of electronic resources and online assistance. The library also has a variety of software and resources to support students, including those with disabilities. Library staff also offer “one-shot workshops” on various topics to increase student success (e.g., “How to Use Web Resources”). An online reference chat program, Question Point, allows students to ask reference questions at any time.

The library offers a one-unit Library Science course each semester titled “Internet Research Methods”, and conducts SLO assessments for the course. Based on the assessment results, the librarians have implemented a variety of changes to improve student learning. Historically, this class was offered in conjunction with journalism classes. However, currently, the course is offered independently of specific disciplines and one or two sections are offered each semester.

Librarians also provide orientation sessions both in the library and in classes. Over the past two years, the number of orientations offered increased 72% to 248 class sections. The library also offers individual student instruction at the reference desk. In addition to five-minute Reference Desk availability to answer immediate student questions, the Reference Desk now also offers 30-minute individual appointments to help students with research questions.



The Center for Academic Success (CAS) is located in the lower floor of the Pierce College Library/Learning Crossroads building, and its services are in high demand. The CAS offers a tutoring center, learning skills courses, student skills workshops, and credit classes. Facilities include a computer lab, workshop room, group study rooms, a conference room, and 8,000+ square feet of open space with white boards and tables. Tutoring is available from 9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 10:00 – 2:00 on Fridays. The CAS also offers online tutoring through the Online Writing Lab (OWL). In 2015, the college offered 20,872 hours of tutoring through the Center. Currently, in-person tutoring is available for about 15-30 discipline courses. The College uses a variety of funding sources to support the library and CAS, and is maintained by the Information Technology (IT) Department at Pierce College. (II.B.1)

Pierce College relies on the expertise of faculty, librarians, and other learning support services staff to select appropriate materials. Students have access to a wide variety of materials to support student learning. The College has an appropriate number of print volumes and virtual books, as well as online databases for research material and supplemental instructional resources.

Faculty members make requests for library resources as part of their course outline of record (COR) and curriculum review. Faculty and Student Services departments define the quality of materials needed for their programs. The library department chairperson is a standing member of the Curriculum Committee and Technical Review Subcommittee, and reviews each COR.

Prior to moving to the new building, the entire library collection was reviewed. The collection was evaluated for old or obsolete materials, and potential new materials were identified to strengthen the breadth of resources for students. The College has increased the resources that students need, as evidenced by the significant increase in student demand for tutoring in 2015 versus prior years. (II.B.2)

The CAS regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its services. The staff conducts student surveys, pre-and post-tests for information sessions, and collects a variety of student usage data for both on-ground and online services.

Library evaluations include input from both faculty and students. The library conducts a student survey and faculty orientation survey each spring. SLO assessments are conducted for the library orientations to measure information competency skills. The CAS conducts student surveys to collect feedback about tutoring and workshops. The Librarians and CAS staff review the data to ensure services are aligned with student needs, and adjust presentation content accordingly. Examples include SLO assessment in 2010 and 2014 satisfaction survey results, according to the college self-study.

Tutors in the CAS are trained before beginning work with students, and have the opportunity to engage in extended training and additional opportunities (e.g., Tutors Conference) to improve their skills. The Director also works with faculty in committee work and individually as the need arises to plan workshops and to allocate resources. In obtaining

feedback toward improvement, the CAS used a variety of modalities including online evaluations through Facebook pages, QR (Quick Read) codes on flyers, and pencil-paper surveys. In addition to assessing learning outcomes, the CAS collected data on customer satisfaction surveys in order to improve their services to students. (II.B.3)

The College participates in the Integrated Library System (ILS) for all of the libraries in LACCD. Interlibrary Loan (ILL) is available to users. Contracts are negotiated by the District contracts office. The District Technology Department maintains and secures the SirsiDynix Symphony server. The Library also participates in EBSCOhost online data bases, Jstor digital library base of books and journals, and e-Library reference sources, among many other resource systems.

All library books are embedded with RFIC tags. The library building has a security system in place monitored by Los Angeles County Sheriff deputies, who are stationed on campus. An ez-proxy system is used to authenticate remote users. (II.B.4)

The District has a long-standing practice of collaboration for library and learning support for its instructional programs. The District has a policy that facilitates intra-library loans for its students. This reciprocal agreement allows students to request material to be sent to another library within the District, generally within one week. Students also have the option to drive to another college to pick up materials on loan.

The District does not have a role in documenting formal collaborative agreements pertaining to library and other learning support services for instructional programs. The development and maintenance of these agreements is the responsibility of the individual colleges. The colleges also have subscriptions for online databases, tutoring programs, and career planning tools. The District libraries use the California Community College Library Consortium to purchase electronic resources which is the most cost-effective approach. The colleges also have reciprocal agreements with the libraries at the local California State University campuses and refer students to the local public libraries for various materials that may not be available.

The institutions are responsible for assuring the security, maintenance and reliability of the services provided. District Information Technology is responsible for maintaining the software and websites. The District does not have a role other than the District wide contract with the Sherriff's Department for campus security services.

### **Conclusions - College**

The College meets the Standard. The nine colleges of the District have strong collaboration with regards to library and other learning support that aligns with District policy. The colleges also collaborate with local universities and the public library system to provide library support for students. The colleges have agreements in place for online resources and services. The nine librarians meet monthly to share resources and identify needs and services for students. The colleges are responsible for the overall security and maintenance of resources, and District IT is responsible for the maintenance of the websites and software. Facilities are secured through a District wide contract with the Sherriff's Department.

The resources allocated to the new building and Library holdings provide a comfortable place in which students can study and engage with their learning process. Materials are current and interlibrary loans, as well as online resources, are available. Resource librarians are available to meet with students individually for extended appointments.

Obtaining student preferences based on student surveys with a year-end survey offering a drawing for gift cards has resulted in increased input from students. Additionally, understanding student needs contributed to the hiring of a library faculty member to focus on social media.

Library faculty are highly engaged with faculty across campus on the Open Educational Resources (OER) Initiative. This will dramatically decrease costs for student textbooks and will help instructors to provide a completely online instructional environment for distance education. As colleges statewide offer more classes online through the Online Education Initiative, the OER work being done by faculty librarians will dovetail to provide open educational resources to distance education students.

The CAS is highly utilized and appears well-staffed. While the facility is very new, the space is currently completely utilized.

The Library recently increased hours of operation based on student need, but the CAS has not done so, and has no Saturday or evening hours. Holding open hours only during normal daytime business hours prevents evening, weekend, and high school students from utilizing in-person tutoring resources and may hinder their success. Alternatively, the college could expand online tutoring services to meet student need, added to the Online Writing Lab (OWL) tutoring which does not address the varied courses and disciplines for which tutoring is available in the CAS.

The Library 102 class is not well-utilized, with just one or two sections per year, and 61 students completing the course last year. Although the instructors do assess learning outcomes with a pre-test/post-test study design to integrate results into their teaching, they may benefit from conducting a comparison study with students who have taken the course and students who have not.

Technology issues at the college presented some minor challenges with non-working Web links (e.g., to some of the student resources, including NetTutor, and OWL). Library and CAS staff and faculty recognize the need for updated hardware for student use within their facilities.

### **College Commendations**

**College Commendation 1:** The team commends the college on their processes of collecting and responding to student feedback to improve and expand Library and Center for Academic Success (CAS) services and resources. (II.B.1, II.C.1)

### **Recommendations for Improvement and Compliance**

None

## **Standard II.C: Student Support Services**

### **General Observations – College**

Los Angeles Pierce College provides students with a broad variety of student support services under the Vice President of Student Services. There are five areas under the Division of student services, with respective persons to oversee programs within each department: the Dean of Student Success; the Dean of Student Engagement; the Athletics Director; the Associate Dean of Disabled Student Services; and the Dean of Student Services.

The Student Services Organizational Structure outlines a total of 25 distinct programs and processes (14 programs and 11 processes) within the five areas of Student Services. These student support programs and departments provide students with services to enhance student success and support the College mission. There are regular, structured processes in place, such as Annual Program Planning and Comprehensive Program Review, to evaluate the effectiveness of student support programs through assessment and analysis of various types of data. Programs are in the process of transitioning from Service Area Outcomes (SAOs) to Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in an effort to better assess student learning in alignment with, and enhancement of, the College's mission.

### **General Observations – District**

The District has adopted, and the colleges adhere to, admission policies that are consistent with the mission and specify the qualifications of students appropriate for its programs. These policies are published in catalogs and class schedules as well as available on websites. In addition, academic programs that have special admission/selection processes such as nursing and radiologic technology include this information in program applications/websites.

The District and colleges have high standards for the confidentiality, maintenance, release, and destruction of student records. District policies and practices have been developed in accordance with state and federal law and are strictly followed. There are a number of safeguards in place to protect the confidentiality of student records, including: requiring photo identification to access records information in person; nightly back up of the databases; adherence to a records classification and destruction system; and restricting access through the use of controlled passwords that are automatically changed every 90 days.

### **Findings and Evidence - College**

The College regularly evaluates the quality of student support services through the distribution of surveys. The analysis of the data is conducted by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the Educational Services Center and through the Annual Program Planning Process and the Comprehensive Program Review. The annual program planning and the comprehensive program review processes provide regular venues whereby Student Services reflect on the effectiveness of their services and identify needs in order to improve those

services. The last comprehensive review cycle for student services was completed in 2010 and the College is conducting their current six-year review this year, in fall and spring of 2016, according to the Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) and follow-up discussion with a variety of student services staff and supervisors.

The program planning process incorporates a variety of data depending on the program. Student support service program goals, based on assessment of various types of data, are mapped to the strategic master plan, which aligns with the mission of the College. The College has also recently implemented a pilot Secret Shopper Program to collect more robust, real time data about student satisfaction and provide additional data about the effectiveness of services provided. To date, there is Secret Shopper data only for the Financial Aid Program; the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, however, has funding for and plans to continue the program. In addition, under the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Student Support and Success Program, and Student Equity Program, projects and plans are evaluated on a regular basis according to the SSSP-Equity-BSI-Evaluation Schedule. (II.C.1, ER 15)

The College has recently implemented a variety of programs to support students. These include a peer mentor program, a first year experience program, and a Summer Bridge program to support new students. The College has also hired a full-time tenure-track student engagement coordinator/counselor and additional part-time counselors. Through the combined efforts of the Student Success Committee and the Office of Student Engagement, the college continues to support and grow student support programs such as EOPS, CalWORKS, CARE, and DSPS, as noted in the ISER and confirmed in discussion with both the Dean of Student Success and the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness. (II.C.1, II.C.3, ER 15)

Based on discussion with Student Support Services staff and administrators, all areas of student support services have some degree of online components to complement, supplement, and enhance services offered at the College. Student Support Programs have an ample online presence in the form of websites and links to resources, which offer students, regardless of location or mode of delivery, information about student support services provided by the College. In addition, the areas of Counseling, Tutoring, Financial Aid, and Admissions and Records, provide online access to a variety of services, such as appointment-making, records requests, and application submission. Assessment testing for placement in English, ESL, and Math are provided at off-campus sites and feeder high schools. The Student Health Center does not provide online support because online students do not pay the Student Health Fee, and therefore do not qualify for services. (II.C. 3, ER 15)

Many student services include on their webpages the contact information and email links for students to contact these services and make appointments or inquiries remotely. The Student

Services programs piloted an evaluation process that includes a Secret Shopper Report. The College reported in the ISER that results of the Spring 2015 evaluation showed that phone calls and emails were not responded to in a timely manner by the Financial Aid Office. In discussion with staff from the Financial Aid office, it was mentioned that there were sometimes hundreds of emails per day and that phones would be silent for periods and then ringing extendedly for other times of the day. The Financial Aid staff stated they planned to discuss these results in the near future. There is no mention of this assessment in the 2016-2017 Financial Aid Annual Program Plan. Other than this, there is a lack of available evidence about the assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of online student services, indicating a gap in the evaluation process of services for distance, disabled, or remote students. (II.C.1, II.C.3, ER 15)

Based on a site visit and discussion with the PACE program staff, the College provides comprehensive and reliable services to their off-site location. PACE program classes are held at the downtown Los Angeles Unified School District office building. The program supports adult learners, and classes are offered evenings and weekends. The program offers a cohort program that has high student success rates. All student support services are either offered online or are taken to the off-site location. For example, PACE students may take their placement assessment exams at this location. The building is safe, clean, and has modern classrooms with appropriate technology. (II.C.3, ER 15)

All Student Services Programs have service area outcomes (SAOs) which have been assessed. These programs are now in the early stages of developing student learning outcomes (SLOs) for all programs to replace the SAOs to focus more specifically on the outcomes of individual student learning as opposed to program-level goals. As part of the annual program planning process, student services evaluate, to varying degrees, data that has been gathered throughout the year, including SAO data. The use of SAO assessment has resulted in program changes to improve student learning and success, such as the Health Center's initiative to provide new workshops about managing stress and sleep hygiene, as noted in the ISER. Student surveys following the workshops indicated that the majority of students learned information that would help them be successful. (II.C.1, II.C.2, ER 15)

In the ISER, and confirmed in site visit interviews, the College noted a significant concern regarding SAOs not yet fully integrated in the college outcomes assessment cycle, especially in the areas of Student Services. Upon review of Annual Program Plans for multiple programs in the area of student services, the team found inconsistencies in year-to-year assessment of outcomes, evaluation of changes made for assurance of quality improvement, and assessment of goals. Outcomes assessment is not currently directly linked to Annual Program Goals, and, in some cases, follow-up on outcomes-based decisions, plans, and changes, as well as assessment of progress on annual goals, is unclear. Program participation in the Annual Planning Process is inconsistent, with varying degrees of data use and evidence

of quality improvement to services. The College noted it will be addressing this concern as part of their Quality Focus Essay Action Project #1. (II.C.2)

The institution supports co-curricular programs through the Athletics Department and through the Associated Students Organization. The College offers 12 sports for male and female students and has an athletic counselor 20 hours per week to support student athletes. The Athletic Program complies with CCCAA articles and bylaws, and in accordance requires all student athletes have student education plans, appropriate credit hours and minimum GPA in order to participate in athletics, as expressed through discussion with a sampling of coaches and the Athletic Director. The College supports athletics financially through the College's general fund allocation and team fundraising efforts. (II.C.4)

The athletic program, an area identified as in need of strengthening, has been realigned under the direct supervision of the Vice President of Student Services as part of the Division of Student Services reorganization. The ISER states that the Athletic Program should improve in two areas: implementing student learning outcomes for each athletic program and developing assessment and evaluation strategies that link student success data to athletics. This began when the head football coach met with the Vice President of Student Services to discuss creating a set of outcomes for the assessment of each student athlete. The Athletic Director stated in a follow-up discussion that he currently creates and files all Student Learning Outcomes for each athletic program, citing that twelve of thirteen coaches are part-time, already overworked, with lack of time to create and implement a process for evaluating SLOs. (II.C.4)

The Associated Students Organization (ASO) is the primary co-curricular program, and is responsible for coordinating campus-wide Student Life activities meant to promote learning and a sense of community among students, such as club rush, cultural events, movie nights and a Town Hall Project. The ASO also charters student clubs and organizations that promote student engagement. The list of official clubs is posted on the College website. In Spring 2015, the ASO, with the Office of Student Engagement, coordinated a Town Hall project that encouraged critical thinking and problem solving. The College conducted an evaluation of this session and found that students are engaged in their own skill development; however, according to the ISER, results of the evaluation suggest that clarification of learning outcomes and a more effective methodology could improve program design and assessment of its effectiveness. (II.C.4)

The College determines which co-curricular programs are appropriate to its mission and students, based on planning that includes goals, intended event outcomes, and assessment of each event. To implement this process, the College has increased training for ASO committee chairs. (II.C.4)

Los Angeles Pierce College provides counseling and academic advising to all students. The Counseling department has greatly expanded its on-campus academic advising, including a drop-in option. It also provides online services including orientation, general advisement, probation workshops, and transfer workshops. New students are directed to the First Year Experience Center, and returning students are directed to general counseling, where there is also counseling for specialized programs, such as EOPS, CalWORKS, transfer, career, DSPS, veteran, foster youth, and international students. The College has increased the number of full- and part-time counselors to provide additional counseling hours and to focus on areas such as probation monitoring. The College has also started a graduate intern program to support counseling efforts and assist with career transfer activities. Online counseling support, which includes counseling services such as orientation, general advisement, TAG applications, and clarifying district policies and procedures, is also available. (II.C.5)

The College promotes professional development of its counseling staff by encouraging and supporting participation in professional learning opportunities, including the LACCD Counselor's Conference, a department "vision" retreat, and weekly meetings for discussion of best practices. (II.C.5)

Counseling evaluates the effectiveness of student services in a variety of ways, including surveys, SAO and SLO assessment, and evaluation of data representing number of students served. Student surveys suggest very high satisfaction with counseling services, and data on students served inform Annual Program Plans for resource allocation. (II.C.5)

The College adheres to admission policies consistent with its mission and is open to anyone possessing a high school diploma or who is 18 years of age or older, if that individual is able to benefit from the programs and services offered at the College. The College follows District Board Rule 8100 regarding its admission practices, and is an open access institution. The College employs an articulation officer who works with discipline faculty and transfer institutions to ensure the transfer of credit and defining clear pathways for transfer and completion. The career and transfer centers provide career and transfer counseling and workshops. (II.C.6, ER 16)

The District has admissions policies consistent with its mission and state regulations. These policies include special admission of part- and full-time K-12 students, F-1 students, noncitizens, and persons who do not possess a high school diploma or equivalent. The colleges all adhere to these policies when admitting students. These policies are published in catalogs and class schedules, as well as available on websites. The colleges also have developed and adhere to admission criteria for specific academic programs such as nursing and radiologic technology. These criteria are published on departmental websites as well as college catalogs. (II.C.6, ER 16)



The College uses CCCApply as the electronic admissions application. The Admissions and Records Office participates in the annual program planning and review process to inform new processes and ensure the effectiveness of the application instrument. (II.C.7)

Assessment is a core function of the Student Success and Support program. The College uses instruments from the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) list of approved assessment instruments, which are validated using the *Standards, Policies and Procedures for the Evaluation of Assessment Instruments Used in the California Community Colleges*. According to the ISER, the College uses locally established cut scores based on a multifactorial score from identified placement instruments, and reviews the scores periodically to ensure that they remain effective. Further discussion with representatives from the Assessment Office, the Dean of Student Success, and the members of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness confirmed that dialogue is ongoing about the equity of new-student placement. They are currently considering alternative measurements, such as high school performance and GPA, for consideration in new-student placement for assurance of equity based on the Spring 2015 Disproportionate-impact Study of Four Precollege-level courses. (II.C.7)

Assessment exams are not currently offered online; however, the Assessment Office offers hard copy assessments for math, English, and ESL on campus and at off-site locations, such as the PACE location and feeder high schools to ensure equitable access for potential students. (II.C.7)

The team confirmed with the Vice President of Student Services that the institution maintains student records permanently, securely, and confidentially, with provision for secure backup of all files, regardless of the form in which those files are maintained. The institution publishes and follows established policies for release of student records. The institution maintains student records in a confidential manner, following state and federal guidelines as they pertain to student educational records, financial aid, medical records, and learning disabilities assessment records. Data is backed up on a regular basis by appropriately trained staff and stored following official regulations. (II.C.8)

All the colleges advise students on the pathways to complete degrees, certificates and transfer goals in various ways. While all the colleges rely primarily on counselors to advise students on these pathways, other resources are relied upon, including transfer and career centers and a number of support services and programs such as First Year Experience, Honors, Puente, and MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement).

The information on degree, certificate, and transfer programs is published in the college catalogs and various websites. Two colleges noted that improvement was needed in this area. In addition, the information provided by one of the colleges was not adequate enough

to assess this component of the Standard. There is no District involvement in developing, publishing, or advising students on degree, certificate, or transfer pathways. (II.C.6)

### **Findings and Evidence – District**

The Los Angeles Community College District has policies in place for the maintenance and destruction of confidential student records in accordance with state and federal law. The colleges do not use social security numbers (SSN) as the key to records; students are assigned student identification numbers. Electronic records are stored securely in the District student information system, and files are routinely backed up and stored off site. Access to confidential student records by employees is controlled through security where users are assigned passwords based upon their job classification and approval of their supervisor. The District general counsel provides workshops on the confidentiality, security, and maintenance of student records for admissions and records staff. Students can access their electronic records online. Access to student records in person requires a picture identification from the student.

Various paper records are maintained on the campuses in locked files, with access controlled by the supervisor of that office. Some paper records are scanned (imaged) into an online database (product varies by college) and stored on a protected server. The information on the servers is backed up locally and is the responsibility of the college. The student health centers comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and maintain records in an electronic records system via a contracted service.

The institution regularly evaluates admissions and placement instruments and practices to validate their effectiveness while minimizing biases. The District has no role.

The District has a policy for classification of records in accordance with state law as well as destruction of student records based upon the classification system. The colleges publish and follow policies for release of confidential student records that align with current federal and state law. The security and maintenance of student records is a shared responsibility between the District and colleges, with the District having primary responsibility for the records in the Student Information System (DEC). (II.C.8)

### **Conclusions - College**

Los Angeles Pierce College meets the Standard. The College has adopted, and adheres to, admission policies that are consistent with its mission. These policies include criteria for special categories of students such as concurrent high school enrollment and F-1 students. These policies are published in District and college publications and websites. The District does not have a role in defining and/or advising on clear pathways to degree or certificate completion or transfer.

The team's conclusion is that the College meets the standard, but with a need for sustained, continual improvement in the area of SLO creation, assessment, and evaluation for assurance of the effectiveness of Student Services and Programs.

## **Conclusions - District**

The District meets the Standard. The District and colleges have high standards for the confidentiality, maintenance, release, and destruction of student records that adhere to state and federal law. Staff receives training on the confidentiality of student records, and passwords are routinely changed every 90 days. The databases are backed up nightly and stored in an off-campus location. The campuses also have local databases that store student records. These databases are backed up, although the storage varies.

## **Commendations - College**

**College Commendation 2:** The team commends the college for their Distance Education (DE) programming in obtaining resources for staffing, professional development, pilot initiatives, student supplies, increased course offerings, and policy development. (II.C.2, II.C.5)

**College Commendation 3:** The team commends the college for its innovation and commitment to student success and engagement, evident in the reorganization of the Student Services Division. (II.C.2, II.C.3)

## **Recommendations for Improvement and Compliance - College**

**College Recommendation 5 (Improvement):** In order to improve, the team recommends that the College, as it noted in its QFE, ensure all Student Service programs develop and assess student learning outcomes, and fully integrate outcomes and assessment data into authentic dialogue, reflection, and plans for quality improvement. Further, the team recommends each program thoroughly follow-up on annual planning, with consistent and accurate assessment, evaluation, and documentation of the effectiveness of program changes from cycle to cycle. (II.C.1, II.C.2, II.C.3, ER 15)

## **Standard III Resources**

### **Standard III.A: Human Resources**

#### **General Observations – College**

Pierce College maintains a sufficient number of staff to promote the college's mission of providing quality instruction to its students as well as effective support services for students and the institution.

Hiring criteria for faculty are determined by district governing board policy predicated on California Education Code and minimum qualifications as mandated by the State Chancellor's Office. The latter is subject to review and modification by the District Academic Senate (DAS) in cases of ambiguous equivalencies. The district's Human Resources team has developed comprehensive HR Guides, published on its website, that mandate policies for recruitment stipulating requisite qualifications of employees. In addition, the college has developed the Pierce College Faculty Hiring Procedures which delineate further procedures for the recruitment and selection of faculty, including desirable qualifications. The district's Personnel Commission maintains classified job descriptions which detail minimum requirements and educational requirements (III.A.1).

Each college is responsible for the hiring of its adjunct faculty team. There appears to be no formal district or college policy with respect to the recruitment and hiring of the adjunct faculty (III.A.1).

The district verifies applicant qualifications through multiple screenings prior to candidates being submitted to the college for consideration. Candidates considered for full-time faculty positions are asked to submit a writing sample and to present a lesson to demonstrate their teaching methods. The engagement of subject matter experts (faculty) on hiring committees ensures that candidates demonstrate expertise in their discipline and in their teaching skills. Department chairs and supervising deans review and confirm official transcripts and work experience for the hiring of adjunct faculty. Final interviews are conducted by the college President, appropriate Vice President or designee and a faculty member selected by the hiring committee. (III.A.2).

Governing board policy, state regulations and Personnel Commission oversight ensure that district administrators and other college staff possess qualifications to sustain instructional quality and institutional effectiveness (III.A.3).

Faculty, administrative, and other positions requiring a degree must submit official transcripts that are verified by the Human Resources Department. Candidates must hold degrees from appropriately accredited institutions. A candidate holding a degree from a non-U.S. institution must pay for a state-approved evaluation service to verify it. If a candidate does not meet minimum qualifications, district procedures are followed for establishing equivalence (III.A.4).

## **General Observations – District**

The human resources function at Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) includes both a Human Resource (HR) Division and a Personnel Commission (PC). While both entities are co-located in the District's Educational Services Center (ESC) office building, the authorities and functions are separate. These two entities provide comprehensive human resource services in support of LACCD's employment practices and in adherence to adopted hiring policies to meet the instructional and support needs of the colleges and District.

LACCD's classified staff employment processes are administered by the PC, an autonomously governed merit system organization. The PC is responsible for recruitment and testing for classified staff and management vacancies, audit of assignments, and classification for support staff. The PC also acts as the hearing panel in disciplinary hearing matters affecting classified employees.

The HR Division has oversight for employment operations, employee relations, and professional development activities for faculty, management, and classified employees. The hiring of tenure-track faculty and management personnel is overseen by District Office HR personnel. The hiring process for adjunct faculty is decentralized to the individual colleges, with final qualification and eligibility determinations made by the HR Division.

The LACCD governing board is responsible for establishing and publishing policy with respect to the district's and colleges' employment practices. These policies are further delineated in associated procedures and protocols disseminated throughout the district through various venues and means. These include Administrative Regulations (ARs), the Personnel Commission, Collective Bargaining Agreements, and the Human Resources department through its Human Resources Guide. In total, these policies and procedures adhere to federal and state laws.

The fair and equitable implementation of the district's employment related policies and procedures is a responsibility shared among the district's Human Resources department, Personnel Commission, Employer Employee Relations department, and the Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. In addition, the colleges are responsible for the front-line implementation of, and adherence to, all employment policies and procedures.

The district's Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion develops policies and procedures to ensure equitable employment access. The district's Human Resources department is responsible for ensuring a diverse pool of qualified candidates to colleges during any recruitment.

Professional development opportunities at Pierce College are developed in response to faculty and staff surveys and by academic programmatic needs, codified in collective bargaining agreements and include an array of workshops, seminars, mentorships and trainings. A professional development plan has been adopted but implementation has yet to begin.

## **Findings and Evidence – College**

Pierce College evaluates its employees systematically and at stated intervals as provided for in the district's collective bargaining agreements with its six units, Personnel Commission policies and Board rules. Evaluations are administered by the Human Resources Department utilizing a web application called Evaluation Alert System (EASY) which reminds supervisors of imminent deadlines (III.A.5).

The college administers faculty evaluations which rely primarily on peer review. Students also evaluate classroom instructors. To focus on any areas of improvement, for faculty who receive a less than satisfactory evaluation, a written improvement plan with appropriate professional growth activities is developed as stipulated by the collective bargaining agreement. Classified staff are evaluated annually. If an employee receives a less than satisfactory evaluation, the supervisor and the employee jointly develop a performance improvement program. Any negative evaluation must include specific recommendations for improvements and provisions for assisting the employee in achieving them. As of December 2015, most (85%) of classified evaluations were current. Administrators and classified supervisors are evaluated annually (III.A.5).

Evaluations for Vice Presidents are conducted annually every spring. The Human Resources Division provides the forms and completion timelines to the college presidents. Evaluations for college presidents are administered by Human Resources, in conjunction with the Office of the Chancellor. The annual/basic evaluation reviews the performance of the college president through the use of the District's Self-Assessment Instrument. The individual being evaluated is provided the opportunity to assess his/her performance over the past year, to assess his/her progress or attainment of the prior year's annual goals, and to update annual goals for the upcoming year. The comprehensive evaluation, conducted every three years, reviews the performance of the college president using the components of the annual/basic evaluation as described above, and incorporates feedback gathered from a contributor group of district employees through a structured data collection process (III.A.5).

Criteria in the evaluation of faculty address the teaching of appropriate course content, leading to effective student achievement. Participating in the process of assessing course SLOs includes identifying remedies to address student weaknesses and allows faculty to measure the impact of any changes implemented. As part of their evaluation, faculty members (adjunct and permanent) are asked to reflect on how they have used achievement data to improve teaching and learning. Academic Affairs administrators work with their departments to utilize achievement data to improve teaching and learning; however, formal inclusion of this component is not included in the evaluations for academic administrators (III.A.6).

Evidence indicates that the college maintains a sufficient number of qualified faculty. The district has consistently tracked and maintained its faculty obligation number since 2008 through a process of tasking each college to meet an assigned faculty level. The district provides to Pierce College an allocation of full-time faculty based on retiree data, annual

growth targets, and the number of positions needed to meet the educational goals of the college. Pierce College has met growth targets over the past two years and has hired sufficient faculty to achieve academic planning goals and support (III.A.7).

The college provides orientation, support and evaluation of its adjunct faculty. Orientation includes an introduction to the campus, college resources, classroom management, and professional development opportunities. Adjunct faculty are represented on the Academic Senate and encouraged to participate on other college committees. Evaluation of adjunct faculty is the responsibility of the department chair (III.A.8).

Pierce College employs a sufficient number of qualified administrators and classified staff to support the institution's mission and purposes. Staffing needs, including for administrator and classified positions, are assessed and identified through annual program planning and vetted through the budgeting process. Minimum qualifications for academic administrators align with State of California Education Code 87400—referenced in the District Human Resources Guides. Classified administrators' qualifications are outlined by the Personnel Commission (III.A.9, III.A.10).

Evidence validates the adequate establishment of, and accessibility and adherence to written personnel policy within the district. The governing board of the LACCD has established policies noted in Chapter X of Board Rules published on the LACCD website. The Human Resources Guide published by the Human Resources department further defines procedures and processes related to employee compensation, recruitment and selection, academic minimum qualifications, faculty tenure and equivalency, and leaves. The Personnel Commission's Laws and Rules provide policies that govern the recruitment and employment of classified employees throughout the district and its Classified Employee Handbook addresses the issues of diversity, sexual harassment and health and safety providing associated links and resources to district employees (III.A.11).

Colleges provide feedback to personnel policies and procedures through representation on the district's Human Resources Council, a group charged with serving as a consultation body to recommend policies regarding classified service to the Personnel Commission and, more broadly, serving as an advocate for employee needs such as training and professional development as evidenced in meeting agendas and minutes (III.A.11).

The fair and equitable implementation of the district's personnel policies and procedures is a responsibility shared between the Personnel Commission, the Human Resources Council, the Human Resources department, and the district's Employer Employee Relations department which supports district and college leaders in effectively, and fairly, putting these into practice. The latter publishes Best Practice Guides and offers employee training to this end (III.A.11).

The district and Pierce College create and maintain appropriate programs, practices, and services to support its diverse personnel. As an LACCD institution Pierce College benefits from Project Match, a districtwide program to "prepare and recruit a diverse community college faculty who are sensitive to the needs of the students and community it serves." The

college also provides work-life support services to its employees through the district's Employment Assistance Program. The college has conducted regular surveys of employees to ascertain interest and have offered a range of workshops, trainings, and/or counseling including those focusing on employee diversity and equality (III.A.12).

The Pierce Diversity Committee (PDC) works to promote awareness of diversity throughout the college community. On its website, the PDC publishes an annual Diversity Calendar and regularly sponsors and promotes events and workshops throughout the year that promote diversity awareness. Pierce's Office of Institutional Effectiveness annually assesses the diversity of the college's employees and publishes its findings. A review of four years data indicates that progress has been made with respect to enhancing diversity in hiring, albeit slowly (III.A.12).

Board policy governs ethics for district employees in Board Rule 1204. Pierce College adopted a Faculty Code of Ethics in 1990 which was revised in 1995, 2001 and again in 2015 (III.A.13).

Pierce College established the College Planning Committee (CPC) in May 2011 to lead, coordinate and evaluate its integrated planning efforts. A task force of the CPC developed the 2014-18 Professional Development Plan submitted to the Pierce College Council in May 2015 and ultimately ratified by the College President in August 2015. A key component of this plan is the hiring of a Professional Development Coordinator to lead the college's professional development efforts. This position is pending Personnel Commission review and endorsement (III.A.14).

The college has consistently offered an array of professional development opportunities. Each semester the college provides a day-long professional development event that is mandatory for full-time faculty and open to all classified staff and managers. Periodic workshops and trainings are developed and provided in response to faculty and staff surveys. An example of a recent training "Cultural Responsiveness: What does it Mean and How Can I get Involved?" was offered in Spring 2015 (III.A.14).

The college adheres to the district's policy on the maintenance of personnel records, ensuring security and confidentiality. Employees have access to their personnel records as delineated in the HR Guide, p-102 (III.A.15).

### **Findings and Evidence – District**

The LACCD Board of Trustees, in its role as the governing authority, establishes policies pertaining to the faculty, staff, and administrators employed by the District. These policies, procedures, and related supporting documentation are found on the District's website. The District's HR Division and PC are responsible for the oversight in the hiring of qualified personnel to serve its nine colleges and central District support services, including the selection, evaluation, and monitoring processes within the LACCD. District guidelines provide consistency in the development, definition, and establishment of hiring policies and processes for administrators, full-time faculty, and classified staff. Job descriptions for full-time/regular



positions reflect the duties, responsibilities, and authority in support of mission and goals for the college and the District.

Due to the dynamic staffing needs encountered at the college level, decentralization of the recruitment and selection process for part-time/adjunct faculty was implemented. The District's HR department verifies the qualifications of recommended part-time/adjunct faculty prior to hire. HR R-130, entitled "Adjunct Faculty Selection and Pay," requires the president and Academic Senate at each college to develop written procedures governing the search and selection of adjunct faculty to ensure that a thorough and deliberate search for the most qualified candidate is conducted well in advance of the starting date of the assignment. Procedures and processes for the selection of part-time/adjunct faculty are not clearly and publicly stated. College-level adjunct hiring processes result in inconsistent notification and advertisement of employment opportunities. HR reviews part-time/adjunct qualifications upon receipt of candidates from the colleges. Candidates' qualifications are evaluated and verified as meeting the job description requirements. (III.A.1)

Faculty qualifications are clearly stated on job descriptions, including education, skills, experience, and/or certifications. Job descriptions include professional responsibilities beyond teaching expectations. Student learning outcomes, curriculum development, and college-level committee requirements are included in responsibility expectations when developing full-time faculty job descriptions. HR reviews the draft job descriptions for competencies, compliance and consistency. Faculty candidates are required to meet all published job qualifications. A faculty-led process for determining equivalency for stated qualifications exists, but is generally limited in utilization. Faculty performance evaluations include the assessment of multiple measures of these job-related requirements. (III.A.2 and ER 14)

Job descriptions for administrators and other positions supporting institutional effectiveness and academic quality include requisite education and experience requirements. Job descriptions are updated by HR and the PC to include evolving institutional responsibilities. HR and PC personnel verify candidate qualifications prior to employment consideration. (III.A.3)

LACCD has established policies and procedures regarding the evaluation of educational degrees earned by faculty, administrators, and support personnel. Applicants and employees seeking promotional opportunities are required to submit official transcripts from accredited institutions. Degrees earned from non-U.S. institutions are required to be evaluated by an established state-recognized evaluation organization for equivalency. (III.A.4)

The District has established a system of performance evaluation for faculty, staff, and administrative personnel. The evaluation process is dictated by individual collective bargaining agreements and District policy. Faculty evaluation tracking is delegated to individual colleges. The PC distributes evaluation notices to classified employees and their respective supervisor during the employee's probationary period. Thereafter, HR uses an automated system to notify supervisors of upcoming and past-due performance evaluations. Current District wide completion rates average approximately 50 percent. (III.A.5)

Faculty evaluations include the assessment of learning outcomes. The negotiated evaluation process and related forms include requirements for the utilization of learning outcomes in the improvement of teaching and learning. Academic administrators' evaluations do not include the assessment of responsibilities related to learning outcomes. (III.A.6)

LACCD employs a substantial cadre of over 3,300 part-time/adjunct faculty among the nine colleges and academic organizations. Each college is delegated the responsibility for orientation, oversight, evaluation, and professional development of adjunct faculty at their respective campus. Opportunities for part-time faculty participation in the teaching and learning aspects of college operations and decision-making are provided and encouraged. (III.A.8)

Written personnel policies and procedures are available online for information and review. A process of regular policy review and updating has been established. The Human Resource Council meets monthly to review and recommend proposed changes in Board Rules and Administrative Regulations. The HR Council's membership includes college presidents, the Vice Chancellor of HR, college vice presidents (academic affairs, student services, and administrative services), and resource personnel, as needed. The PC regularly reviews its policies and procedures regarding the employment of classified staff. These rules and regulations provide fair and equitable employment conditions. The Employment Relations Department is responsible for addressing allegations of inconsistent application of District policies. (III.A.11)

The Office of Equity, Inclusion and Diversity provides programs, analysis, and training to support the District's diverse personnel. This office is assigned compliance and investigatory responsibilities to resolve allegations of unlawful discrimination and conduct. LACCD's "Project Match" program provides a formalized outreach program to aspiring, but historically underrepresented, individuals to encourage community college faculty careers. An Equal Employment Opportunity Plan has been adopted and includes an annual evaluation of employment equity and diversity of LACCD's employees. (III.A.12)

The District has adopted Board policy, Code of Ethics-Board Rule #1204, and collectively bargained language addressing professional ethics expectations. Appropriate corrective actions and consequences are addressed in the Board Rule. (III.A.13)

The District has long-established professional development programs. Existing programs and new opportunities for District employees are continually identified, evaluated, and developed, i.e., "Dean's Academy," "Professional Development College," and "The President's Academy". The introduction of a partnership with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) to create the "President's Academy" provides relevant training for aspiring LACCD executive leaders. The District Academic Senate provides faculty representatives the ability to work collaboratively in providing content in support of student learning and success. The District also explores methods to increase opportunities for its classified staff. Campus-level trainings are provided by District personnel as part of the regular communication and educational support. (III.A.14)

The District provides security and has established both physical and electronic access safeguards in the confidentiality of personnel and employment records. Access to confidential electronic personnel data is monitored and limited to authorized employees. Procedures, as evidenced by Administrative Regulation C-10, Custodian of District Records, and collective bargaining agreement language are in place to provide employee access to his/her personnel records. (III.A.15)

### **Conclusion - College**

The College meets the Standard.

### **Conclusion - District**

The LACCD provides comprehensive human resource services to employ qualified personnel in support of its broad educational programs. The District has established policies and procedures beginning with the recruitment process, hiring, evaluation, and employee-related matters throughout employment for its regular employees.

Although the colleges currently are responsible for the adjunct faculty hiring process, the District is responsible to assure that employment policies and practices are clearly described and equitably administered. However, the recruitment and employment of adjunct faculty is unevenly administered, and, therefore, the District does not meet Standard III.A.1.

The District does not conduct regular evaluations of all staff, and does not meet Standard III.A.5.

Faculty evaluations include an assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) as a component of the performance appraisal; however, academic administrators' evaluations do not have an SLO responsibility component, so the District does not meet Standard III.A.6.

The team commends the District for its commitment to professional development and improving the knowledge, skills, and abilities of its employees in support of student achievement.

## **Recommendations for Improvement and Compliance**

**District Recommendation 1 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the District ensure consistent and uniform guidelines for the search and selection of adjunct faculty. (III.A.1)

**District Recommendation 2 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the District ensure all personnel are systematically evaluated at stated intervals in accordance with the bargaining agreements and Board policies. (III.A.5)

**District Recommendation 3 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the District update the performance evaluations of academic administrators to include the results of the assessment of learning outcomes to improve teaching and learning. (III.A.6)

## **Standard III.B: Physical Resources**

### **General Observations – College**

With approximately 426-acres of campus, nearly half of which is farmland, Pierce College serves a diverse student body population exceeding 20,000. The College has completed several recent major construction projects, including a new maintenance and operations facility and student services building. Additionally, several new buildings and facility renovations, aligned with the facilities master planning documents for the college and district, are in progress.

To ensure continuous safety awareness and planning, Pierce College has established the Safety Task Force to broaden the discussion of and training for safety on campus. Due to recent heightened awareness of active shooters on college campuses, the College updated the Threat/Hazard/Vulnerability Risk Assessment originally developed in 2007. As a result, the College re-ranked all safety and emergency risks. The College's emergency plan outlines immediate action steps that, if needed, are deployed by members of the Pierce College Crisis Action Team (CAT).

To ensure compliance with state and federal regulations, adherence to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Division of the State Architect (DSA) as well as California Building Code (CBC) regulations is strictly enforced. Additionally, the College maintains an ADA/504 Transition Plan detailing non-compliance items with ADA requirements and a timeline to bring these items into compliance.

Pierce College, mandated by the governing board, has an approved facilities master plan. New to the College planning process, the Facilities Strategic Plan 2014-2018 was developed through the shared governance planning process to maintain and standardize physical

resources. The plan also addresses how to best maximize and utilize space on campus. Due to reduced bond funding from the district, the College ranked and prioritized all projects in the facilities master plan through participatory governance. The Pierce College Council (PCC) established the Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) to serve as the governance and recommending body to the full PCC. FAC advises PCC regarding facilities planning issues at all college venues, including owned and leased off-campus facilities.

In light of bond allocation reductions, recommendations from the FAC, and post-data analyses of space utilization, the College recently created the Facilities Master Plan Update 2014. The plan reflects all of the approved changes through the participatory governance process and approved by the governing board. The FMP details long-range capital plans for construction and renovation projects. Further, the College's long-range capital plans supporting institutional improvement goals are identified in the Five Year Capital Outlay Plan 2017-2021.

Pierce College adequately plans for and evaluates its facilities and equipment on a regular basis through structured processes, integrated planning, and analyses of relevant data. The College's updated FMP reflected a process of analyzing data to determine planned projects' size and scope. The College has integrated these processes with other master planning documents, including the Strategic Master Plan to align utilization and physical resource needs with enrollment growth objectives and support services requirements. The College reviews and updates facilities plans and the improvement of equipment needs as outlined in the review and update process in the Pierce College Integrated Planning Calendar 2013-2026.

College departments utilize the annual program planning process to request additional equipment and/or facilities needed to ensure physical resource support of institutional programs and services. Resource requests, including classroom instructional needs, are prioritized by the Budget Committee, a sub-committee of the PCC. As with other integrated planning at the College the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations department (FMO) identifies and prioritizes resource requests through this venue.

Since 2002, the district and college have capitalized on state and local bonds— A, AA, and Measure J—to build new facilities and undertake much needed renovations on campus. The district formed a nine-member Independent Review Panel to provide recommendations related to long-term capital plans for each of the colleges, including Pierce College. The results of this panel was the 2011 Master Building Program Budget plan which provided the foundation for integrated planning for Pierce College's educational master plan development.

The District has fully addressed comprehensive plans for total cost of ownership by reviewing the status of existing and future facilities, benchmarking existing facilities operations, and developing processes to measure, monitor, and control both facilities costs and utilization. In April 2014, the Board approved the College's Facilities Master Planning and Oversight Committee's resolution addressing the protection of capital investments

through the management of Total Cost of Ownership. The College now uses a Total Cost of Ownership calculator for all construction projects to support long-term capital planning and sustainability.

### **General Observations – District**

The District's role and performance is, for the most part, strong and effective in assisting the college in meeting Accreditation Standards. Three District documents (the Independent Review Panel Report dated January 4, 2012, resulting in 17 recommendations to the chancellor for the improvement of the bond program delivery; the LACCD Comprehensive Plan for Total Cost of Ownership dated March 20, 2013, resulting in seven recommendations for the better understanding of the actual cost associated with maintaining and operating a building; and the LACCD Accreditation Special Report, dated April 1, 2013, that responded specifically to the 17 recommendations to the Independent Review Panel Report) indicate the District's commitment to ensuring that integrity and accountability are maintained in the acquisition, implementation, and use of funds related to the physical resources of the District.

### **Findings and Evidence – College**

Team members evaluated both the Pierce College ISER and supporting evidence as well as toured the College's 426-acre campus. The tour included visits to both new and older construction on campus. The College adequately plans and provides sufficient physical resources aligned with its integrated and strategic plans. The College's APP allows for facilities and physical resource planning to align fully with the college's mission and needs to offer courses, programs, and learning support services to its students. The College has several mechanisms and structures in place to assure safety and responses to potential emergencies via the Safety Task Force and the College's risk assessment (III.B.1).

Evidence indicates that Pierce College links strategic needs to resource and institutional planning to ensure the necessary physical resources. The College has taken strides towards improving processes to ensure effective space utilization and continuing quality to support its programs and services through participatory governance sub-committees such as the Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC). For example, the FAC regularly reviews physical and equipment resource requests and needs as well as utilization and occupancy comparisons. This information is reviewed and prioritized to meet the facility needs of the College's programs and services. Finally, the College has implemented a new Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) calculator to analyze financial impacts of design and the capacity to fund the required ongoing maintenance. These new processes and analyses allow the College to build sustainable and affordable physical resources to serve students well into the future (III.B.2).

The district provides direct oversight of the bond construction program through the Facilities Planning and Development Department (FPDD) and outside contracted firms. The College works closely with these entities to ensure the completion of projects. Progress, at times, has

been slow, if not halted, thereby adversely impacting Pierce College students and staff. The college has demonstrated flexibility and resolve in the face of these challenges (III.B.2).

Through integrated planning and participatory governance, the College assures the feasibility and effectiveness of its physical resources. Resource allocation and prioritization, integrated with program planning on an annual basis, is aligned with strategic plans and master planning documents of the College. The College has implemented a new dashboard for the strategic plan to easily track and report specific facilities plans and initiatives. The goals identified in the facilities plans are directly linked to the College's strategic plan (III.B.3).

The College has successfully integrated institutional planning with short-term and long-range capital resource allocation. Additionally, the College has a strong focus on total cost of ownership with the use of a calculator to assess and ensure financial support of long-term capital planning (III.B.4).

### **Findings and Evidence – District**

The District plays a significant role in ensuring that all locations under its purview are safe and that sufficient resources are provided to maintain each facility. The LACCD contracts with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department for college campus security. This agreement provides for a standardized and coordinated approach to campus safety. Further, a report titled Blue Ribbon Panel on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness was adopted December 16, 2015. The charge of the panel was to, "review the District's existing policies and procedures on safety and security in order to determine the readiness of the colleges, District satellites and the Educational Service Center in cases of natural catastrophes or criminal events." It will be critical to follow up on the progress of the colleges and District in their response to the recommendations and implementation of plans. The sufficiency of physical resources at the colleges is clearly assured by the District. Three bond issues have been passed since 2001 resulting in nearly \$6.2 billion in capital project funding. To date, about 80% of those funds have been expended. All funds are budgeted to projects. Sufficiency is also evident by the current cap load status. District wide, the lecture capacity/load ratio is 162% while the laboratory cap/load is at 144%. The District has supported the colleges in assuring access. ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) transition plans were created for the nine colleges using District resources. The implementation of the plan is funded by a District wide bond allocation of almost \$69 million. (III.B.1)

The District provides effective centralized services for planning, acquiring, building, maintaining and upgrading its physical resources. Following the 17 recommendations in the Independent Review Panel Report, the District has developed a new program management approach assuring the continuing quality necessary to support its programs and services to achieve its mission. Noting that shared governance practices had significantly contributed to increased costs, changes, delays, and disruptions to the Building Program, the Board responded with BT4: Resolution-Standardize Centralized Accountability Controls dated September 12, 2012. The resolution centralized accountability measures and established that college project manager's report through the program manager to the District. The District

uses a “project allocation model” in dispensing bond funds which ensures that the Board of Trustees has primary control over which projects will be built at the colleges and that projects will align with District priorities, i.e., support of the Educational Master Plan ensuring a consistency of intent. To ensure the model is followed, Board Resolution to Adopt a Master Budget Plan and to implement Policies to Strengthen Oversight and Spending Practices for the District's Construction Program (BT6) was approved by the Board on October 5, 2011. (III.B.2)

The District materially assists the colleges in updating master facilities plans on a regular basis. This planning is managed through the bond program manager reporting to the District Office. The BuildLACCD website shows evidence that all nine colleges have current facility master plans, the oldest being less than eight years old. Further, the District assists the colleges in facility condition assessment and uses the data to identify needs and allocate District-scheduled maintenance funds. (III.B.3)

The Board of Trustees adopted the Master Building Program Budget Plan per resolution BT6 dated October 5, 2011. The plan assigns budgets at the individual project level providing support for long-range capital plans. The Board adopted Resolution 3 of BT6 dated October 5, 2011, stating, "The chancellor ... will include in the regular budget reports the identification of funding measures to address the costs of maintaining and operating expanded facilities." Following that, the District produced the Comprehensive Plan for Total Cost of Ownership detailing seven points defining, "a process for establishing the true cost of additional space". The Board voted to create a Deferred Maintenance Fund by passing Board Resolution BT2 on May 23, 2012. This resolution sets aside a fixed amount each year from the General Fund to address postponed and emergency repairs and maintenance work not funded by the bond program. In addition, the District provides funding to the colleges for maintenance and operations calculated by a formula that takes into consideration total assignable square footage as a part of the basic allocation (III.B.4)

### **Conclusions – College**

Evidence indicates that Pierce College links strategic needs to resource and institutional planning to ensure the necessary physical resources.

The College meets the standard.

### **Conclusions - District**

In general, the role of the District in supporting the colleges to meet the Standards of Accreditation is evident and well supported. The District has implemented positive changes to the bond program management structure and adequately responded to the recommendations made in the Independent Review Panel Report. The District meets the Standard.

### **Recommendations for Improvement and Compliance**

None.



## **Standard III.C: Technology Resources**

### **General Observations – College**

The Pierce College Division of Information Technology supports the delivery of the District IT systems and services and assists in supporting instructional technology needs in the classrooms. The team maintains the needs of computer labs and maintains an infrastructure to support technology needs for students, staff, faculty and administrators at the local campus. The College IT Division has maintained an increasingly demanding infrastructure and changes in technology, including maintaining new technological equipment due to facilities expansion, with limited staff and resources. The Technology Master Plan was developed by the College Technology Committee to align with the District technology plan, but little-to-no prioritization has been given to the components of the College technology priorities in the past several years.

There are several major College IT infrastructure and information technology needs that have not been addressed in the past three years. The Technology Committee exists to create, update, and facilitate the needs identified in the Technology Master Plan and to address campus technology needs. Per the Technology Committee Charter, the committee brings recommendations for approval to the Pierce College Council (PCC). However, this does appear to be practice.

In a separate but related process, technology resource needs are prioritized by department and program through the annual planning process. These requests, both technological equipment and software, are vetted through the vice presidents of each division, the Budget Committee, and prioritized and approved by PCC. PCC makes a final recommendation to the President on resource allocation and the associated technology requests on the prioritized rankings. This process includes alignment with the Strategic Master Plan for the College. However, it does not include prioritizing technology initiatives with the Technology Master Plan—creating a gap in meeting the strategic technology needs of the College.

### **General Observations – District**

The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) emphasizes the effective use of technology in the support of teaching and learning, student support and success, and administrative functions to assist students and staff as evidenced by the significant investment made in staff to support the use of technology, equipment and systems, and training of staff and students in the use of technology. The forty-plus members of the LACCD Information Technology department provide systems and services to support learning, assessment, and teaching with infrastructure and productivity tools as outlined in the LACCD Technology Strategic Plan-Vision 2020. Campus information technology staff at each of the nine campuses assist in the delivery of LACCD Information Technology department systems and services as well as support the classroom, computer labs, and local infrastructure to enhance the learning environment. Policy, planning, and budget

recommendations regarding the use of technology across LACCD is driven by the Technology Planning and Policy Committee (TPPC), a governance committee with representation from all constituents. The District Technology Committee (DTC) focuses on operational decisions and makes recommendations to the TPPC.

### **Findings and Evidence – College**

The Technology Master Plan (TMP), developed by the College Technology Committee, identifies areas of focus for the College for current and future information technology needs. These strategic areas of focus are aligned with the SMP and governed by PCC (III.C.1).

Future technology needs are aligned with bond funded proposition infrastructure projects. These technology needs were identified via internal studies integrated with master plans for the College with identified technology needs for academic and student support services. However, the ITSG Manager's input was rarely included in future planning needs for new and renovated projects on campus. Building User Groups (BUGs) for each of the new construction projects are making the technology implementation recommendations for their respective areas without consulting the ITSG Manager. This has created a disconnect between technology standards and services with master planning documents including identified new technology (III.C.1).

The College has aligned the TMP with the District Technology Strategic Plan – Vision 2020. Additionally, the TMP is integrated and aligned with the Strategic Master Plan—prioritizing campus technology needs with strategic goals for the institution. The TMP includes an overview and planning cycle with specific targeted goals and metrics to be accomplished by 2018. To date little progress has been made and limited resources have been allocated to support the plan (III.C.2).

The District Technology Committee has proposed a draft replacement schedule for technology equipment for all colleges, including Pierce College. In reviewing the College ITSG annual budget, there is no ongoing, committed lifecycle funding to support replacement technology needs or a supported plan to adhere to the replacement schedule. However, progress is being made on supporting a three-year replacement cycle for more than 350 desktop devices on campus. This does not address many of the other technology areas and concerns on campus, including servers, classroom technology, wireless connectivity, network security, and the more than 950 desktop computer used for administrative purposes (III.C.2).

The College ITSG provides technology resources and support at all locations to assure reliable access, safety, and security. The College provides ample opportunity for dialogue, input and planning for technology needs integrated with the Strategic Master Plan, Technology Master Plan, and instructionally related technology committees (i.e. distance education, educational technology, etc.). The APP allows for departments and programs to

identify technology resource needs for consideration in resource prioritization processes (III.C.3).

The College has experienced difficulty in implementing and/or maintaining various technology needs and services on campus. The campus is not fully wireless, there have been several service outages and connectivity issues, smart classrooms are outdated, and there is a significant staffing gap to assure reliable services and security related to information technology. Students and staff voiced concerns to the visiting team related to these technology concerns. The Burwood Group, an outside consulting company, conducted a needs assessment and analysis for ITSG. The results of this study identified a significant number of service delivery gaps related to IT staffing, planning, and investment for the College. The College has convened an independent task force to assess the recommendations and gaps as well as to develop an implementation plan aligned with the TMP. Staffing gaps are further complicated by the current job classifications and restrictions related to the Personnel Commission to cross-train areas of expertise (III.C.3).

Pierce College, with limited staff resources, partially provides essential training and support for the effective use of technology related to institutional practices and support services. The College provides a variety of training, customized to the needs of the varying divisions, including distance education platforms, instructional technology, portal training, and software platform training. Additionally, faculty are provided trainings during opening day activities and at conferences and seminars. All staff are afforded the opportunity to participate in Microsoft Office certification trainings. Finally, faculty and students who are having problems with technology-related access are provided assistance through PierceOnLine. The newly approved College Professional Development Plan will provide additional technology-related training opportunities for all staff once implemented (III.C.4).

Currently, the ITSG does not have an operational HelpDesk to assist staff and students. Furthermore, all ITSG are classified staff and only available during scheduled work hours. Interviews with faculty indicated a need to have increased technology support during evening and weekend operational hours for instruction and support services. (III.C.1, III.C.3, III.C.4)

The College adheres to District policies and procedures guiding appropriate use of technology as well as local procedures and regulations. At the local level, the Technology Committee operates as a sub-committee to the Pierce College Council. Technology related procedures and regulations that are operational and procedural in nature are approved by PCC (III.C.5).

### **Findings and Evidence – District**

Technology resources are used to support student learning, student services, and institutional effectiveness. As noted in the District/College Functional Map, this is a shared responsibility between the colleges and the District. Each college technology department provides support

and infrastructure to meet campus network and computing needs. At the District level, the LACCD Information Technology department provides the wide area network infrastructure, an enterprise resource planning system for finance and human resources (SAP), a student information system (DEC/Peoplesoft), an educational planning system (DegreeWorks), email for students and staff (Office 365/Microsoft Exchange), a helpdesk ticketing system (CMMS), a scheduling system for faculty class and room assignments (Protocol ESS), an electronic curriculum development system (ECD), and other related systems as presented in the campus Self Evaluation Reports and confirmed in interviews with District and college technology staff. In addition, it was noted in interviews with campus technology managers that LACCD Information Technology assists with contract optimization, District wide technology standards, best practices, data interface to campus specific systems such as distance education systems and staff augmentations when needed to assist the colleges. (III.C.1)

Planning at the District level is defined in the LACCD Technology Strategic Plan-Vision 2020. The plan was developed with input from all nine campuses by the District Technology Planning Taskforce (DTPT). As stated in the plan, this task force was commissioned by the TPPC and comprised faculty from each of the nine colleges, administrative leadership and students. The DTPT developed the plan as a framework for the District and identified five areas to achieve the mission, including learning, assessment, teaching, infrastructure, and productivity. The plan is reviewed regularly at TPPC meetings as evidenced by the committee minutes. In interviews with District staff, it was noted that the five-year re-assessment, due in 2016, of the current state of IT infrastructure at all the colleges and the District will be done in the next four to six months. This will be used to update the target baseline for all colleges in the technology areas identified in the LACCD Technology Strategic Plan-Vision 2020. Two of the campus technology plans indicate direct alignment with Vision 2020 and the other seven technology plans are directly aligned with their respective campus strategic plans which identify Vision 2020 as a guiding force. Further, the TPPC commissioned the Implementation Task Force (ITF) with representation from faculty, administrative leadership, represented staff, and students which developed thirty two objectives to work on for the next five years. This was approved by the TPPC in 2013. Some colleges are incorporating Total Cost of Ownership principles, but some have not. As identified in the District/College Functional Map this is a shared responsibility between the colleges and the District. (III.C.2)

Reliable, safe, and secure technology resources are the primary responsibility of the colleges and a shared responsibility with the District. Through interviews, the team determined that the LACCD Information Technology department has developed Disaster Recovery/Business Continuity plans which include local backup to disk, immediate backup to a second data center at one of the college sites about 25 kilometers away, with a final encrypted copy to tape. The tapes are moved off site to a specialized tape vault service, and the tapes are rotated out of state to Nevada for greater protection. Each campus is responsible for the security and reliability of the systems and data they support locally. All nine colleges indicate varying levels of security for locally supported systems, with six doing local campus backup only, two having local backups at a second on-campus data center, and one college doing backup to the District. None of the colleges indicate the existence of a Business

Continuity/Disaster Recovery plan in their respective Institution Self Evaluation Reports. Interviews with campus and District technology staff confirmed that student and staff data are stored both at the District and campus servers and should be protected. (III.C.3)

Support, including training, in the effective use of technology is the primary responsibility of the colleges. Each campus has the appropriate instruction and support for faculty, staff, students, and administrators for their respective systems as evidenced by the existence of various forms of teaching and learning centers on the campus as well as training opportunities. As confirmed by interviews with District and campus technology staff, training is scheduled as part of any new systems deployment. The established strategy is to create super-users for all District wide systems so that the local campus can maintain the training after initial system deployment. The District will also schedule trainings on an as-requested basis when a significant need is identified. Campus technology staff also indicates that the District Information Technology unit provides funds for off-site training in deployed technology solutions. (III.C.4)

Policies and administrative regulations in place at the District which guide the appropriate use of technology in the teaching and learning process include B-27 Network Security Policy, B-28 Use of District and College Computing Facilities, B-33 Web Accessibility Standards and Guidelines, B-34 ADA Self Evaluation and Transition Plan, E-89 Distance Education Policy, E-105 Student Privacy/FERPA, and E-114 Identity Theft Prevention Program. The colleges acknowledge that they abide by these policies to guide operations as evidenced in their respective Institution Self Evaluation Reports. The team confirmed in interviews that the TPPC and TPC suggest policies as needed to aid in the appropriate use of the technology. In addition, the colleges have additional local policies for campus technologies such as websites and distance education systems. (III.C.5)

The College Information Technology Services Group (ITSG) and Media Center supports several core components of the institution. With twelve employees, which includes one manager, ITSG provides support for a campus serving more than 22,000 students, approximately 52,000 annual enrollments, 254 classified staff, more than 245 full-time faculty, and 11 administrators. Additionally, ITSG and Media Center provide support directly related to all local instructional and student support services functions, including classrooms, laboratories, learning centers, the library, and faculty technology and media support (III.C.1).

### **Conclusions – College**

The College has experienced difficulty in implementing and/or maintaining various technology needs and services on campus. The campus is not fully wireless, there have been several service outages and connectivity issues, smart classrooms are outdated, and there is a significant staffing gap to assure reliable services and security related to information technology.

The College conducted a needs assessment using the Burwood Group, an outside consulting company. The results of this study identified a significant number of service delivery gaps related to IT staffing, planning, and investment for the College.

There are several major college information technology infrastructure and information technology needs that have not been addressed in the past three years.

The College and District do not meet all parts of the Standard due to the disconnect between technology services and master planning for technology, the lack of technology replacement funding, and a general need to upgrade technology on campus.

### **Conclusions – District**

Technology resources are adequate to support the institution's management and operational functions. Tremendous effort has been put into integrated planning within each college and is guided by planning processes District wide. The institution plans for District-level technology replacement using a Total Cost of Ownership model for District systems. Sound decisions about technology are being made as a result. None of the colleges acknowledge a Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery plan although all indicate redundancy on campus data centers and local backups. The District and campuses provide appropriate instruction and support in the effective use of technology solutions. The District has appropriate policies and procedures that guide the appropriate use of technology in teaching and learning processes. The District meets all the Standards in III.C except Standard III.C.3.

The team commends the technology staff from the nine colleges and the District for their teamwork and collaboration in sharing staff resources, developing technology standards, collaborative training, and deployment of integrated systems which result in effective and efficient use of technology resources to improve academic quality and institutional effectiveness. (III.C.1, III.C.4)

### **Recommendations for Compliance and Improvement**

**College Recommendation 6 (Improvement):** In order to improve, the team recommends the College include IT staff in technology planning related to building and construction to ensure appropriate and adequate technology services, professional support, and technology hardware to meet the needs of operational functions, academic programs, teaching and learning, and support services (III.C.1).

**College Recommendation 7 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the College allocate appropriate fiscal resources and adopt a lifecycle plan for the ongoing refresh and replacement of technology to ensure its technological infrastructure, quality and capacity are adequate to support its mission, operations, programs, and services (III.C.2).

**College Recommendation 8 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the College achieve an adequate level of professional support for students and staff to address service gaps in the information technology department and to fully support technology needs directly related to local instructional and student support services, as well as institutional operations. (III.C.1, III.C.4)

**District Recommendation 4 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the District and colleges develop a comprehensive Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery plan to ensure reliable access, safety, and security. (III.C.3)

## **Standard III.D: Financial Resources**

### **General Observations - College**

Pierce College is the second largest college of nine, in terms of students served, within the Los Angeles Community College District. The recently revised district budget allocation model provides Pierce College with annual base funding, predicated on projected annual enrollment targets, augmented by an allocation for senior administrative staff, maintenance and operations, and transition funding to mitigate the impacts of implementing the new model through a phased-in approach. These district-provided financial resources are enhanced by categorical funding provided by the State—such as SSSP funds—as well as by fiscal resources generated and/or earned by Pierce College directly, for example through grants and enterprise activities.

Pierce College develops an annual Budget Plan based on these financial resources. Financial planning is mission-driven, integrated with the College’s Strategic Master Plan, and incorporates annual departmental program reviews, tied to College goals and objectives, into the process. The responsibility for financial planning is shared across the college among its shared governance groups such as the Pierce College Council, Academic Senate, and Budget Committee. Pierce College has a core funding model which represents a baseline for programmatic and support unit budgets. Additional resources are requested through the Annual Program Planning process. The vetting and prioritization of these resource requests is accomplished through collegial discourse and a final prioritized list is endorsed by the Pierce College Council then submitted to the College President for approval.

Clearly defined district and college policies and procedures govern the college’s planning efforts and ensure the institution’s financial stability. The governing board provides guidance with respect to financial planning, budget development, and fiscal monitoring. Annual external audits validate the accuracy of district financial statements, compliance with state and federal programs, while the district’s internal auditing team regularly assesses the efficacy of financial systems in a cycle of continual improvement. Financial information is disseminated widely throughout the college through various means and venues. Pierce College monitors expenditures through monthly and quarterly reports reviewed by its Budget Committee, a standing committee of the Pierce College Council.

The district ensures fiscal solvency by accurately identifying and quantifying short term and long term obligations, developing detailed income and cost projections, and sustaining a healthy reserve balance. The district and college maintain sufficient cash flow and general fund reserves to service all current and reasonably anticipated future obligations.

### **General Observations - District**

The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) has strong fiscal practices as evidenced by the reports from the District's external auditors, strong reserves, and documented practices in place to help achieve the District's goals of Organizational Effectiveness and Resources and Collaboration.

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO)/Treasurer serves as the executive head which oversees all financial operations, including directing the development of financial strategies, policies, programs, models, controls, and standards to ensure the financial integrity and performance of the colleges, and also supports the overall strategic missions of the District.

The CFO also monitors the effectiveness of the Board-approved budget allocation mechanisms and plans, develops, directs, and evaluates the District's treasury which includes cash and investment management. The CFO manages and directs the following departments: Budget and Management Analysis; Accounting; Central Financial Aid; and the Office of Internal Audit.

Under the direction of the CFO, there are 91 staff members who provide services to the colleges. Staffing includes six staff members within the CFO Office. In the Budget and Management Analysis department, eight staff provide direction to the colleges on budget development, budget monitoring, and analysis of budget activity; in Accounting, 57 staff are responsible for general accounting, accounts payable, and payroll; in Central Financial Aid, 13 staff ensure all student aid programs are in compliance; and seven staff in the Office of Internal Audit provide investigations and internal control improvements.

The District's main budget committee is the District Budget Committee (DBC), a District-level governance committee comprised of the nine college presidents, six Academic Senate representatives, six Faculty Guild representatives, and one representative from each of the following: AFT (American Federation of Teachers) Staff Guild, Local 911 Teamster, EEIU Local 99, Building and Construction Trades, Supervisors Local 721, Classified Management, and Associated Students Organization. This committee also includes the deputy chancellor, chief financial officer, and budget director as resource personnel. The DBC reports to both the chancellor and all constituent groups, and is charged with formulating recommendations to the chancellor for budget planning policies consistent with the District's Strategic Plan; reviewing the District's budget; making recommendations to the chancellor for adoption or modifications; and reviewing the District's financial condition on a quarterly basis.

The chancellor (ex-officio), the CFO (chair), four Academic Senate/faculty representatives, one union/association representative, two college presidents, two college vice presidents, and



the deputy chancellor serve on the Executive Committee of the District Budget Committee (ECDBC). The purpose of the committee is to advise the chancellor on financial matters, evaluate the District Budget Committee, manage the District Budget Committee agenda, and perform as a workgroup on fiscal matters.

Beginning in April 2016, a new vice chancellor of finance and resource development will begin tenure and will hire a new director, institutional advancement. The latter, new position will focus on resource and workforce development. There will be no significant changes to the responsibilities of current staff except for the addition of one reporting layer between the chief financial officer and chancellor.

### **Findings and Evidence – College**

Pierce College proactively manages its fiscal resources in order to ensure financial stability and does so in a manner that effectively supports its instructional and operational needs.

The LACCD budget allocation model provides to Pierce College an annual base allocation plus an allocation for administrative staff and maintenance and operations. During the past two years, Pierce College has positioned itself to take advantage of growth funding provided by the State generating additional available financial resources. Funded enrollment has increased by 4% on average during this period and is projected to grow at 5% in the current year.

In addition to enrollment driven resource allocations, Pierce College receives additional financial resources from State categorical and grant funds as well as from enterprise activities such as leasing revenues. Further, the college has developed financial and other partnerships to augment its resources and programs including the PACE Program with the Los Angeles Unified School District and joint use agreements with local sports leagues. (III.D.1, III.D.4, III.D.8)

Through prudent planning, monitoring and realistic assessment of resource availability, Pierce College has completed each of the prior two fiscal years with an ending fund balance *surplus*, representing over 10% of its annual expenditures. These year-end balances are carried forward to the subsequent fiscal year providing for a prudent reserve from which to draw in times of economic downturns. Interviews with staff indicated that the College had plans to fund limited one-time instructional needs in the current year with these funds. (III.D.1, III.D.4)

Pierce College's mission and goals provide its foundation for financial planning. The College utilizes its 2013-2017 Strategic Master Plan (SMP) and Integrated Planning Calendar to inform the planning. College departments and support units align their resource requests with SMP institutional goals and objectives in their Annual Program Plans (APP).

The College develops its annual budget through a shared governance process. The budget is vetted by the Pierce Budget Committee, a sub-committee of the College Council. The Academic Senate also provides a venue for deliberation of resource allocation requests over and above the baseline core programmatic and operational funding. The college's Budget

Committee reviews requests for additional resources, via the APPs, and prioritizes them based on a well-defined rubric developed by the finance team. This prioritization list is then reviewed by the Pierce College Council for endorsement and advanced to the college President for consideration and final approval. (III.D.2, III.D.3)

Financial statements, budget projections, and spend rate analyses are prepared by the vice president of administrative services and shared with the College's Budget Committee. The team verified, through interviews and evidence, that Pierce College regularly reviews Budget variance reports, monitors categorical expenditures, and disseminates—through numerous venues—financial information broadly throughout informing decision making. (III.D.4, III.D.6)

### **Findings and Evidence – District**

LACCD Board Rules, Article VI provide guidance with respect to financial resource allocation, budget development and fiscal monitoring. The district's comprehensive Business Office and Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual delineate protocols relating to cash handling, accounts payable and accounts receivable ensuring sound financial practices. (III.D.2)

The district has an integrated financial management process that regularly evaluates its financial practices and internal control structure to ensure the financial integrity of the District. The Chief Financial Officer of the District and the colleges work together to ensure that dependable and timely information for sound financial decision-making is consistently available to all parties. Financial information is distributed on a set schedule to the Board of Trustees, the colleges, the District Budget Committee (DBC) and the Board Budget and Finance Committee (BFC). The District appears to do a good job of managing the finances and evidenced by the over 13% ending balance (Reserves) that has been maintained over the last three years. (III.D.5, III.D.9)

LACCD commissions annual external audits to validate the accuracy of its financial statements, review compliance with State and Federal programs, and gauge its internal controls. The District received an unmodified external audit, with no identified material weaknesses, for 2013 and 2014. When auditors identify areas of internal control deficiencies or programmatic non-compliance, the LACCD notifies the college(s) of such findings and requests a corrective action plan to address the deficiencies. For example, as a result of the 2013-14 fiscal audit the LACCD shared a Statement of State Findings and Recommendations with three of its colleges, including Pierce College, delineating findings related to Title V Disabled Student Programs and Services Implementation Guidelines. Pierce College provided a timely response to the district that included a corrective action plan to address the deficiency. The team confirmed that the plan had been implemented by the College. (III.D.7)

The district's internal audit department regularly reviews all business and finance systems to ensure compliance with relevant policies, procedures, laws and statutory regulations. The Internal Audit Plan's focus is on cash controls, procurements/contracts, Associate Student

Organizations, Foundations, Financial Aid and the Fraud Hotline. Over the last three years, the internal audit department averaged 7,500 audit hours per year. (III.D.5, III.D.8)

LACCD reviews cash flow on a regular schedule and has maintained cash and reserves ranging from 13% to 17%. Since 2013-14 the District has had a General Fund Reserve of 6.5% of expenditures and other uses, and a Contingency Reserve of 3.5%. The cash available to the District is sufficient as demonstrated by the District not participating in a Tax Revenue Anticipation Note (TRANS) since the 2012-13 year. Over the last three years, the report showed a low of \$51,116,662 and a high of \$262,061,404 for cash balances. (III.D.9)

The district has adequate property and liability coverage in the amounts of \$600 million and \$40 million respectively. Property deductible is \$25,000 per occurrence and the liability self-insurance retention is \$1.5 million per occurrence. The district is self-insured for Workers' Compensation up to \$750,000 per claim through USI, with excess coverage through Safety National. (III.D.10, III.D.11)

LACCD has significant unfunded liability for retiree healthcare. As of the 2013 Actuarial Valuation, the liability was estimated at \$478,320,000 and the market value of assets in the District's Irrevocable Trust (PERS) was \$76,800,000, leaving an unfunded balance of \$401,520,000. The District Annual Required Contribution (ARC) for 2014-15 was \$34,604,000 and the District made contributions of \$29,604,235. At the end of fiscal year 2014-15 the liability was 16.06% funded. The district regularly reviews and analyzes the impact of OPEB, retirement rate increases, and healthcare reforms. (III.D.12)

While there was no official plan to fund the entire OPEB liability, steps have been taken to mitigate the liability. Examples of that include changing the health benefit plan to PERS Medical which reduced the liability by over \$120 million, the creation of the irrevocable trust through CalPERS, and the negotiated settlement with all six collective bargaining groups to take 1.92 percent of COLA in 2006 and apply it toward the ARC. Over the last two years, the District contributed 86% of the ARC payment. At the time of the accreditation visit, the District was waiting for the draft of the 2015 Actuarial Valuation. (III.D.12)

The district's long-term debt schedule shows a liability of \$4.3 billion with most of this debt being General Obligation Bonds where debt payment resources will be coming from taxes assessed on local property. Other long-term debt reported is Workers' Compensation Claims, General Liability Claims, Compensated Absences and Capital Lease Obligations. (III.D.13) One liability that is not recorded is for load banking, an option available to faculty as part of the faculty collective bargaining agreement, Article 39. Discussions with District managers confirmed that the colleges have load banking obligations, but a liability has not been booked into the District financial statements. (III.D.12, 14) District audits reveal no locally incurred debt instruments. (III.D.13)

LACCD has numerous rules, regulations and procedures to ensure proper use of funds consistent with intended purposes. Regulations are updated regularly, and both internal and

external audits are conducted on an annual basis, allowing the institution to identify and promptly correct any deficiencies in internal controls and ensure financial resources are well managed and used with integrity and in accordance with their intended purpose. CEOs are responsible for financial management. GO Bonds and their audits are reviewed by the Board and Student Default rates are monitored. The District has not issued COPs since 2009. (III.D.14)

Audits of financial aid programs of the district's colleges are conducted on an annual basis by an external auditing firm to ensure compliance with Federal programs such as Title IV. The college monitors and manages its funds effectively as evidenced by the fact that no deficiencies were noted in the past years' audits. Pierce College's default rates fall within the acceptable range. (III.D.15)

Contractual agreements at Pierce College are governed by district policy and consistent with the institution's mission and goals. The district's Educational Services Center has established policies and procedures that govern contracts and procurement. The college president and vice president of administrative services approve short term agreements while ensuring alignment with the institution's mission and goals and compliance with established policy. These are then ratified by the governing board. Long-term agreements are reviewed by the Contracts Office of the ESC and the Office of General Counsel. The college also maintains a number of long-term contracts that directly serve the instructional goals of the institution. (III.D. 16)

In October 2013, the Board of Trustees adopted the District Financial Accountability Measures in response to a 2013 Accreditation Evaluation Report for Los Angeles Valley College, which recommended that accountability measures be put in place to ensure long-term fiscal stability and financial integrity of the college.

The District Financial Accountability Measures are used to ensure sound fiscal management and provide a process to monitor and evaluate the financial health of all colleges within the District and require that each college president include provisions for a balanced budget; long-term enrollment plans; position control for personnel; an annual financial plan; quarterly reporting on expenditures and overall fiscal status; a college reserve policy; and action plans. (III.D.1)

The District's budget planning process is clearly laid out in the District's "Operation Plan Instructions" for 2015-16 (District's website) which covers the budget calendar for the year and detailed instructions on how the budget will be prepared. In reviewing the last three years' final budgets, the team finds that they are well done and contain a very good analysis of the budget in both summary and detailed form. Information is presented at both the District and college levels and includes the general fund as well as the other funds of the District (i.e., bookstore, cafeteria, child development, building, financial aid, special revenue, and debt service funds). The plan includes the chancellor's recommendations on the use of \$57.67 million of State Mandated Reimbursement Revenues and how they were tied to the District's Strategic Plan Goals. (III.D.3-4, 6)

While the District's Financial Accountability Measures require that the colleges maintain position control for personnel, upon discussion with finance staff, it was noted that the District's information system does not currently have a tool to track and maintain personnel costs. While the District's percentage of salaries and benefits compared to overall expenditures is approximately 85 percent, several of the colleges significantly exceed this amount. (III.D.4)

The District has an internal audit department that regularly reviews all business and finance systems to ensure compliance with relevant policies, procedures, laws, and statutory regulations. The Internal Audit Plans for the last three years reflect a focus on cash controls, procurements/contracts, Associate Student organizations, foundations, human resources, special requests, financial aid, and the fraud hotline. Over the last three years the internal audit department averaged 7,500 audit hours per year. (III.D.5, III.D.8)

The District has several reserves. Since 2013-14, the District has had a general fund reserve of six and one-half percent of expenditures and other uses, and a contingency reserve of three and one-half percent. Over the last three years, the District has maintained an ending balance over 13 percent. There is also a two percent set aside used to fund deferred maintenance projects, which is sometimes referred to as the Deferred Maintenance Reserve. (III.D.5, III.D.9)

Audit reports are available for review on the District's website and the last three years' reports all included "unmodified" opinions rendered by the District's external auditors, the cleanest opinion an auditor can give. The Management, Discussion and Analysis (MD&A) for the last three years was well done and included a summary of the history of the District, a summary of economic factors, and explanations of changes between current-year and prior-year numbers. There were no "material weaknesses" reported in the audit reports for the years ending June 30, 2013, 2014, and 2015. There was a "significant deficiency" reported in each of the last three years' reports related to information technology controls, and "To Be Arranged" (TBA) hours that have been outstanding since the 2007 fiscal audit. In 2014, the audit report included several recurring significant deficiency findings in the EOPS/CARE programs, but those were cleared in 2015. In the last three years, there have been other findings that are considered significant deficiencies and/or compliance findings, but recent results show the District clearing those findings by the next audit year. (III.D.7, III.D.10)

The District's audit reports for the bond program are posted on the District's website. There are two separate reports, one for performance audits and the second for financial audits. The performance audit reports (2006-07 through 2013-14) are quite detailed and address such things as analysis of change orders, completeness of operating procedures, and evaluation of the project close-out process. The financial reports (2007-08 through 2014-15) are broken down between Proposition A, Proposition AA and the Measure J bond programs, each with a separate opinion. For the 2014-15 financial report, all three opinions were unmodified and the results of the auditor tests disclosed no instance of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards. For the performance audits, it was noted that there were several substantial improvements over key capital project

delivery processes compared to what was found in previous years. There were several areas where additional improvements could be made which included two medium-priority opportunities and three low-priority opportunities. No high-priority opportunities were identified. (III.D.8)

The cash available to the District is sufficient as evidenced by the District not participating in Tax Revenue Anticipation Notes (TRANs) since the 2012-13 year, and the cash balance reported to the State Chancellor's Office in the CCFS-311Q. Over the last three years, the report showed a low of \$51,116,662 and a high of \$262,061,404 for cash balances. (III.D.9)

The District has adequate property and liability coverage in the amounts of \$600 million and \$40 million, respectively. The District's property deductible is \$25,000 per occurrence, and the liability self-insurance retention is \$1.5 million per occurrence. The District is self-insured for Workers' Compensation up to \$750,000 per claim through USI, with excess coverage through Safety National. Because some of the colleges have incurred huge debt to the District, the District Executive Committee of the District Budget Committee has recommended a debt repayment policy. The committee also proposed a plan for future STRS/PERS increases. In the 2015-16 budget, the District set aside \$20 million (later revised to \$22 million) of one-time funds to fund the future obligation for the STRS/PERS increases that will impact the District over the next few years. The District's plans call for using a portion of the \$22 million each year to cover two-thirds of the cost of the increase; this will cover the on-going increase through 2020-21. (III.D.10, III.D.11)

The District has a significant, unfunded liability for retiree healthcare. As of the 2013 actuarial valuation, the liability was estimated at \$478,320,000 and the market value of assets in the District's Irrevocable Trust (PERS) was \$76,800,000, resulting in an unfunded balance of \$401,520,000. The District Annual Required Contribution (ARC) for 2014-15 was \$34,604,000, and the District made contributions of \$29,604,235. At the end of fiscal year 2014-15, the liability was 16.06 percent funded. While there was no official plan to fund the entire OPEB liability, steps have been taken to mitigate the liability. Examples of that include changing the health benefit plan to PERS Medical which reduced the liability by over \$120 million, the creation of the irrevocable trust through CalPERS, and the negotiated settlement with all six collective bargaining groups to take 1.92 percent of COLA in 2006 and apply it toward the ARC. Over the last two years, the District contributed 86 percent of the ARC payment. At the time of the accreditation visit, the District was waiting for the draft of the 2015 Actuarial Valuation. (III.D.12)

The District's long-term debt schedule reflects a liability of \$4.3 billion with most of the debt being General Obligation Bonds where debt payment resources will come from taxes on local property. Other long-term debt reported is Workers' Compensation claims, general liability claims, compensated absences, and capital lease obligations. One liability that is not recorded is for load banking, an option available to faculty as part of the faculty collective bargaining agreement, Article 39. Discussion with District managers confirmed that the colleges have load banking obligations, but a liability has not been booked into the District's financial statements. (III.D.12, III.D.14) District audits reveal no locally incurred debt instruments. (III.D.13)

The District does not have any Certificates of Participation outstanding. Auxiliary activities, fund-raising efforts, and grant monitoring are done at each of the colleges, with some oversight from the District. Claims are done through the District’s Accounting Office. For example, the District’s Internal Audit department has spent significant hours auditing the Colleges’ Associated Student Organization funds and college foundations. The District also coordinates the external financial audits for the college foundations.

The Los Angeles Community College District Foundation has not had much activity over the last several years. The last audit report was for the years ended June 30, 2012 and 2013; at that time, cash assets were \$328,845. Reviewing the District’s Financial Summary, the cash balance as of February 29, 2016, is \$384,975. There is a Representation Letter with the auditors to do a review of the financial statements for the years ended June, 30, 2014 and 2015. A review is proposed instead of an audit due to the limited activity. (III.D.14)

The District’s Financial Aid Unit (CFAU) coordinates the work of college Financial Aid offices and ensures college and District operations are legally compliant. The unit implements standardized policies and procedures throughout the District, reconciles student loan programs, and provides guidance to college administrators and Financial Aid managers. The CFAU also assures that the colleges clean up any audit issues as soon as discovered and tracks and makes phone calls to help collect on the Federal Perkins Loan Program. Default rates for the last four years were provided by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer.

**Perkins Default Rates**

	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
<b>LA City</b>	25.35%	22.67%	26.44%	28.00%
<b>East LA</b>	24.53%	18.33%	17.46%	14.52%
<b>LA Harbor</b>	33.33%	37.50%	33.33%	33.33%
<b>LA Mission</b>	10.00%	14.29%	28.57%	41.67%
<b>LA Pierce</b>	33.96%	33.33%	41.67%	35.90%
<b>LA Southwest</b>	31.58%	27.59%	34.00%	34.00%
<b>LA Trade-Tech</b>	36.66%	43.75%	38.54%	21.30%
<b>LA Valley</b>	12.68%	14.29%	12.63%	32.39%
<b>West LA</b>	46.88%	34.48%	39.13%	47.62%

Four colleges had a Perkins default rate that exceeded 30 percent for three, straight years. Los Angeles Harbor, Los Angeles Pierce, Los Angeles Trade-Technical (LATT), and West Los Angeles had total principal outstanding loans in default that exceeded 240 days in the amount of \$874,202. The District is phasing out the Perkins Loan Program and is moving to the Direct Loan Program. The published default rates for the Direct Loan Program only go through fiscal year 2012. Only one of the nine colleges had rates over 30 percent-LATT at 32.2 percent; however, it has been in the program for only one year. (ER5) (III.D.10, III.D.15)

## **Conclusion – College**

Pierce College links strategic needs to resource and institutional planning to ensure physical resource needs are met. Resource allocation and prioritization are integrated with program planning. The college also has a strong focus on total cost of ownership.

The College meets the standard.

## **Conclusions – District**

The team commends the District for its substantial support of the internal audit function. With the exception of Standard III.D.7 and III.D.12, the District meets the Standards.

## **Commendations - College**

**College Commendation 4-** The team commends the college on its budgeting process including the prioritization, allocation and monitoring of fiscal resources and its integration with the annual program planning process. (III.D.2, III.D.3)

## **Recommendations for Improvement and Compliance**

**District Recommendation 5 (Improvement):** In order to increase effectiveness and better assess financial resource availability, the team recommends that the District implement a District position control system to track and budget for personnel costs. (III.D.4)

**District Recommendation 6 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the District comprehensively responds to the recurring audit findings concerning: 1) the internal control weakness in information technology controls over the areas of security and change management; and 2) the state compliance exceptions related to “To Be Arranged” (TBA) hours attendance documentation and course classifications. (III.D.7)

**District Recommendation 7 (Improvement):** In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the District develop and publicize a plan to fully fund the Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB) Liability, which is currently funded at 16.06 percent. (III.D.12)

**District Recommendation 8 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the District develop a process to capture the full impact of the District’s liability for load banking and to record the liability in the District’s financial statements. (III.D.12)



## **Standard IV Leadership and Governance**

### **Standard IV.A: Decision Making Roles and Processes**

#### **General Observations – College**

The LACCD has a seven-member Board that presides over nine colleges serving more than 225,000 students. The LACCD Board of Trustees establishes policies that are consistent with its mission statement and exercises oversight of the college’s educational programs by means of its Board Rules and Administrative Regulations. (Board Rules, Chapter 1, Article 2)

The Chancellor of the District executes policies and procedures and presides over the daily operations of the district. The college presidents report to the chancellor of the District.

The President has fostered a climate that creates opportunities for participatory governance and streamlined decision-making processes, leadership and shared governance structures. There is evidence that the College Council is the governance council for college matters and has representation from all constituency groups. The College has an organized committee structure which is outlined in the *Decision-Making and Planning Handbook*.

#### **General Observations – District**

The District supports effective institutional governance through well-established practices which ensure administrators and faculty exercise a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning, and budget. The shared governance process is the primary mechanism by which all campus constituents participate in decision-making. Faculty have primary responsibility for curriculum and student learning programs and services, but administrators are appropriately involved in the curriculum process. In some instances, classified staff are not included in the membership of District wide institutional governance committees regarding institutional planning and policies.

#### **Findings and Evidence – College**

The District has a culture that encourages participation by all constituencies, described by the chancellor as “The Power of NINE!” in reference to the District’s nine colleges. Constituent participation includes the District- and college-level Academic Senate, the six collective bargaining units, the Associated Students, a seven-member Board of Trustees, and District/college management. These constituent bodies have the opportunity to provide input into decision-making as outlined in the *District Governance and Functions Handbook*. The governance functional map outlines the lines of authority and delineates the colleges’ and District roles. The *District Governance and Functions Handbook* describes the overall governance and decision-making structures for the colleges and the District. (IV.A)

The Annual Program Planning (APP) process seems to be solid and provides strong evidence

of meeting this standard by including (presumably) all staff at the program level in annual planning and input.

The *Decision-Making and Planning Handbook* is a comprehensive snapshot of committee memberships (administrators, faculty, staff and students) and description of how systematic participative processes are used to assure effective planning and implementation.

Pierce College Council includes all constituencies and is a structured governance body that ensures broad participation and input. The Student Affairs Committee (SAC) and the Associated Student Organizations (ASO) are solid examples of student involvement and participation in decision-making processes with Board policy to validate this level of involvement.

The *District Governance and Functions Handbook* thoroughly outlines the roles and responsibilities of all major stakeholder groups at the district and college levels—all seemingly authorized by board policy. Board policy 2407 provides how members of the public can participate in bringing forward ideas and have a voice in decision-making discussions.

The college has clearly established its procedures to provide the guidance for established governance structure that includes all employee groups and students. The College should continue its plans for student engagement in the participatory governance process and improve student participation.

Processes are established for the college to implement the review or establishment of new policies or procedures. The role of the Board and evaluation thereof is taking place appropriately, as is that of the college's President.

The President has done an incredible job in leading the college through the much needed changes in regards to planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness. (IV.A.2, IV.A.3, IV.A.4, IV.A5)

There is strong evidence to support compliance of meeting this standard via a variety of agendas, minutes, and adherence to Brown Act provisions, when applicable. The President has made efforts to also provide open communication regarding decision-making processes via committee websites, newsletters, announcements, "First Monday Reports," committee reports, and guidelines for naming conventions. (IV.A.6)

The College has developed mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of its governance structures, processes, and procedures. The college participatory governance committees undergo a process of self-evaluation, validation, and recommendations for improvement. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness developed a dashboard to monitor the committee self-evaluation process. (IV.A.7)

## Findings and Evidence – District

Faculty and administrators have ample opportunity for providing input on institutional policies, planning, and budget through participation on college-level governance committees, District wide executive administrative councils, and District-level governance committees. At all the colleges, administrators serve on governance committees based on their areas of expertise. The LACCD and AFT (American Federation of Teachers) Agreement 2014-2017 (Agreement) emphasizes the importance of faculty representation from the union and senate on participatory governance committees. The LACCD and AFT Agreement specifies which committees require faculty representation and those for which it is recommended. The Agreement requires faculty membership for both Budget and Strategic Planning Committees. (IV.A.3.)

Faculty and administrators follow well-defined structures in making recommendations about curriculum and student learning programs and services. All nine of the LACCD colleges reference in their self-evaluations the primacy of faculty in making recommendations about curriculum and student learning programs and services. Administrative regulation E-65 lays out in great detail a step-by-step process for curriculum development and approval. This process recognizes the primacy of faculty members in making curriculum recommendations while also ensuring administrative input in the curriculum process. (IV.A.4.)

There are well-defined processes for communication before internal administrative and external Board decisions are made that impact faculty, staff, and students. Recommendations from governance and contractually mandated committees are solicited before decisions are made.

The roles of administrators and faculty in the development of District policy are delineated in Board Rule XVII, Article I-Academic Senate and Board of Trustees Shared Governance Policy and Article II-Students and Board of Trustees Shared Governance Policy and in Chancellor's Directive No. 70. LACCD does not have a classified senate. The AFT Staff Guild, Local 1521A, represents the full-time and part-time classified clerical/technical administrative staff. The Supervisory Employees' Union, S.E.I.U. Local 721, represents regular full-time and regular part-time classified employees of the District who are assigned to classifications in the Supervisory Unit.

“Role of the Unions,” in the *District Governance and Functions Handbook*, describes District-level consultation between the administration and representatives of the six bargaining units. Consultation occurs through:

1. direct consultation during regular meetings between union representatives and the chancellor and/or the college presidents;
2. regular monthly grievance meetings between union representatives, the chancellor, the chancellor's designees and/or the college presidents;
3. participation in relevant District and college governance and decision-making committees, including the District Budget Committee, the Joint Labor/Management Benefits Committee, and the college governance councils; and

4. direct representation from the Resource Table during monthly Board meetings.

In some cases, it appears that classified staff do not have appropriate representation on District-level institutional governance committees regarding institutional planning, policies, and other key considerations. For example, the Student Success Initiative Committee (SSIC) states that the “overarching purpose of the Student Success Initiative is to create an effective District-wide network of faculty, administrators and *staff* dedicated to improving student success.” However, the committee’s membership does not include representatives from the classified staff. Likewise, the committee membership of the District Planning Committee does not include representation from the classified staff. (IV.A.5)

### **Conclusions – College**

The College President reports to the District Chancellor and is responsible for the operations of the college. The President has fostered a climate that creates opportunities for collaboration of constituent groups. Faculty, staff and administrators participate in the structured governance process. Students have an opportunity to participate as well, but expanded efforts to engage and develop the student’s voice could improve governance.

The college meets this Standard.

### **Conclusions - District**

LACCD has clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of not only the colleges and the District, but also the Board members, the chancellor, and the college presidents. The District has completed and revised its governance structures and procedures which demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement. The District meets this standard.

### **Commendations - College**

**College Commendation 5** - The team commends the college for its collaborative planning efforts that resulted in the development of a creative and mission-driven Strategic Master Plan. The team acknowledges the commitment and engagement of the faculty, staff, and administration for these efforts. (IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.3)

### **Recommendations for Improvement and Compliance**

**College Recommendation 9 (Improvement):** In order to improve, the team recommends that the College continue to develop the student’s voice and engagement in the shared governance process. Student participation and genuine input can be improved through training and mentoring (IV.A.2).

**District Recommendation 9 (Improvement):** In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the District review the membership of institutional governance committees

to ensure all employee groups, particularly classified staff, have formal input on institutional plans, policies, and other key considerations as appropriate. (IV.A.5.)

## **Standard IV.B: Chief Executive Officer**

### **General Observations – College**

Through an interview process, attendance at meetings, and the review of Board Policy, there is evidence of defined Duties and Responsibilities of the District Board of Trustees, District Chancellor and College President as well as the delineation between their respective responsibilities and authority. The President seems to have primary responsibility of the overall quality of the institution through structured processes and shared governance structures. The President has provided leadership in developing core master planning documents and the Strategic Master Plan 2013-17. The plan is linked and integrated with all planning processes and plan documents.

### **Findings and Evidence – College**

The President has demonstrated her ability to effectively lead the college in planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness. Evidence of the President’s abilities in these areas starts with the revised integrated planning processes and development of the Strategic Master Plan 2013-2017. The reassigning of the reporting relationship of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to the Office of President, demonstrates commitment to institution-wide measurement and support of the student success initiatives of the College. (IV.B.1)

Evidence supports the President utilizes her chain of command and committee structures to appropriately delegate authority, communicate changes in statutes, regulations, and governing board policies. The President has supported organizational changes recommended by her executive team. Faculty and staff were surveyed and 80% responded favorably regarding the President. (IV.B.2.)

The evidence demonstrates that there is a structured set of processes, policies, and procedures to fully meet this Standard, including a creative and organized *Strategic Master Plan* focused on teaching and learning. The Institutional Set Standards (ISS) have been identified and integrated with the institutional planning processes. Pierce College has a defined committee structure which is outlined in the *Decision-Making and Planning Handbook* with organized timelines and cycles for evaluation and identification of roles and responsibilities.

The college has formalized and solidified a seemingly very well-thought-out participatory governance structure under the leadership of the President. The college has an integrated, creative and organized *Strategic Master Plan* focused on teaching and learning (CAPS – completion, accountability, partnerships and student success)—the acronym helps the entire college community remember and implement the plan into departmental and program level processes and planning. The established Institutional Set Standards are integrated at the departmental and program level to ensure continuous quality improvement throughout all

programs and services. Survey results indicate the President is meeting the standard of ensuring evaluation and planning relies on research and analysis of data with 81% of faculty and staff approval. (IV.B.3)

The President is directly involved with accreditation and works with college constituents to discuss the importance of accreditation, self-reflection and improvement. She has conducted public forums and distributed printed materials and clearly demonstrated her leadership role. The Accreditation Liaison Officer reports to the President and the Accreditation Steering Committee reports to the College Council, chaired by two elected members of the Council, which makes recommendations directly to the College President. (IV.B.4)

The evidence supported that the analysis and evaluation of this Standard written in the Self Evaluation Report: “The president has established an effective participatory governance and organizational infrastructure to comply with all applicable state and federal regulations, as well as Los Angeles Community College District governing board policies.” (IV.B.5)

The President has made efforts to also provide open communication regarding decision-making processes via committee websites, newsletters, announcements, “First Monday Reports,” committee reports, and guidelines for naming conventions. (IV.B.6)

## **Conclusions - College**

The college meets this Standard.

## **Standard IV.C: Governing Board**

### **General Observations – District**

The Board of Trustees (Board) of the Los Angeles Community College District provides effective leadership for its complex system. The seven-member Board of Trustees has worked with the chancellor to develop clear lines of authority at the college and District levels.

### **Findings and Evidence – District**

The roles and responsibilities of the Board and LACCD administrative leadership are codified in the Board Rules. The District administration implements those rules through creation of Chancellor’s Directives and Administrative Regulations. In addition, the Board has four standing committees: Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success; Budget and Finance; Legislative and Public Affairs; and Facilities Master Planning and Oversight. Membership is limited to Board members only, has a specific charge, and is designed to ensure the Board exercises authority and responsibility to assure the colleges and District run effectively. Chaired by the vice president of the Board and made up of all Board members, the Committee of the Whole reviews District wide standards and performance for efficiency and quality. The governing authority rests with the entire Board, not with individual members. (IV.C.1-2)

The Board Rule (BR) found in Chapter X: Human Resources, Article III, Selection Policies #10308 clearly delineates the process for the hiring of the college CEOs; no such Board Rule exists for the hiring of the chancellor. However, the Board used a clearly defined process in the hiring of the most recent chancellor which has yet to be codified. HR E-210: Performance Evaluation, College President/Senior Academic Executive clearly delineates the process for the evaluation of college presidents. Chancellor's Directive (CD) 122 provides for an evaluation process for the chancellor and the college presidents and is outlined in the executive contracts. The process provided for in CD 122, however, is not evidence of a Board policy. (IV.C.3)

The Board holds regularly scheduled meetings that allow for public comment on general and specific agenda items. The Board holds meetings at the colleges as well as at the Education Service Center (ESC), where the chancellor and District's administrative offices are housed. At the Board meetings, there are opportunities for public comment in general or on specific agenda items. The Board uses the Legislative and Public Affairs Committee to engage discussion about issues related to the public interest. (IV.C.4)

Board policies are codified in Board Rules and are available on the District website. The Board Rules establish the Board's role in establishing policy with the acknowledgement that it has the ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity. The Board also has standing committees designed to ensure they are abreast of matters pertaining to its responsibility for financial integrity and stewardship of the District. (IV.C.5)

The Board consists of seven members elected at-large for terms of four years. Elections are held every two years, alternating with three members being chosen in one election and four members at the other. The president and vice president of the Board of Trustees are elected by the Board for a one-year term at the annual organizational and regular meeting in July, and a nonvoting student trustee is elected annually by students for a one-year term beginning June 1. The student trustee has an advisory vote on actions other than personnel-related and collective bargaining items. (IV.C.6)

Board Rule 2301 gives the Board general authority to establish rules and regulations that are consistent with law. This Board Rule also authorizes the Board to delegate rulemaking authority to LACCD officers (such as the chancellor), employees, or committees. Under Board Rule 2902, the Board expressly authorizes the chancellor to adopt and implement Administrative Regulations. BR 2418.12, adopted by the Board in February 2007, directs the chancellor to perform periodic reviews of the Board Rules, Administrative Regulations, and procedural guides. Administrative Regulation C-12, also adopted in February 2007, establishes that reviews and revisions will be conducted by staff on a triennial basis and the process to be used. While there was evidence that revisions to Board Rules were forwarded to the Board for approval, there was no evidence that the triennial reviews were communicated to the Board when no revisions were made. No evidence was found that there is any assessment or review by the Board of the policies for their effectiveness in fulfilling the District mission. (IV.C.7)

As evidenced in its Board Rules, Chapter I, Article II, entitled the "Mission of the Los Angeles Community College District," the Board exercises oversight of the District's educational programs and has established an Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success (IESS) Committee to monitor the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services. Through the Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Committee (IESS), the Board of Trustees is kept regularly informed on key indicators of student learning and achievement. Additionally, Board agendas and minutes provide evidence of regular review of the colleges' academic quality and institutional plans. Cyclic approval of Educational and Strategic Master Plans; review of District-wide completion data covering a six-year period with a focus on improving student success data and academic quality; and an annual review and analysis of the state's Student Success Scorecard, which reports major indicators of student achievement, is documented. (IV.C.8)

Board Rule 2105 requires a formal orientation for new trustees. The last orientation occurred in June 2015 and included an overview of the functions and responsibilities of District Office divisions, conflict of interest policy, and the Brown Act. (IV.C.9)

The annual process for regular self-evaluations of the Board is delineated in BR 2301.10. The Board of Trustees has conducted its annual self-evaluation during a public session in which they reviewed data results from the preceding year and established new annual goals. (IV.C.10)

The Board is in compliance with establishing a policy on Board member code of ethics and conflict of interest with Board Rule 14000, Chapter XIV, and the implementation of these standards is captured in the 2013 Actionable Improvement Plan (March 19, 2013). This plan outlines specific actions that Board members should take to reinforce these standards and to demonstrate its support as a collective entity by adoption of its Code of Ethical Conduct. (IV.C.11)

The Board sets policy with the delegation of responsibility to the chancellor and presidents for the execution of policies and procedures as well as day-to-day operational control of the District. Additionally, Board policy outlines the role of a trustee and identifies that "Authority is given to the Chancellor as the Trustees' sole employee" with a pledge to "work with the Chancellor in gathering any information from staff directly that is not contained in the public record." The chancellor's job description as well as BR 2902 authorizes the chancellor to adopt and implement administrative regulations and delegation of authority to the chancellor and presidents to administer the institutions. The functional map outlines the lines of authority and responsibilities. (IV.C.12)

The Board is extremely knowledgeable and fully engaged in all aspects of accreditation. The Board has been deliberate in its acquisition and application of knowledge on accreditation. Board members are aware of the importance of their role in the accreditation process. All Board members participate in ACCJC's online training program on the topic. Meeting minutes document the formation of a Board ad hoc committee on accreditation in 2013 with the stated purpose of supporting all colleges participating in any aspect of the accreditation



process. The Board has dedicated funds to support efforts and review any reports prior to submission to the Commission by any of the nine colleges. (IV.C.13)

### **Conclusions – District**

The District meets Standard IV.C., except IV.C.3 and IV.C.7.

### **District Recommendations for Improvement and Compliance**

**District Recommendation 10 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the Board adopt policies that clearly define the process for the selection and evaluation of the chancellor. (IV.C.3)

**District Recommendation 11 (Compliance):** In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the Board establish a formal process for approving the review of policies in which no revisions are made and to regularly assess the effectiveness of all policies in fulfilling the District mission. (IV.C.7)

## **IV.D: Multi-College Districts or Systems**

### **General Observations – District**

The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) is a complex, multi-college system comprised of a District Office, which houses the chancellor, senior administrators and District classified professional staff, as well as nine comprehensive community colleges that provide services in 40 cities and communities and cover an area of more than 882 square miles in the greater Los Angeles basin.

In total, the District has 46 district-wide councils, committees, and consultative bodies in which District and college administrative staff, faculty, classified staff, and students regularly participate. All governance councils and committees maintain agendas and meeting summaries/minutes on the District website.

In previous years, operations of the District Office, now referred to as the Educational Services Center (ESC), were highly centralized, and many college decisions related to finance and budget, capital projects, hiring, payroll and contracts were made by District personnel. Operations subsequently have been increasingly decentralized. Colleges have been given considerable autonomy and authority for local decision-making to streamline administrative processes, encourage innovation, and hold college decision-makers more accountable to the local communities they serve. Diligent work by the institution has clarified functions and delineated areas of responsibilities between colleges and the ESC. Original recommendations regarding role delineation and decision-making processes in 2009 were resolved, and, by 2012, the District was commended for its work in this area. The ESC continues to evaluate these delineations on an ongoing basis.

In 2011, the District began a review of the budget allocation formula and policies, including base allocations, use of ending balances, assessments for District operations, growth targets, and college deficit repayments. In 2012, the District developed and approved a new, well-defined allocation model that appears to be understood widely across the institution.

In the 2012 accreditation visit to the colleges, the District received a recommendation to adopt and fully implement an allocation model for its constituent colleges that addresses the size, economies of scale, and the stated mission of the individual colleges. By 2013, the recommendation was resolved, and the District received a commendation for its effort as well as for its transparent and collaborative process.

### **Findings and Evidence – District**

The chancellor demonstrates his leadership and communication by various means. Evidence has shown that the chancellor communicates with all employees of the District about educational excellence and integrity through two publications posted on the District website: *Synergy* and *Accreditation 2016*. He leads a variety of meetings in which he communicates his expectations for excellence as well as reviews and discusses roles, authority and responsibility between colleges. These meetings include Chancellor's Cabinet, Presidents' Council, and meetings with faculty and classified leadership. In addition, he leads and meets with a variety of District committees in which he articulates and provides leadership for the effective operation of the District as a whole and individual colleges. The Board of Trustees has approved a District/college functional area map, developed in consultation with all major stakeholders across the District. The functional map clarifies the structure of District administrative offices and their relationship to the colleges, aligns District administrative functions with Accreditation Standards, and specifies outcome measures appropriate to each function identified. (IV.D.1)

The chancellor directs the ESC staff to ensure the delivery of effective and adequate District services to support the mission of each college. In addition to outlining the operational responsibilities and functions of the District Office, the 2013 *District Governance and Functions Handbook* details the District wide governance processes. The chancellor ensures effective and adequate District services in support of the colleges by requiring the ESC divisions to conduct an annual program review. As documented in the ESC Unit Program Review Guide, the ESC divisions monitor Service Area Outcomes (SAOs) with clear links to District-level goals and consider their main contributions to the mission of the colleges, goals, effectiveness, and/or student achievement or learning. In addition, an Educational Services Center User Survey was created to solicit college user feedback in support of the program review process. Common questions were developed for all units, with individual units having the ability to customize supplemental questions specific to their college users. Over 21 user groups, including District managers, deans, directors, vice presidents, and presidents participate in the survey. A review of the ESC program reviews reveal that all ESC divisions have completed at least one cycle of program review. Data from the ESC User Survey was disaggregated and used to identify strengths and weaknesses, receive feedback on the effectiveness of their services, and gather suggestions for improvement. Divisions with identified areas for improvement create plans to improve their services and strengthen

their support of the colleges in achieving their missions. The Board received a presentation on the status of the ESC Program Review process in Spring 2015. As documented by the *District Governance and Functions Handbook*, the District Budget Committee (DBC) provides leadership on District-level budget policies. Membership includes all nine college presidents, District Academic Senate (DAS) representatives, and collective bargaining unit representatives. Its charge is to: (1) formulate recommendations to the chancellor for budget planning policies consistent with the District Strategic Plan; (2) review the District budget and make recommendations to the chancellor, and (3) review quarterly District financial conditions. (IV.D.2)

In 2011, the District undertook a full review of its budget allocation formula and policies, including base allocations, use of ending balances, assessments for District operations, growth targets, and college deficit repayment. DBC Minutes show that a review of other multi-college District budget models and policies was also conducted. This review led the District to adopt a model that established minimum-based funding. The Board of Trustees approved Phase I of the new allocation model in June 2012. This phase focused on the annual allocation of resources. During Spring 2013, the District worked on Phase II, which covered the review of college carryover funds, reserve balances, college growth formula and college debts, and operating deficits. DBC minutes from September 18, 2013, show that these changes were all reviewed and discussed at the DBC and approved by the Board of Trustees at their October 9, 2013.

The allocation model begins with an annual base allocation to fully fund minimum administrative staffing for each college. In particular, the base allocation includes funding for the following positions: the president, vice presidents, an institutional research dean, a facilities manager, and a number of deans (based on size of the college). In addition, the base allocation includes Maintenance and Operations costs based on an average cost per-gross-square-footage (currently \$8.49/square foot). After allocating the minimum base allocation, all remaining revenue (with a few exceptions, such as international student revenues) is distributed based on the each college's proportion of the funded FTES for the District. In the event that a college suffered a reduction in funding due to the new model, provisions for transition funding are included in the model. The model also provides charges for Central Accounts, Educational Services Center functions, and appropriate reserve levels at both the District and the colleges. The colleges can retain up to five percent of their year-end balances of the prior year Unrestricted General Fund budget, excluding the prior years' carryover funds. The model also includes provisions regarding how colleges with prior-year over-expenditures can pay off the debt. The model was included in the 2014-15 Final Budget of the District as Appendix F, and implementation of the model can be tracked in the 2015-16 Final Budget. As of the end of the 2014-15 year, there were five colleges with a total debt of \$19.2 million owed back to the District for prior-year over-expenditures. The colleges continue to express concerns regarding the handling of outstanding debt. (IV.D.2-3)

The District provides comprehensive budget and financial oversight, including an annual finance and budget report (CCFS-311), a final budget, an annual financial audit, a bond financial audit report, a performance audit of bond construction programs, year-end balance and open-order reports, full-time Faculty Obligation Number (FON) reports and targets,

enrollment projections, and year-to-year comparisons with enrollment targets. The District has established effective policies and mechanisms to control expenditures. The District website has detailed monthly expenditure reports for the District and the colleges to assist with tracking, monitoring, and maintaining budgets, financial commitments, and expenditures. The colleges and District financial reports are reviewed by staff and are submitted to the Board of Trustees. Evidence in the self-evaluation illustrates that college presidents have full responsibility and authority to conduct their work without interference from the chancellor. College presidents have full authority in the selection and evaluation of their staff and management team. (IV.D.3)

The framework for CEO accountability is established through annual goal-setting between the chancellor and each college president. College presidents then complete a yearly self-evaluation based on their established goals. At least every three years (or sooner if requested), presidents undergo a comprehensive evaluation, which includes an evaluation committee, peer input, and, if necessary, reassignment or dismissal. Evaluations are reviewed with the Board of Trustees in closed session. College presidents are also given full authority over their budgets and in allocating resources at their campuses. In October 2013, the Board adopted fiscal accountability measures which explicitly hold college presidents responsible to the chancellor for their budgets, ensuring that they maintain “a balanced budget, as well as the efficient and effective utilization of financial resources.” (IV.D.4)

The LACCD Strategic Plan Vision 2017 (DSP) was created collaboratively among key constituent groups, with interviews confirming that faculty members, classified staff members, and administrators had ample opportunity for input. While written after the college strategic plans, the DSP generally integrates all of the college strategic plans by establishing a common framework through four overarching goals. The most consistent alignment, however, occurs through the annual Institutional Effectiveness Reports that are reported to the Board of Trustees. Using a standard report template and common metrics and data sources developed collegially by the District Planning and Accreditation Committee (DPAC), the colleges map college goals to the District goals, compare their progress against the District as a whole in their reviews, and provide an analysis of strengths and weaknesses in accomplishing planned objectives. These assessments, in turn, inform the Board of Trustees’ annual goals as well as future college and District planning priorities. Interviews and a review of District Budget Committee (DBC) minutes show the existence of integrated financial planning within the District. Incorporating college and District-level enrollment projections, the colleges and District jointly establish District wide FTES targets for the upcoming academic year in the spring semester. These targets are reviewed by the chancellor, the District Budget Committee, and the Board Budget and Finance Committee prior to final adoption of the budget in August of each year. (IV.D.5)

The District Budget Allocation Model utilizes these FTES projections and additional revenue streams to allocate funds to the colleges as well as to the Educational Services Center (ESC). In March, the colleges and the ESC develop budgets that reflect their planning and institutional priorities. Prior to adoption, college and ESC budgets are reviewed by the Board Budget and Finance Committee to ensure that priorities align with the DSP, Board goals, and the chancellor’s recommendations. The colleges and the District monitor revenue and

expenditure projections throughout the year and have the ability to update financial plans and FTES growth targets. The District chief financial officer, college representatives, and ESC staff members meet on a quarterly basis to review revenue and cost projections and discuss adjustments or actions needed to maintain their alignment. (IV.D.5)

The Technology Planning and Policy Committee (TPPC) coordinates the activities of several District-level, technology-related advisory groups and provides a forum for consultation on all technology-related issues. The TPPC developed the District Technology Plan, which created a framework of goals and a set of actions to guide District wide as well as technology planning. The District Technology Implementation Plan established measures and prioritized deployment of technology solutions in consideration of available resources. In addition, the TPPC serves as a clearinghouse for all policy issues related to District wide technology systems (e.g., updates on the SIS development). (IV.D.5)

District/college integrated planning also occurs during operational planning for District wide initiatives. Examples include joint marketing and recruitment activities, implementation of the Student Success and Support Program, Student Equity Plans, and the new student information system. These initiatives involve extensive District/college collaboration, coordination with centralized District service units, and interaction with various District-level committees. Interviews during the visit confirmed intra-District discussions that impacted integrated planning had occurred during the Council of Academic Affairs, Council of Student Services, the District Academic Senate, Student Information System Development Team, and the District Research Committee. (IV.D.5)

Various mechanisms are used to evaluate the effectiveness of District/college integrated planning. The Biennial District Governance and Decision-Making Survey is used to assess budget development and resource allocation, enrollment management, FTES, and facilities planning as well as the governance process as a whole. With the assistance of the Educational Programs and Institutional Effectiveness (EPIE) division, DPAC has analyzed three years of the survey (2010, 2012, and 2014) to look at trends and develop improvement plans based on the data. District-level planning and policy committees assess their effectiveness through annual committee self-evaluation reviews. In its 2015-16 work plan, DPAC is charged with systematically reviewing these self-evaluations and the Council will be making recommendations for improvement to the committees. Lastly, the ESC Program Review process assesses performance and outcomes through an annual User Survey and information specific to each service unit. A review of DPAC minutes as well as interviews with DPAC co-chairs and the vice chancellor of educational programs and institutional effectiveness provide evidence that the District regularly reviews its processes and provides opportunities for dialogue among key stakeholders. (IV.D.2, IV.D.5, IV.D.7)

A considerable amount of communication occurs between the nine colleges and the District. In total, the District has 46 District wide councils, committees, and consultative bodies in which District and college administrative staff, faculty, classified staff, and students regularly participate. All councils and committees maintain agendas and meeting summaries/minutes on either the District website (public) or on the District intranet. Seven District wide executive administrative councils meet monthly: (1) Chancellor's Cabinet; (2) Council of

Academic Affairs; (3) Council of Student Services; (4) District Administrative Council; (5) Executive Committee of the District Budget Committee (ECDBC); (6) Human Resources Council; and (7) the Sheriff's Oversight Committee. (IV.D.6)

Four District-level governance committees meet monthly: (1) District Planning and Accreditation Committee (DPAC); (2) District Budget Committee (DBC); (3) Joint Labor Management Benefits Committee (JLMBC); and (4) the Technology Planning and Policy Committee (TPPC). Committee members encompass a broad range of college faculty, college researchers, and college deans, with representatives from the unions, college presidents, college vice presidents, and ESC senior administrators. The District Academic Senate (DAS) represents the faculty of the District in all academic and professional matters. In this capacity, the president and Executive Committee regularly inform faculty of District policy discussions and decisions related to educational quality, student achievement, and the effective operation of the District and colleges. (IV.D.6)

In 2011, District Information Technology (IT) undertook a complete redesign of the District website. The updated website, which allows each division/unit in the ESC to manage its own content, launched in fall 2012. The District planned to implement a new intranet site in December 2015 to improve employee access to Educational Services Center divisions, units, and services; however, as of the evaluation visit, the intranet was still in the latter stages of implementation. Information Technology maintains 78 active listservs. These listservs include the District wide consultative bodies, administrative councils, and operational committees as well as subject-specific groups such as articulation officers, curriculum chairs, counselors, and IT managers. Each listserv has a coordinator/owner charged with maintaining an accurate list of members. Interviews during the visit revealed that while subscriptions to the listservs are typically comprised of members to the committees and councils, the subscriptions are open to any interested employee of the District. (IV.D.6)

Results from the Biennial District Governance and Decision-Making Survey and discussions with representatives from key stakeholder groups, however, indicate concerns over effective communication about District decision-making bodies. In all three years of the survey, over half of respondents (58 percent in the most recent survey) said decisions made through participatory governance at the District level are not communicated effectively to all affected stakeholders. Moreover, among the most frequently mentioned concerns about District participatory governance across the three survey administrations has been a "lack of communication or transparency" and "insufficient representation or unbalanced participation from stakeholders." Responding to the results in the survey, the Educational Programs and Institutional Effectiveness (EPIE) division and DPAC members co-presented a workshop at the annual DAS Summit in September 2015. The workshop addressed District wide communication and discussed data from recent governance surveys related to communications. A facilitated discussion followed, with participants brainstorming communication strategies which will be reviewed by DPAC in upcoming meetings. On the other hand, there was no evidence of workshops with members of the classified staff or other stakeholder groups. (IV.D.6)

In 2009, the District Planning and Accreditation Committee (DPAC-formerly called the District Planning Committee or DPC) developed a District Governance and Decision-Making Survey and administered it in 2010. The DPAC implemented a cyclical process for system-level evaluation and improvement. The evaluation cycle has been institutionalized and District processes have been revised in support of institutional effectiveness as indicated in the development of new intranet sites for committee communication (IV.D.7)

With assistance from the EPIE division, DPAC established an annual self-evaluation process for all District governance committees. These common self-assessments document the accomplishments, challenges, and areas for improvement for the committees during the prior year. Results of the assessment are reviewed by each respective committee and serve as the basis for changes and improvements to committee function. Minutes confirm that DPAC reaffirmed their responsibility to ensure self-evaluations are conducted by District governance committees, results are posted online, and that they are used to improve committee effectiveness. (IV.D.7)

Role delineations are evaluated during the regular review of functional area maps. Revisions are made based on input from governance committee members, governance surveys, ESC administrative units, the Chancellor's Cabinet, and college stakeholders. Functional area maps were expanded and revised in 2015 and are currently under review prior to finalization. (IV.D.1, IV.D.2, IV.D.7)

The *District Governance and Functions Handbook* is regularly reviewed and updated by District stakeholders under the coordination of the DPAC. A section of the handbook describes all District wide councils, committees, and consultative bodies. These entities were first formalized in 1994 by Chancellor's Directive (CD) 70: District wide Internal Management Consultation Process. Updates to CD 70, and its related committee/council structure, committee/council charge, membership, meeting schedule, leadership and reporting structure are currently in process as shown in DPAC minutes of November 20, 2015. (IV.D.7)

## **Conclusions – District**

The District meets the requirements outlined in the Standards for multi-college districts.

The chancellor clearly and appropriately delegates authority and responsibility to the college presidents and communicates expectations for educational excellence and integrity to the District community. The District has made consistent progress in detailing areas of responsibilities, creating administrative and governance decision-making processes, and evaluating these functions and processes regularly for continuous quality improvement. Clear evaluation processes for the services provided by the ESC have been established and institutionalized. In recent years, the District, in collaboration with the colleges, has created a completely new resource allocation model in order to adjust the differential impact of fixed operating costs on the colleges based on size. In addition to the Budget Allocation policy, the District also adopted new District financial accountability policies to help control

expenditures and maintain fiscal stability. Both policies include provisions that identify processes for regularly evaluating the budget allocation model.

While college planning drives the overall planning in the District in a decentralized model, the District has provided frameworks and decision-making processes that maintain alignment across the District. In particular, the annual Institutional Effectiveness Reports given to the Board of Trustees' Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Committee provide excellent examples of integrated planning in the District. The District has been especially diligent in providing formalized mechanisms for evaluating its decision-making processes and services using data and collegial feedback for continuous quality improvement. In the future, evaluations of the decision-making process should include analyses on the effects of decentralization on institutional excellence.

Given the complexity and size of the institution, as well as the decentralized nature of the decision-making process, the efforts of the District and colleges to collaborate and work collegially to support student learning and achievement are noticeable and commendable; however, unique challenges for effective and widespread communication about District wide decisions remain. The District should continue to address these communication gaps, particularly among classified professionals.

The team commends the District for its commitment to continuous quality improvement by building evaluation loops for all its services, decision-making processes, and institutional performance.

### **District Recommendations for Improvement and Compliance**

**District Recommendation 12 (Improvement):** In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the District expand efforts to communicate decisions made in the institutional governance process to all stakeholders. (IV.D.6.)



## **Quality Focus Essay**

Pierce College identified three action projects in need of change for improvement. The action projects included – Outcomes Assessment, Professional Development and College Information Technology Improvements.

The three areas included a comprehensive background, analysis and a timeline that included all of the steps to be implemented for each project. In addition, resources and lines of responsibility were delineated in order to implement, sustain and assess each action project.

The team reviewed each action project and determined that the strategies and plans warranted the time for implementation and assessment for improving in the areas Pierce College identified. The team also provided recommendations for improvements and compliance for the standards representative of these three action projects. The recommendations included College Recommendation 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and College Recommendation 9.