

EVALUATION REPORT

**West Los Angeles College
9000 Overland Avenue
Culver City, California 90230**

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

**This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited West Los Angeles
College on March 12 – 13, 2012**

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Introduction

An eleven member accreditation team visited West Los Angeles College, March 12 – 15, 2012. Simultaneously separate accreditation teams visited two other district colleges (Harbor & Southwest) out of a total of nine colleges in the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD). The LACCD is perhaps the largest district in the United States serving 36 cities over an area encompassing 822 square miles and providing service to approximately 140,000 students a semester. The nine colleges in the district employ approximately 5,000 full-time and part-time faculty and nearly 7,000 full-time and part-time administrative and support staff.

West Los Angeles College is commonly referred to simply as “West” and it is located on 70 hillside acres with a commanding view of the Westside of the Los Angeles metropolitan area. From its founding in 1969 it reached a peak enrollment of 11,640 students in fall, 1980 followed by enrollment declines to as low as 6400 in 1985; and fluctuating enrollments thereafter. Beginning in 2007, five continuous years of enrollment growth have brought West back to very near its 1980 peak enrollment. West’s enrollment fluctuations follow the trends in the LACCD enrollment patterns very closely. West is one of the smaller colleges in the district with approximately 100 faculty members (teaching & non-teaching) as well as 150 staff.

West currently serves approximately 11,500 students with approximately 50% of the students under the age of twenty-five. The student body is ethnically diverse with the largest segments of the population being African-American students at 41% and Hispanic/Latino at 34% of the total. Female student are predominant on the campus at 61 per cent. Fourteen per cent of the students speak a language other than English as the primary language at home. Only 21% of the students take a full time load of classes, and significantly 21% of the students take on-line classes from West. Finally, West faces a significant challenge in the STEM disciplines with almost 98% of its students placing at pre-college levels in mathematics and almost 52% of the total incoming student body placing at the math basic skills level in a study of placements between 2005-2010. During the same time period slightly less than one out of four students at West placed in college-level English courses. The college has recently been accepted into the *Achieving the Dream* program, and this will no doubt be of great assistance in dealing with the aforementioned challenges faced by incoming students.

West offers 45 Associate degree programs; 26 Certificate of Achievement programs; and 30 Skill Certificate programs. Approximately 25% of the students identify as vocational students and 44% designate transfer as their objective. Significant growth in the distance education program with an emphasis upon on-line and hybrid course offerings has provided convenience for students at West. In 2008 the college received approval from the Commission for its Substantive Change request to offer 11 Certificates and 15 Associate Degrees, via distance delivery for 50% or more of the programs in question. A second substantive change request

dated October 22, 2011 was approved by the Commission on November 22, 2011 for an additional eight associate degrees, 13 certificates of achievement and six skills certificates.

The eleven-member evaluation team, including a team assistant, conducted a comprehensive evaluation to review evidence that West Los Angeles College meets the accreditation standards of ACCJC during its visit to the college from Monday, March 12 to Thursday March 15, 2012. The team reviewed past evaluation reports including the evaluation team report for the last comprehensive visit in 2006; a Progress Report accompanied by a Visiting Team Report in 2007; another Progress Report without a visit in 2008; a Substantive Change Request that was approved in 2008; a Focused mid-term Report accepted by the Commission in 2009 with the requirement of a Follow-up Report due in 2010; the Follow-up Report accepted by the Commission in 2010 with one explicit Commission Reminder and one explicit Commission Concern indicated. The two issues were as follows:

Commission Reminder:

The Commission expects that institutions meet standards that require the identification and assessment data to plan and implement improvements to educational quality, by fall 2012. The Commission reminds West Los Angeles College that it must be prepared to demonstrate that it meets these standards by fall 2012 (Standards I.B.1, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, and II.C.2)

Commission Concern:

In assessing compliance with Standard III.D Financial Resources, the Commission has a concern about whether the Los Angeles Community College District's financial resources are sufficient to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness. The distribution of resources supports the development, maintenance, and enhancement of programs and services. Provisions of Standard III.D requiring a level of financial resources that provide a reasonable expectation of both short-term and long-term financial solvency necessitates that the district and the college begin to act in a way that will create and implement funding plans to ensure that adequate cash or liquid resources will be available to pay for OPEB liabilities at the time those costs become due.

The Commission notes that colleges and districts not making the minimum payment or Annual Required Contribution (ARC) are now accumulating unfunded liabilities that will require cash to be paid out when benefits are paid to retired employees. The consequence of not funding an amount that is at least equal to the ARC is that an unfunded liability will be recorded on the financial statements of the district and the colleges and the ending fund balance or reserves will decline.

Eventually, unless this liability is funded the district and the colleges' financial condition will deteriorate to a level that will make it difficult for colleges to meet the requirements of Standard III.D.

The Commission requests that the College provide information about how the ARC is being handled and how funds in an amount at least equal to the ARC are being paid into an irrevocable trust fund in order to pay for liabilities as they become due (ER 17 and Standard III.D.1.b and c). This information should be provided in the Self study Report due spring 2012.

Both the foregoing reminder and the concern expressed explicitly by the Commission are important factors to understand some of the subsequent formal recommendations that have been made by this evaluation team.

The team found the Self Study Report to be acceptable as a whole although several members commented about the tendency of the document to lack in-depth corroboration for assertions. The perception of the West campus may be that it has provided a data rich report given the nearly 25 pages of data in the Introduction, but this does not substitute for the paucity of data in particular with respect to the coverage of learning outcomes assessment at the course level. Additionally the campus would have made a better first impression if a more careful proofreading of the Self Study Report had taken place. For example two of the tables cut off on p. 34, and type-overs of data on p. 17, as well as an incomplete statement on page 23.

West has gone through a period of considerable transition in leadership since the last comprehensive visit in 2006. It is now working with its fifth President since that date (two interims 2005-2006 & 2010-2011; one acting in summer 2010 and two presidents August 2006-June 2010 & August 2011 to the present). Despite these multiple transitions in leadership a spirit of having turned a corner for the better prevails at West among faculty, staff and students. Another type of transition is occurring simultaneously, and this involves the transition from the 40 year old "temporary" structures to the new classroom and student services buildings as well as a new parking structure. Additional facilities are planned, and the campus community takes pride in this transition which also contributes to their confidence in having turned a corner for the better. The good spirits on campus carried over to the welcome and cooperation received by the visiting team during the entire visit. All members of the team shared laudatory comments about the atmosphere on campus and the prospects for the future at West.

Based on a careful reading of the self-study, accompanying documents, and interviews with district personnel, members of the Board of Trustees, college personnel and students, the visiting team submits the following commendations and recommendations related to the four standards.

Commendations

District Commendation 1:

The district office is commended for revising district service outcomes, district wide committee descriptions, and the district wide functional map to create a user-friendly and clear delineation of college and district functions. The process of survey, dialog, and district-wide review demonstrates a commitment to providing an informed understanding of the district's role in governance and service.

District Commendation 2:

The district is commended for its commitment to planning driven by data and service to the colleges.

WLAC Commendation 1:

Student services is to be commended for the pervasive commitment to developing alternative modes of delivery and incorporating appropriate technologies for serving students at a distance and in an effort to develop efficiencies in providing services with shrinking resources.

WLAC Commendation 2:

West should be commended for the institutional efforts to address equity gaps in student achievement through such programs as *Umoja*, *Puente*, and participation in *Achieving the Dream*.

WLAC Commendation 3:

Student Services should be commended for the focus on developing community partnerships to address gaps in service or specialized services that cannot be provided by college staff and faculty, such as mental health services provided by USC interns; assessments for Child Development Center children with special needs provided by the pediatrics department at St. John's Hospital, and working with U.S. Vets to provide mental health services and support specific to the needs of Veteran students.

WLAC Commendation 4:

West Los Angeles College is to be commended for an established governance structure that embraces open, candid dialogue and encourages involvement from all constituent groups in the planning and decision making process.

WLAC Commendation 5:

The team commends the college for expanding its online learning program in a thoughtful and effective way that combines technological and pedagogical innovations while maintaining high instructional training standards, collegial oversight, and a strong commitment to student learning. Both the growth and the quality of the online program are impressive.

WLAC Commendation 6:

The team commends the college for the attractiveness of the college's campus and its emphasis upon sustainable facilities that provide state of the art classrooms and address ever increasing non-instructional operating costs. The commitment to a clean, welcoming campus is a positive reflection of the culture of the college. (Standards III.B.1, III.B.2)

WLAC Commendation 7:

The team commends the college for pursuing and obtaining external funding from various sources including state capital funds, Title V grant, and Predominately Black Institution funding.

WLAC Commendation 8:

The team commends the college for its CTE programs that strongly emphasize the outcomes of employability, licensure and placement of their students.

Major Recommendations

WLAC Recommendation 1: Measurable Goal Setting (2012)

In order to fully meet the Standard, the college must specify its goals on all its master plans and its annual plans in measureable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be assessed, discussed, and applied to decisions regarding improvement of institutional effectiveness (Standard IB.2, IB.3, IB.4, IV.A.).

WLAC Recommendation 2: Systematic Evaluation and Planning (2012)

In order to increase effectiveness and improve its compliance with the Standard, the college should develop and implement a formal, organized process that is regularly evaluated for assuring quality of data and assessment definitions, interpretation, and application that builds upon the established governance and planning system. This will further college efforts to develop a process where decisions are based on a culture of evidence that results in cohesive planning, evaluation, improvement, and re-evaluation (Standard I.B.3, IV.A.1.).

WLAC Recommendation 3 – Student Learning Outcomes (2012)

As noted by the 2006 team and in order to fully meet the Standards and facilitate the college's achievement of commission expectations of proficiency by AY 2012-13, the team recommends that the college identify student learning outcomes that are related to course objectives for all courses; evaluate all courses and programs through an on-going systematic review of the relevance, appropriateness, and achievement of student learning outcomes, currency, and future needs and plans; and conduct authentic assessment of student achievement at the course, program, and institutional levels in order to improve student learning.(Standard II.A.1.c, 2.a, 2.e, 2.f, 2.h, 2.i; II.B.4; II.C.2., IV.A.2.b.)

WLAC Recommendation 4– Student Learning and Service Level Outcomes (2012)

In order to fully meet the Standards, the team recommends that the college review and revise as necessary its developed student learning and service level outcomes to assure that they are measured in both quantitative and qualitative terms. These measures should be adequate for evaluating whether services are meeting identified student needs so that results can be used to improve the delivery of support services. (Standards IB.3, IIB.4, IV.A.2.b., IV.B.4.).

WLAC Recommendation 5 – College Catalog Currency (2012)

In order to fully meet the Standard, the college should include both an academic freedom statement, as well as a statement on the acceptance of transfer credit in its next catalog. (Standard II.B.2.a. & c.)

WLAC Recommendation 6 – Library Collection Development and Security (2012)

In order to address recommendations made by two previous visiting teams and to meet Standards, the college should develop a consistent, sustainable and sufficient funding stream to develop quantity, quality, depth, and currency in Library resources and services. Moreover, the

college should take necessary steps to evaluate and correct security measures to protect the Library collection. (Standard II.C.1, II.C.1.c., IV.A.2.b.)

WLAC Recommendation 7 – Financial Resources (2012)

In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the college integrate planning, evaluation, and resource allocation decision making in order to systematically assess the effective use of its financial resources and use the results of the evaluation as the basis for institutional improvement and effectiveness in a manner that assures financial stability for the institution. (Standard III. D. 1. and III.D.3.)

District Recommendation 1:

In order to meet the Standards and Eligibility Requirements, the Teams recommend that the district actively and regularly review the effectiveness of the construction bond oversight structure and the progress in the planned lifting of the moratorium to ensure the financial integrity of the bond programs, and the educational quality of its institutions as affected by the delays of the planned facilities projects. (*III.B.1.a.; IIID.2.a; IVB.1.c; Eligibility Requirements 17 and 18*)

District Recommendation 2:

In order to ensure the financial integrity of the district and the colleges, and to meet the Standards and Eligibility Requirements, the Teams recommend the resolution of the material weakness and significant deficiencies cited in the 2010 financial audit be fully effected by the completion of next year's audit, and appropriate systems be implemented and maintained to prevent future audit exceptions. (*IIID.2.a; IVB.1.c, Eligibility Requirements 17 and 18*)

District Recommendation 3:

In order to meet the Standards and Eligibility Requirements, the Teams recommend the district adhere to the ARC guidelines and closely monitor the planned process. (*IIID.1.c; IVB.1.c, Eligibility Requirements 17 and 18*)

District Recommendation 4:

To fully respond to the recommendation first tendered by the Comprehensive Evaluation Team in 2006, and to reflect a realistic assessment of financial resources, financial stability, and the effectiveness of short- and long-term financial planning for the district and the colleges, and in order to meet the Standards and Eligibility Requirements, the Teams recommend that the district adopt and fully implement as soon as is practicable an allocation model for its constituent colleges that addresses the size, economies of scale, and the stated mission of the individual colleges. (*IIID.1.b, IIID.1.c, IIID.2.c, IVB.3.c; Eligibility Requirements 17 and 18*)

District Recommendation 5:

To meet the Standard, the Teams recommend that the Board of Trustees make visible, in behavior and in decision-making, their policy role and their responsibility to act as a whole in the public's interest. Further, the Teams recommend continuing professional development for the Board of Trustees to ensure a fuller understanding of its role in policy governance and the importance of using official channels of communication through the chancellor or his designee. (*IVB.1.a*)

Institutional Responses to Previous Recommendations

Evaluation of Institutional Responses to Commission's 2010 and Accreditation Team 2006's Recommendations

Recommendations from 2006 Accreditation Report

Recommendation #1 (2006) *The college should create a campus climate that embraces open, candid dialogue that embraces a culture of respect, civility and trust to improve institutional decision making, planning, and effectiveness. (Standard I.B.1; Standard III. A.1.d. III. A.4, III, A.4.c; and Standard IV.A.2, IV.A.2 a, IV.A. 3, IV. A.5)*

The team has determined that the college has met Recommendation #1 (2006). The College Council drawing upon its several constituent committees has led the way in establishing the new atmosphere of respect, civility and trust. In particular the device of shared chairing responsibilities by pairing an administrator with a faculty member co-chair has effectively bridged the gulf that formerly may have bedeviled the campus climate. Faculty leadership has

been realistic in admitting that faculty member participation rates in campus governance needs to continue to improve. However this continuing challenge does not reflect poorly upon an atmosphere of trust and hopeful expectation that is apparent among faculty and staff under its new leadership.

Recommendation 2 (2006) *The college should identify student learning outcomes at the course and program levels, and refine them at the institutional level, while adhering to the defined timeline and monitoring timely development within each department. These student learning outcomes should be systematically assessed and the results used for the improvement of student learning and institutional effectiveness. (Standard I.B.1, A.B.4, .B.7, Standard II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.d.b, II.A.d.e, II.A.2.f, II.A.2.g, II.A.2.h, II.A.2.i, II.A.3,II.A.6,II.A.6.a, II.B.1, II.B1.4, II.C.1.a, II.C.2; Standard III.A.1.b. III.A.1.c; Standard IV.A.1, IV.A.2.b, IV.B.1.b*

The team has determined that the college has not met Recommendation #2 (2006). Learning outcomes expressed in course syllabi were generally PLOs. Interviews generally confirmed that faculty map their courses to selected PLOs and in some instances, departments did use evaluation tools such as exams or essays to assess them. There was some discussion that course level SLOs may be developed if PLOs did not meet the needs of the department for individual courses. Currently, each program has completed one cycle of assessment as defined by the institution. This cycle of assessment is characterized by matching or linking a course to one or more PLOs and then in some cases, using an existing assessment tool, against a rubric, to assess programs.

Recommendation 3 (2006) - *The college should implement a viable plan to operate in a fiscally responsible fashion that aligns its programs and services with its revenue allocation to achieve sustainable fiscal stability. (Standard III.B)*

The Standard has been partially met in regard to financial resources except for requirements associated with planning and resource allocation, and assessment of resources allocated to determine whether resources achieved desired or anticipated outcomes. However the college faculty and staff engage in dialogue regarding annual budget development through its program review process and prioritization of these requests in spite of the ever decreasing state funding to the District in the form of imposed workload reductions, which has resulted in decreasing budget allocations to the college. West has taken steps to constrain costs wherever possible and adopted strict prioritization steps. However, the team could find no evidence of integrated evaluation processes tying resource allocation to planning to determine how well resource decisions influence subsequent allocation decisions as the basis for institutional improvement.

Note: The team has also recognized that Recommendation #3 (2006) was incorrectly identified as Standard III.B. Physical Resources rather than being identified as Standard III.D. Resources.

Recommendation 4 (2006) - *The district should evaluate the impact of the revenue allocation model and consider the special conditions of individual colleges. (Standard III.D, Standard IV.B)*

The team has determined that the college has not met Recommendation #4 (2006). Accordingly the following recommendation has been proffered:

District Recommendation 4:

To fully respond to the recommendation first tendered by the Comprehensive Evaluation Team in 2006, and to reflect a realistic assessment of financial resources, financial stability, and the effectiveness of short- and long-term financial planning for the district and the colleges, and in order to meet the Standards and Eligibility Requirements, the Teams recommend that the district adopt and fully implement as soon as is practicable an allocation model for its constituent colleges that addresses the size, economies of scale, and the stated mission of the individual colleges. (*IIID.1.b, IIID.1.c, IIID.2.c, IVB.3.c; Eligibility Requirements 17 and 18*)

Recommendation 5 (2006) - *The college should develop a sustainable reiterated cycle of integrated planning, resource allocation, plan implementation and evaluation by strengthening its information collection and dissemination for program review, and concentrating on implementation of the master plan and its ambitious planning agenda. (Standard I.A.4, 1.B)*

The team has determined that the college has partially met Recommendation #5 (2006). The college developed and implemented its first cycle of integrated planning, resource allocation, plan implementation and evaluation in 2011. Progress has been made in improving its information collection and dissemination, and implementation of several of the college's master plans have been assessed, reported, and discussed. Resulting actions include updates to the Educational Master Plan and the Student Services Plan. Given only one cycle of the newly integrated planning and allocation process has been completed, it has not been determined whether institutional effectiveness has improved. It is important to note that the college's efforts to address previous recommendations resulted in advancing an emerging culture of evidence, and in the identification of more explicit procedural linkages between program review, planning, and budget augmentation requests—hence, despite not knowing its impacts on institutional effectiveness overall, the college's operational approach to planning has indeed improved. Follow through to sustain the foregoing process will be crucial to the college's continued satisfaction of Commission expectations with respect to planning/resource allocation.

Recommendation 6 (2006) - *The college should periodically review its staffing priorities, hours of operations, and counseling priorities to ensure that what is delivered is consistent with program review, of acceptable quality, and aligns with the mission and values of the college. (Standard II.B.1)*

The team has determined that the college has partially met Recommendation #6 (2006). The college has been responsive to student concerns based upon point of contact surveys that were conducted in 2008. Changes that have been implemented include increased staffing; expanding available service hours; setting of counseling success priorities; development of goals for a Student Services Plan. Moreover, the Student Services faculty/staff evince a commitment to identifying interventions to address equity gaps in student achievement, as well as a sincere desire to meet student needs. Although a 2009 survey provided positive support for student satisfaction with the quality of counseling services, interviews with faculty suggested that there is insufficient counseling and advising access to meet student needs.

Recommendation 7 (2006) - *The college should address the inadequacy of its Library collections. (Standard II.C.1)*

The team has determined that the college has partially met Recommendation #7 (2006), and it is including a more explicit recommendation in 2012 as follows:

WLAC Recommendation 6 – Library Collection Development and Security (2012)

In order to meet the 2006 recommendation and to meet the Standards, the college should develop a consistent, sustainable and sufficient funding stream to develop quantity, quality, depth, and currency in Library resources and services. Moreover, the college should take necessary steps to evaluate and correct security measures to protect the Library collection. (Standard II.C.1, II.C.1.c)

Recommendation 8 (2006) - *The college should assess its staffing needs and organizational structure and implement a plan that effectively allocates its human resources. (Standard III.A.1, III.A.2, III.A.6)*

The team has determined that the college has met Recommendation #8 (2006). The annual program review process is employed by the college to provide preliminary identification of classified staff and faculty needs. Classified staff needs are prioritized with reference to an Educational Master Plan implemented in 2007. Starting at the office and departmental level these requests follow the traditional budget process through prioritization decisions by the relevant Vice Presidents and on for ratification by the Budget Committee, the College Council and finally the President. Faculty positions so identified undergo a broadly representative review process before the Faculty Position Identification and Prioritization Committee. The President

receives and implements these faculty hiring priorities within the fiscal limits of the college or will provide written explanations for any decisions that depart from the recommendations.

Recommendation 9 (2006) - *The college should complete and maintain scheduled employee evaluations. (Standard III.A.1.b)*

The team has determined that the college has met Recommendation #9 (2006). The district has facilitated the challenge of guaranteeing timely evaluation of staff by developing an EZ system of periodic reminders to help prompt the completion of annual evaluations for this classification of employees. Likewise the college enforces the annual evaluations of probationary faculty and triennial evaluations of tenured faculty members. The district office's development of an EZ prompting system for the completion of classified employee evaluations has produced noticeable improvements in the record for completed evaluations. With 99% of the evaluations having been completed among classified staff and 94% of the faculty evaluations having been completed in the triennial cycle for faculty this issue is resolved.

Recommendation 10 (2006) - *The college should adopt a fully integrated planning and budgeting process that focuses on promoting student learning, includes a technology plan that provides an equitable distribution of information technology, and includes the total cost of ownership for technology. (Standard III.C.2)*

The team has determined that the college has met Recommendation #10 (2006) as it relates to adopting a technology plan that provides an equitable distribution of information technology, and includes the total cost of ownership for technology. The plan aligns with the college's Educational Master Plan. Its implementation is reviewed annually and updated every three years by the college's Technology Committee, a standing committee of the College Council. West is building a technology infrastructure that can accommodate the rapidly evolving needs of the students, faculty and staff with an ability to accommodate emerging demands and new technologies.

Recommendation 11 (2006) - *The college should assign a high priority to attaining long-term financial stability. (Standard III.D)*

The team has determined that the college has met Recommendation #11 (2006) through its Revenue Enhancement Initiative started in 2009, which has increased alternative sources of funding; the college has generated operating surpluses in the past two years and anticipates similarly ending fiscal year 2011 with an operating surplus in spite of the significant revenue reductions imposed by the state of California on community colleges.

Recommendation 12 (2006) - *The college should develop and execute enrollment management strategies to achieve stable enrollment and growth. (Standard III.D)*

The team has determined that the college has met Recommendation #12 (2006). A college-wide Enrollment Management Committee, co-chaired by the VP of Student Services and a faculty member has addressed this recommendation in a comprehensive manner. The product of its efforts has included an effective enrollment marketing campaign; searchable schedule of class offerings to expeditiously identify closed and cancelled sections; developed detailed reports to facilitate the schedule preparation process; linked class schedule development more directly with budgeting; drawn division level attention to enrollment management as a feature of program review.

Recommendation 13 (2006) - *All college personnel should identify ways to increase participation in governance and develop trust throughout the institution by conducting meaningful, timely dialogue that acknowledges different perspectives and ideas for making informed decisions. (Standard IV.A.1, IV.A.2.a)*

The team has determined that the college has partially met Recommendation #13 (2006). Fortunately, the college has made a transition to new executive leadership and it evinces the signs of a period of stable leadership for the immediate future. Nonetheless wide spread participation continues to elude the college despite encouragement by current leaders and concerted institutional efforts to recruit new participants. The college itself recognizes this continuing challenge by addressing it in one of its own planning agenda items.

Recommendation 14 (2006) - *The functional relationship between the College and District needs to be fully defined through a dialog focused on efficient use of resources and services to students. The implementation of a decentralized relationship needs mutual definition. (Standard IV.B.3.a, c)*

The team has determined that the college has met Recommendation #14 (2006). The District addressed this recommendation by replacing its functional map with a greatly improved version. This effort resulted in the creation of the LACCD District/College Governance and Functions Handbook, providing employees with a more accurate and informed understanding of the District's role in relation to the college. Additionally, the District instituted Customer Satisfaction Surveys for every major service unit in the District Office. Results are used to improve unit performance and further refine District Office operations.

Recommendation 15 (2006) - *The Commission is seeking evidence that the District has developed, implemented, and adhered to a plan which will address the unfunded retiree health benefit liability to assure out-year obligations are met without significant negative impact on the financial health of the institution. (Standard III.D.1.c)*

The District is adhering to its “pay as you go” plan for its OPEB unfunded liabilities; however, this plan and the additional commitment of 1.92% of actual annual salaries provided to fund the Annual Required Contribution (ARC) for the District’s OPEB unfunded liabilities has been determined by the team to be insufficient to assure out-year obligations are met without negative impact on the financial health of the institution. Therefore the team has determined that the District has not fully met Recommendation #15 (2006) and is offering District Recommendation 3 in this report.

Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

Standard I.A. - Mission

General Observations

The college most recently reviewed its mission at the 2009 Leadership Retreat. The revised statement accurately reflects the college’s purposes, character, and student population (I.A.1.). While formal documents exist requiring consideration of the mission in established procedures (such as new program development and prioritization of resource allocations), it is not clear that a formal policy or established procedures were followed to ensure regular review and revision through its governance and decision-making processes (Standard I.A.3). Furthermore, it was not clear from the self-study and initial evidence provided by the college whether or how the mission remains central in institutional planning. Links between goals from master plans, district plans, and the state were described conceptually, but it was difficult to ascertain how progress on goals is assessed and how findings inform institutional improvement and progress on the mission (I.A.4). Evidence cited in the self-study for this standard seemed indirect, incomplete, or not relevant; however, the college was very responsive in making sure the additional evidence requested by the team was provided.

Findings and Evidence

The college reported in the self-study that “participatory governance processes are used regularly to review and update the mission statement” (p. 123). The evidence points to some use of participatory processes for the most recent revision of the mission statement: Evaluations from

the leadership retreat session for “Connecting to the Mission” were very favorable. The Academic Senate and AFT were reported as having discussed the mission statement at meetings although minutes supporting this were not found. Other governance committees did have minutes that recounted discussions of various iterations of the mission—in particular, the Accreditation Steering Committee:

- On 1/28/2010, “West has already taken significant actions, including the review of the college’s mission statement, which the Steering Committee now undertakes and will move forward to completion.”
- On 2/25/2010, “The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. by Fran Leonard, Chair. Dr. Rocha welcomed and thanked the committee for their participation in the Administrative Retreat on January 14, 2010, the Retreat on January 21 of the Joint Council and the editing committee which met on February 10, 2010 for their collaborative efforts in creating the mission statement for West. The committee members gave feedback on the wording of these (mission and vision) statements.”

Additionally, College Council minutes for 4/10/2010 reflect a 12 to 1 approval of the mission statement, with subsequent unanimous approval by the LACCD Board of Trustees on 5/12/2010.

How regularly the mission has been reviewed in the past and the impetus for its most recent revision is not clear. The self-study indicates that “The Leadership Retreats of 2006, 2007 and 2008 found no need to revise the mission statement.” But there is no mention of this in the “Summary Report from the Fall 2007 Leadership Retreat,” nor is mission review described in the documents from the 2008 Leadership Retreat. A report for 2006 could not be found (I.A.3.).

At the Joint Administrative Council and Divisional Council Committee Retreat on 1/21/2010, it was decided that “The College needs to review and revise its current mission statement as part of the accreditation process.” At the Administrative Retreat on 1/14/2010 there was a review of the college mission statement, and it was decided that “the new mission statement should reflect who West is and should match closely with who we are today as opposed to a generic statement that can be applied to any college.” The timeline was set to be approved by the Board of Trustees on May 26, 2010 and the updated mission statement is published in the college catalog (I.A.2.).

Although a model was adopted on 2/5/2010 to indicate mission review is the first step in the college’s annual and comprehensive planning and budgeting cycle, evidence indicates the most recent process was prompted by the previous college president in connection with initiation of the self-study. With the adoption of the new planning and budgeting model, the college has established documentation for and practice of a more formal basis to assure regular review of its mission in the future.

Conclusions

The college has adopted a mission that serves its communities, defines its broad purposes, and is formally adopted. The college has demonstrated commitment to its mission in appropriate ways, including broad communication of the mission statement to the public using a variety of means. Although it is not clear how regularly the mission was reviewed or revised prior to the most recent effort in 2010, a new model has identified and formalized that practice by casting mission review as the first step in the college's annual and comprehensive planning and budgeting cycles. The centrality of the mission in institutional planning and decision making is very clear for some core planning documents, but not in others—in large part due to issues relative to Standard I.B. and, therefore, addressed in the next section.

Recommendations

None.

I.B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

General Observations

The college has directed many efforts to address past recommendations to develop a cycle of integrated planning, allocation, implementation and evaluation, and to strengthen its information collection and dissemination for program review. Procedures have been specified, forms developed, and a workflow designed. Furthermore, the college is the driving force in the district-wide, in-house development of a system for managing all aspects of an institutional effectiveness assessment and reporting system (a/k/a "IES"). While much progress has been made in strengthening collection and dissemination of program review information, the cycle of integrated program review, planning, and budgeting has not been fully implemented in terms of evaluating the impact on institutional effectiveness.

Findings and Evidence

Through its efforts to respond to recommendations from the 2006 visit, the college has created a working and learning environment characterized by ongoing, collegial dialogue focused on addressing its most pressing challenges (*e.g.*, poor campus climate; over-commitment of its bond projects; annual reports to the Commission in response to recommendations from 2006). Improvements to the college's participatory governance system have included formal documentation ("College Participatory Governance and Planning Policy and Procedure Handbook"), which includes a process for evaluation of governance annually. One cycle of evaluation of governance has been conducted, as has a cycle of program review, planning, and

budget augmentation requests. The team found during interviews with college faculty and staff that improvements to the participatory governance and decision-making/planning systems are perceived to have contributed much to reversing the negative campus climate of the past. Results from the most recent campus climate survey further support this notion. (I.B.1)

With regard to institutional effectiveness in planning, college goals are set through (1) the college's master plans, and (2) its annual planning and budget allocation process. Master plans of the college include the four listed below. The goals on these plans are strategic in nature with varying time horizons and inconsistent quality in the measurability and assessment of progress towards or achievement of goals:

- The Educational Master Plan adopted in 2010 spans 3 years from 2011 to 2014. Goals are specified in terms of relevant action and corresponding measures—*e.g.*, the goal statement, “Affirm institutional commitment to student learning,” involves the objective, “Strongly encourage all students to participate in comprehensive orientation and assessment before class registration.” The associated metric for the goal and objective is “# of new, full-time students who participate in orientation & assessment,” and “% of new, full-time students who participate in orientation & assessment.” No definitions could be found of what constitutes progress or achievement of goals, making it difficult to ascertain how the college determines improvements in institutional effectiveness.
- The Student Services Plan is currently being updated and should be completed by April 2012 according to interviews with staff. The last plan spanned from 2007 to 2011; the goals are stated in terms suggestive of measurements, but no measures are specified. For example, “GOAL 1: Decrease the number of applicants who never enroll in the college by streamlining the enrollment process,” includes the objective “Reduce the number of applicants that never enroll at the college.” Strategies are identified, responsibility is delegated, and an attainment date is pinpointed. However, while metrics are implied, no metrics and corresponding performance expectations are defined. Still, the most recent update of the Student Services Plan was preceded by a qualitative assessment of progress on the plan using comprehensive program reviews, which was then used to inform the plan update.
- The Facilities Plan originally adopted in 2005 was updated in 2010. Goals are not stated in measurable terms.
- Technology Plan spans from 2009 to 2016. Goals are not stated in measurable terms.

Assessment of the college's goals as stated in its Educational Master Plan and Student Services Plan have been assessed, and lead to recent updates to both plans. Goals described in the Facilities Plan and Technology Plan are not stated in measurable terms and, hence, it is unclear whether progress toward achieving those goals has been assessed in a way that accommodates improvement of institutional effectiveness. (I.B.2)

Moreover, without clear definitions of goals, it is difficult to ascertain how centrally the mission is considered in master plans for technology and facilities. Despite the conceptual connections explained in the evidence provided for this standard, the specific operational links that assure centrality of the mission in master planning for technology and facilities are not clear. For example, the existing district policy for new program development requires that every new program being proposed must support the mission; and the adopted principles used to prioritize annual plans with resource allocation requests includes as its second principle “focus on core mission.” No such direct connection to the mission was evident in the college’s master plans for technology and facilities. (I.B.3)

The college completed its first cycle of program review-driven planning and resource allocation in 2011: Comprehensive program reviews were conducted in Fall 2010, with updates in Spring 2011, followed by allocations for fiscal year 2012-13. At this writing, the college was preparing for its program review phase for the next cycle of planning and budgeting for fiscal year 2013-14.

The process is broad-based and distributed, with opportunities for input by members of the college community at each phase of development both within divisions and through participatory governance committees: The process starts with unit-level plans developed among program managers or department chairs, faculty, and staff. Plans are then validated by deans in terms of “completeness.” Once validated, plans are submitted to vice presidents for prioritization, followed by Budget Committee and College Council review before recommendations are forwarded to the President. This process was depicted graphically in the evidence provided, and confirmed in interviews with various college workforce members. (I.B.4)

The validation process is used to check the content of the unit-level program reviews, plans, and budget requests in terms of “completeness.” The instructions on the validation form include “continue the review-update cycle until you and the division/program are satisfied with the program review”—clearly, an iterative and collaborative process for editing program review and planning documents. However, it is not clear whether validation is conducted by employing consistent practices for determining the adequacy of document contents. In other words, no formal actions are taken to ensure that the notion of “satisfied with the program review” is interpreted similarly among reviewers—much like instructors would do to ensure norming of rubrics used in outcomes assessment (I.B.5).

While interviews revealed that the practice in one division did consider more than just completeness of the documents, it was also revealed that no consistent practice exists to assure more than just completeness of documents is considered. This may be a plausible reason for the wide variance in the content of program review reflections and assessments found during review of samples while on site. This inconsistent quality in program review information may, in turn, compromise the capacity of the college’s review and planning system to enable sound decisions that lead to improvement of institutional effectiveness. Because no direction is provided to

assure a uniform approach to evaluating the content, and no shared definition of expectations for what constitutes acceptable content of program review and planning documents (read, *outcomes*) has been established, it is also unclear how the college will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of these processes and, in turn, improve them (I.B.6).

Following the inaugural launch of the college's integrated program review, planning, and budget augmentation system, a document entitled "College Participatory Governance and Planning Policy and Procedure Handbook" was published on March 12, 2012 to formally document the new planning system, casting it in the context of participatory governance. The document serves well as a guide for understanding the structure, charge, meeting pattern, and information flow of committees, as well as providing information for how to complete related program review and planning forms.

While the college's annual and comprehensive planning and budgeting process involves the identification of goals in connection with resource requests, it is not clear how and whether progress on those annual goals is assessed. Plans must indicate a priority rank for each goal, the responsibility center, a timeline, and how it is aligned with strategic plans. However, no measures are requested for defining progress and performance on the goal, making evaluation and decisions for improvement difficult.

Furthermore, it is not clear how progress on all of the college's goals as stated on its master plans for facilities and technology can inform decisions about improvement of institutional effectiveness if they cannot all be assessed. Despite the many efforts to refine the college's ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, and resource allocation—including the impressive effort to develop an in-house reporting system—the newly developed process does not address all aspects of this standard (I.B.7.).

Conclusions

The college's documentation of its planning policy and procedure handbook in the context of its participatory governance system demonstrates its conscious effort to enable their capacity to make changes to improve student learning. However, it is not clear what the document contributes to the fostering of the college's emerging culture of evidence. Procedures for participating in governance, planning, and decision-making are specified. Uniformly assuring quality practices campus-wide about what data to use, what they mean, and how they might best be applied to improving institutional effectiveness is not addressed in the handbook—which may explain the difficulty the team had in finding evidence of meaningful dialogue about student learning and improvement of program, services, and operations. Evidence provided showed results of the dialogue in terms of what changes, decisions, or budget requests were made, but documented evidence of actual data-driven dialogue about student learning and improvement was limited.

Given only one cycle of the newly integrated planning and allocation process has been completed, it has not been determined whether institutional effectiveness has improved. It is important to note that the college's efforts to address previous recommendations resulted in advancing an emerging culture of evidence, and in the identification of more explicit procedural linkages between program review, planning, and budget augmentation requests—hence, despite not knowing its impacts on institutional effectiveness overall, the college's operational approach to planning has indeed improved.

Unfortunately, given the college's current planning process involves budget augmentations only, it is not clear whether broad-based input is enabled in the establishment of the base annual allocation—indeed, the process for establishing base allocations is not clear. Also difficult to ascertain is whether the decision-making approach for establishing base allocations meets programs' resource needs. With the district on the verge of adopting a new allocation model across its nine colleges, it may be prudent for this college to consider how the current approach to program review and planning fares in terms of identifying and prioritizing all of its resource needs in a manner consistent with the Standards. This, coupled with the fact that it cannot be determined whether the college's planning process adequately leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness, indicates that the college falls short of meeting this standard.

Recommendations

WLAC Recommendation 1: Measureable Goal Setting

In order to fully meet the Standard, the college must specify its goals on all its master plans and its annual plans in measureable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be assessed, discussed, and applied to decisions regarding improvement of institutional effectiveness (Standard IB.2; IB.3; IB.4, IV.A.).

WLAC Recommendation 2: Systematic Evaluation and Planning

In order to fully meet the Standard, the college should develop and implement a formal, organized process that is regularly evaluated for assuring quality of data and assessment definitions, interpretation, and application that builds upon the established governance and planning system. This will further college efforts to develop a process where decisions are based on a culture of evidence that results in cohesive planning, evaluation, improvement, and re-evaluation (Standard I.B.3; I.B.5; I.B.6., IV.A.1.).

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

Standard II.A. – Instructional Programs

General Observations

The overall quality of the report was fair and the direct links were generally helpful when functioning though they did not always support the self-study making documentation difficult.

West has done a lot of work since the last accreditation self-study to modify its planning processes, more fully integrate information through its committee and council structure, and has begun to use assessment results toward continuous improvement. They have a significant number of programs and services for students designed to address the needs of the college's diverse student body and improve student success. Additionally, it appears to have substantially increased the use of technology across all areas of the institution since the last self-study.

Findings and Evidence

West offers a variety of programs to meet the needs of its diverse student population including transfer programs, Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, pre-collegiate-level courses and General Education courses. Classes are scheduled during the day and evening, full-term and short-term, open-entry, and in formats such as paired, hybrid and fully online. Class offerings include lecture, laboratory, studio, workshop, and computer-based courses. Evidence of these is found throughout the spring 2012 Schedule and the 2011-2014 Educational Master Plan where Objective 5d states: "Identify best practices for implementation by programs in evening, on weekends, and off-campus." Offsite locations include primarily local high schools. Courses are offered at the request of the high schools working with Outreach, the Department Chair and Dean. These courses, listed in the college catalogue, are taught by college faculty outside of regular high school hours of operation. One benefit of offsite offerings noted during interviews was the increase in first time college students from Culver City who had historically attended another local community college. West does not offer courses or programs in locations outside of the United States. Extensive data pertaining to West's diverse student demographics, learning styles, educational experiences and preparedness is well documented and may be seen at the Office of Research and Planning website. As such, data informs the College regarding numerous goals such as "Improve the number of students advancing into transfer and CTE programs by supporting the college's Foundation Skills Program" as seen in the Educational Master Plan, 2011-2014, and the development of the Foundation Skills Plan, spring 2011. (II.A.1.b, A.2.d., A.8.)

West offers CTE programs leading to Associate degrees in 14 majors, 27 Certificates of Achievement and 33 Skill Certificates. Several programs offer stackable certificates and all are sequenced as evidenced on program websites and printed course maps. During an Open Forum, students commented how appreciative they were that specialized programs were designed to coincide with State exams. Those with external accreditation, licensure and certification requirements follow the standards recommended by the appropriate approving, certifying or accrediting agency as discussed with faculty and administrators representing programs affiliated with American Bar Association, Federal Aviation Administration, American Dental Association, and Motion Picture and TV industry unions. Others have articulation agreements so that students may transfer in Child Development to earn their teaching credentials or programming degrees in Computer Science. Grants support many of the programs, and the District is instrumental in garnering significant grant funding as well as Foundation support in the amount of \$70,000 for CTE student scholarships. Finally, Allied Health programs, Child Development, and Paralegal Studies offer continuing education units through fee-based classes. Evidence did corroborate high levels of success on national and state exams for students in four CTE programs. As well, evidence showed that there is ample dialogue both formally at the college, district and regional level and informally on campus. (II.A.5)

A General Education component that includes student learning outcomes (SLOs) is required of all degree programs and is designed to meet Associate Degree, CSU, or Inter-segmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) transfer requirements. LACCD Board Rule 6201.4 addresses this. The six general education area requirements prepare students to gain new knowledge and skills and to develop an appreciation and readiness for lifelong learning. West offers two associate degrees with majors, areas of focused study, or interdisciplinary study that require 60 units, a minimum of 18 of which must be completed in the discipline or related defined courses for the major. To date, three TMCs that focus on streamlining curriculum to improve student transfer and success have been approved in Psychology, Mathematics, and Administration of Justice. Three additional TMCs, English, Physics, and Sociology, are in the development stages. All students must complete all courses for the major area requirements or area of emphasis with a minimum of a grade of C or P, according to LACCD Board Rule 6201 and 6102. CTE faculty reported that they encourage their students to matriculate through both GE and major courses simultaneously rather than completing major requirements before completing GE coursework. The Curriculum Committee has primary responsibility for the evaluation, selection and review of courses that satisfy general education requirements and Title 5, relying on faculty expertise regarding course content and appropriateness of SLOs in recommending these courses to the Academic Senate. Recently, Arabic and Mandarin courses have been added to the curriculum to help launch an international studies program. In speaking with the college community, they indicated the goal of this new program had shifted after a brief time and now they would link these to the TMC degrees that continue to be developed. This represents a modification in the original direction described in the self-study and demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness to student interests and faculty leadership. (II.A.3, 3.a., b., c., A.4.)

Learning communities are developed in several programs in response to Educational Master Plan objectives. Several programs incorporate a cooperative work experience component facilitating student's learning while at work. In the 2011-2014 Educational Master Plan, Objectives 4c and 5a read: "Establish and support learning communities and recruit students during registration," and "Support a variety of learning communities." In addition, students have access to a variety of services designed to support their educational progress, as addressed in the 2011-2014 Educational Master Plan, Objective 1d, 1f, 3b, 4d-f, 5b and 5e. (II.A.1.a, A.1.b, A.2.d)

In spring 2008, the Commission received and accepted West's Substantive Change Proposal to offer 11 Certificates and 15 Associate Degrees with more than 50% of each program being delivered in an online format. Between fall 2005 and fall 2009, West's online program enrollment increased by 285% (as measured by FTES). Currently, more than 240 classes have been approved for online delivery, and enrollments have continued to increase. A second substantive change request dated October 22, 2011 was approved by the Commission on November 22, 2011 for an additional eight associate degrees, 13 certificates of achievement and six skills certificates. As of the site visit, online or hybrid courses were reported to represent approximately 22% of the college's FTES with a focus on the development of online components in all courses. A course management system, now available as a smart phone application, is used in all online classes providing consistency for students. In order to teach online, faculty is required to have training. As well, there is discussion of the online course evaluations process entering into the faculty AFT agreement.

West has a Distance Education (DE) website for students and faculty, including a link to a student personal assessment for determining if online classes are right for them. Staff is available to assist faculty in the DE Center or online, and a faculty mentoring program is in place for support. Interviews substantiated the level of support through the DE Center, including three staff and a student worker who are prepared to help faculty and students at multiple levels. In addition, the Distance Education Committee (DEC) has finalized a draft of a comprehensive Online Instructor Handbook based on a review of best practices. These enhancements begin to address Objective 5c in the 2011-2014 Educational Master Plan that reads: "Support highest quality online and hybrid courses." (II.A.1.b, A.2.d)

There are other examples of educational programs being offered to meet the needs of West's diverse student population. The Accelerated College Transfer (ACT) program offers multiple two-year pathways for students who are able to attend full-time either during the evening or on weekends, to complete IGETC requirements for transfer to UC or CSU and one of five Associate of Arts degrees. The schedule of classes lays out a clear pathway to completion. On-campus interviews confirmed the popularity of this program, particularly for older students; however, data was unavailable as to number of students in the program and student success rates given there is no defined cohort and any student may enroll in a single short-term course. Nevertheless, on the final day of the site visit, the team was given a summary document of ACT Data that identified an average of approximately 1000 unduplicated headcount in the program with 10 out

of 156 graduates in spring 2010 and 86 (100%) graduates in spring 2011. While success rates are low, the document addresses this and states “increased support is required . . . to assist them in achieving their goal.” West’s Institute for Student Excellence (WISE) reaches out to underserved high school students through a number of initiatives supported by Revenue Enhancement Initiatives (REI) and community partnerships. The Police Orientation Preparation Program (POPP) is offered in partnership with the Los Angeles and Beverly Hills Unified School Districts’ law enforcement programs, the Los Angeles and Beverly Hills Police Departments, and the Police Academy Magnet School Foundation. (II.A.1.a, A.1.b, A.2.d)

Westside Extension has expanded CTE offerings to meet the workforce needs of the community as well as offerings in recreational subjects. Evaluations with both quantitative and qualitative measures are distributed to all students. These evaluations, including learning objectives, offer recommendations for improvement; the program and instructor work together to implement improvements for subsequent classes. (II.A.1.a, A.2.d, A.2.e)

In the self-study, West states that all degrees, certificates, programs and courses have SLOs tied to the nine institutional SLOs that are assessed and inform a continuous cycle of renewal. Faculty take responsibility for identifying SLOs and expresses pride that this process is a requirement of all faculty per the bargaining unit contract, indicating they felt this was an important step toward compliance. Upon review of http://www.wlac.edu/slo/program_slos.html, all the programs viewed showed SLOs and most listed the Institutional Outcomes to which they are linked; however, most did not draw a clear link from each SLO in the Program to a specific instructional outcome. The college has identified learning outcomes for every instructional program and for disciplines such as ESL where there is no CCCC approved degree or certificate. Evidence found online and during the site visit supported near-completion of identification of program-level learning outcomes (PLOs), but few are appropriately assessed. Additionally, course-level SLOs are not routinely developed or assessed though it was stated that course level SLOs are not discouraged after PLO assessment if the PLOs do not fit the course. Through the college visit and document review, it appeared that there is not a clear understanding of the SLO course level assessment as it pertains to course objectives and to the improvement of student learning.

The systematic assessment of student learning outcomes in instructional programs is an essential element of Standard II. Evidence shows that West has progressed toward meeting this standard and has invested resources in SLO Training Workshops for faculty, one-on-one training and in small groups, including both full-time and part-time faculty, managers and administrators. As seen in the fall 2011 Professional Development Week schedule of workshops, two workshops were offered on SLOs and SLO Assessments. The College has assigned a faculty member to coordinate SLO assessment, review, and revision at all three levels. A webpage has been developed that includes resources, such as drop-in hours for SLO assistance, workshops on the SLO Assessment Cycle and numerous other workshops, an SLO Podcast created by three faculty members who attended WASC training, and an Assessment Tutorial, complete with YouTube clips made by members of the college community. Multiple charts attempt to describe SLO

Information Flow, Course Assessment and Revision Cycle, SLO Development Process, SLO Impact, ILO Assessment, and Critical Linkage SLOs to Student Learning. Other documents related to SLOs include the Comprehensive Program Review SLO Report, Comprehensive Program Review Implementation and Assessment, Comprehensive Program Review Reflection and Assessment, Comprehensive Program Review Continuous Quality Improvement, and SLO/SAO Changes as a Result of Assessment, each of which appears to document the various stages of the continuous improvement cycle. (II.A.1.c, A.2.a, A.2.e, A.2.f)

Through the Academic Senate, West's faculty has affirmed responsibility for identifying measurable SLOs as seen in the meeting minutes of October 14, 2008. The institution's Educational Master Plan, approved by the Academic Senate, further affirms this institutional commitment. (See Objective 1c) However, a review of sample syllabi did not substantiate the requirement that course credit is awarded based on student achievement of the course's stated learning outcomes. Learning outcomes expressed in course syllabi were generally PLOs. Interviews generally confirmed that faculty map their courses to selected PLOs and in some instances, departments did use evaluation tools such as exams or essays to assess them. There was some discussion that course level SLOs may be developed if PLOs did not meet the needs of the department for individual courses. Evidence does not support the statement that the institution awards degrees and certificates based on achievement of stated course level learning outcomes. (II.A.2.a, A.2.b, A.2.h, A.2.i)

Evidence regarding SLO assessment is inconsistent. A review of http://www.wlac.edu/slo/program_slos.html does not substantiate near-completion of an assessment cycle that will position West at the level of proficiency by AY 2012-13. Currently, each program has completed one cycle of assessment as defined by the institution. This cycle of assessment is characterized by matching or linking a course to one or more PLOs and then in some cases, using an existing assessment tool, against a rubric, to assess programs. Few examples of rubrics were seen. Additionally, there is little evidence that faculty use the results of assessment to improve student learning through the modification of courses and programs. (II.A.1.c, A.2.b, A.2.e, A.2.f)

Faculty at West is central to the development and evaluation of courses and programs, establishing quality and improving instructional programs and courses. Following established procedures, faculty design, revise, and update courses and programs and develop PLOs. The Curriculum Committee, composed of faculty representing each academic division, the Articulation Officer, and Curriculum Dean, approves new and revised courses and programs. This is seen in the *Curriculum Program Development: Forms and Process-Successfully Completing State Program Applications* document. Separate approval processes are in place for hybrid or online course offerings, and every new course must have PLO's submitted for review. An Electronic Curriculum Design system (ECD) was implemented throughout the District in 2008 to facilitate course and program development. Training workshops were held and the ECD webpage provides a series of helpful links for support. Interviews validated that this training did

take place, and faculty and staff feel the ECD is working well though there were obvious glitches at the beginning. Given this is a district wide system, it has facilitated the sharing of curriculum, making communication easier. (II.A.2.a, A.2.b, A.2.c, A.2.e, A.3)

Standard II.A.2.g requires evidence that departmental course and/or program examinations have been validated for their effectiveness in measuring student learning and in minimizing test bias. The mathematics department is cited as an example. Some CTE programs are also cited and validated as using standardized industry certification exams. There is, however, very little evidence provided for programs outside of CTE or for this happening across all programs. In addition, there is little evidence that faculty are using the results of assessment to improve student learning. (II.A.2.g)

Standard II.A.7 asks the institution to make clear any conformity policies. There are no conformity codes of conduct at West; the AFT agreement strongly supports the academic freedom of faculty and guarantees the freedom to learn for students. The college catalog publishes “Our Values” and “Institutional Student Learning Outcomes” that hold faculty and students to the highest standards of ethics, personal and professional integrity, honesty and fairness and promotes critical thinking and analysis. West’s Academic Senate has adopted a Statement on Faculty Professional Standards. (II.A.2.c, A.7.a, A.7.c)

Additionally, students are held to standards of conduct as seen in the 2010-12 Catalog under “Student Conduct” and in the class schedule under “Important Things to Know.” The Academic Senate’s Statement on Faculty Professional Standards requires that instructors include statements on academic honesty in their syllabi. The majority of syllabi reviewed did include this statement; however, some syllabi are not complete, and the Curriculum Committee, working with the Deans and DE Center, has developed a template syllabus with models and explanation of the information that should be included in each section to assist faculty in rectifying this difficulty. The college subscribes to *Turnitin* to help faculty monitor plagiarism. The fall 2009 Student Survey indicates that 89% of students agreed or strongly agreed that policies and penalties for cheating are explained and followed. (II.A.7.b)

Class scheduling and sequencing are primarily data driven and involve input from faculty, deans and administration. Staff support schedule development through their technical expertise. Enrollment trends and student petitions as well as requests from counselors regarding needed sections also inform class scheduling and sequencing. The Enrollment Management Plan is used to guide the college in meeting its enrollment targets; this plan is updated with each cycle of the process in response to the needs of the community and the budget priorities for the year. (Refer to the Enrollment Management Committee, Academic Affairs Enrollment Management Plan, 2010-11) The Office of Research and Planning provides detailed data to support scheduling and the allocation of course sections. This was evident in conversations during which many different college constituencies referred to the research support with praise. The College Profile webpage provides data on student demographics, enrollment trends, access and outcomes, including

accountability data from the College Effectiveness Report, ARCC Report and IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education system) Data. The deans in the Office of Instruction and the division chairs review this information as they schedule the semester one year ahead. Finally, West has developed curriculum maps for certificates, degrees and transfer majors for CSU and UC transfer to assist students in their planning. Both transfer programs and CTE programs have completed this, and CTE programs have them posted on their websites. There is discussion of the institution's dialogue regarding data produced by the Office of Research and Planning and presentations at committees and council meetings college wide. (II.A.2.c)

The policy for transferring credits from other institutions is described on pages 48-49 of the 2010-12 Catalog though there are some comments indicating it is not as complete as it could be. Students are required to provide transcripts if they are requesting transfer credit. Interviews with Admissions and Records staff clarified that student applications for transfer credit are reviewed based on ASSIST, College Catalogues, or College Source descriptions, and courses are certified as meeting West course standards as defined by Board Policy, not by a comparison of SLOs. (II.A.6.a)

In 2003, the LACCD Board of Trustees established a program viability policy that gave each college the responsibility of developing procedures for initiating and conducting a viability review. (Board Rule 6803) In 2005, West's president and Academic Senate president agreed on a college Program Viability Review Process, adopted December 13, 2005. Although the institution has never needed to implement this process, even with enrollments in some programs declining or other events limiting the college's ability to support the program, interviews on campus revealed that some of these discussions may start to take place due to continued budget reductions. The practice has been to reduce scheduling of the classes or to archive the courses with the intent of revising or reinstating the program as circumstances allow. This practice began with the implementation of the Electronic Curriculum Design (ECD) and with a general expectation that the majority of those classes will be deleted. More recent courses listed for Viability Review have not been offered or updated within five years. (II.A.6.b)

A review of the current Catalog, spring 2012 Schedule, and college website shows that West represents itself clearly, accurately and consistently. Official publications selected to review were available in print and on the college's web site. The Catalog is updated and published every two years. A Catalog Addendum is posted in alternate years to reflect policy and curriculum changes. West's Office of Public Relations publishes a weekly online newsletter, *West Week*, with updated information on activities at the college and reminders of key dates. (II.A.6.c)

Examples of evidence of the institution's dialogue may be found in College Council meeting minutes, Curriculum Committee meeting minutes, Academic Senate meeting minutes, Program Review Committee minutes and Program Review Comprehensive Program Review reports. The regular meetings of the academic divisions were confirmed as well as discipline and divisional meetings district wide, where discussions of courses, programs, budget, SLOs and changes or

new developments in respective fields take place. CTE faculty, using the input of advisory councils and industry partners, constantly modify existing courses and design new courses and programs to respond to the changing needs of employers and industry. An example of evidence may be found in the April 2, 2011 minutes of the Computer Science and Application Division Advisory Committee meeting. Furthermore, the Program Review process encourages a broader view of programs and encourages identification of trends and resource needs by planning for the future. The Academic Senate reviews and forwards Program Reviews to the President and Board of Trustees. During the site visit, it was mentioned many times that “we have a lot of meetings;” however, at no time were these described as unnecessary or undesirable. More frequently, they were described as opportunities to come together, solve problems, and reach agreement on important issues to move forward. (II.A.2.a, A.2.b, A.2.e)

In all cases, Accreditation Standards recommend that institutions rely upon data. West uses data from multiple sources to plan its curriculum and course offerings, including student enrollment, retention, success, persistence and progression data as well as economic forecast data and empirical data gathered from industry partners, employers and members of advisory councils. This is easily found throughout the self-study and the college website. The program review process is used to evaluate the educational quality of programs and courses using updated data to prioritize goals across all areas of the campus. Evidence in minutes of meetings confirmed that assessments are discussed within the discipline and reported out in program review. The Planning Committee and the Office of Research and Planning help to integrate this data into college wide program review which allows opportunities for input at the College Council, the Divisional Council and the Academic Senate. All CTE programs conduct, at minimum, annual advisory council meetings to validate program content and ensure that instruction is aligned with the skills that employers require. (II.A.1.a, A.2.b, A.2.e)

Conclusions

The institution is making progress toward meeting this standard. However, as stated before, evidence regarding development of SLOs at the course level and authentic assessment of those SLOs in addition to valid assessment of learning outcomes at the program and institutional level is incomplete. A review of evidence does not substantiate near-completion of an assessment cycle that will position West at the level of proficiency by fall 2012.

There is adequate evidence that campus wide dialogue is occurring to support improvement of educational programs and courses, though there appears to be some confusion regarding the description or characterization of course-level SLOs.

Recommendations

WLAC Recommendation 3 – Student Learning Outcomes

As noted by the 2006 team and in order to fully meet the Standards and facilitate the college's achievement of commission expectations of proficiency by AY 2012-13, the team recommends that the college identify student learning outcomes that are related to course objectives for all courses; evaluate all courses and programs through an on-going systematic review of the relevance, appropriateness, and achievement of student learning outcomes, currency, and future needs and plans; and conduct authentic assessment of student achievement at the course, program, and institutional levels in order to improve student learning.(Standard II.A.1.c, 2.a, 2.e, 2.f, 2.h, 2.i; II.B.4; II.C.2., IV.A.2.b.)

Standard IIB – Student Support Services

General Observations

Although the self-study document suffered from a paucity of evidence to substantiate many of the assertions made relative to this Standard, the team visit and associated interviews provided a clearer picture of the work taking place at West. At the time of the visit, all of student services had very recently moved into a newly constructed student services building. Previously, the services had been distributed across the campus and most often housed in trailer bungalows. Student services faculty and staff clearly reflected a sense of pride and enthusiasm about the new facility. While some of the concerns about planning, student learning outcomes and evaluation in the review of the self-evaluation were substantiated during the visit, the visit and interviews also provided many opportunities for positive observations about the services and programs provided for student support.

In the course of interviews, the staff, faculty and administration were found to be positive, professional, and committed to serving students. Although affected by budget cuts and the associated reductions in staffing, those representing the student services programs spoke positively about their work, the college and their students. Based on interviews, a mutual respect and collegiality was apparent between staff, faculty and administration.

Student Services at the college includes 15 programs. Based on the organization chart provided in the self-study, oversight is provided by the Vice President of Student Services, two Deans of Student Services and an Associate Dean, directors, and faculty leadership positions, such as the Counseling Chair and Matriculation Coordinator. Student Services faculty and staff are represented on college committees and meet within their departments. Coordination between programs is facilitated through the Student Services Council, which is chaired by the Vice President of Student Services and includes leadership from the student services programs.

Student service programs are evaluated relative to the Student Services Plan, a 6-year comprehensive review and annual program reviews, as well as reports submitted to fulfill state and federal mandates. The comprehensive program review and annual reviews are the primary link between student services and college planning and funding. The program reviews include a

section for review and reporting on student learning outcomes and continuous quality improvement. Student learning outcomes are linked to institution level outcomes (IIB.1).

The college is committed to providing services to address student needs. Students are invited to take advantage of a comprehensive range of student support services, many in multiple modes of delivery. Official information, requirements, and major policies affecting students are available in hard copy in the college catalog, the schedule of classes, and online. The web site is both attractive and manageable, with clear and accessible information (IIB.1).

Students report their needs and satisfaction through an annual district-wide survey and through individual “point of contact” surveys administered by individual programs. The programs use the results in the program review process for evaluating and adjusting programs although the quality of the analysis of survey results varies among the programs (Standard IIB.3).

Student Services employs an impressive array of internal and external strategies to connect students to the college. The strategies include access drop-in and scheduled assessment testing; access to counseling and advising face to face, via chat and one on one in a virtual environment; college and career fairs; a comprehensive online career center; Student Educational Plan workshops; financial aid workshops and application assistance; a comprehensive, quality support program for student athletes. Recruitment strategies include campus tours and visits to area high schools. Student life strategies include an active Associated Student Organization and student activities program programs specifically targeted at addressing equity achievements gaps; and community resource partnerships for Veterans, mental health support, and disabled students (IIB.1)

Findings and Evidence

The self-study describes the planning and evaluation cycle for Student Services, indicating an annual program review cycle and two comprehensive cycles since last visit. Only one complete set of program reviews (Fall 2010) was provided in evidence. The self-study also references the 2007-2011 Student Services Plan completed as part of the development of the Educational Master Plan, which is included in evidence. The 2006-2011 Student Services Plan is cited as a guiding document, although its connection to the college mission, strategic goals, and programmatic evaluation process is not clear. The college provided a draft of the updated Student Services Plan, which has elements that mitigate concerns about integration of the document with the institutional planning cycle. Elements of assessment and evaluation are present in these processes, but the college needs to ensure that they are systematic and ongoing and clearly documented.

The college catalog is on a two-year cycle and is available in print and online. The self-study acknowledges two deficiencies in the current catalog including the absence of an academic freedom statement, as well as the absence of a statement on the acceptance of transfer credit. Although the self-study indicates the intention to include these statements in the next catalog, this is not accompanied by a planning agenda. This plan needs to be documented to ensure that it is not overlooked in the next catalog cycle (II.B.2.a, b, c, d.)

West Los Angeles College creates an environment for the development of students' interpersonal skills and awareness of civic responsibilities through coursework and extracurricular activities. Students have opportunities for civic responsibility lessons through leadership opportunities offered through the ASO; clubs; intercollegiate athletic programs; and in various curricula. Civic responsibility is identified as one of the Institutional Learning Outcomes (II.B.3.b).

Counseling services are provided on campus and online through general counseling services as well as in the context of specific programs, such as equal opportunity programs and services, disabled students programs and services, the program for international students and the intercollegiate program. Student access to counseling services has been assisted with the use of technology; however, the 2009 district wide survey results indicated that the majority of students preferred to access counseling face to face. Counseling programs have developed Student Learning Outcomes and Service Level Outcomes; however, evidence was not provided of a completed assessment cycle. The team could not substantiate that a systematic, ongoing process is in place for measuring access and effectiveness of services. Interviews identified programs that include components of advising and other support services that are under Academic Affairs. These services do not seem to be well coordinated nor connected to student services. It is unclear how the advising for these programs fits or is consistent with the general counseling programs and services. The 2009 survey provided positive support for student satisfaction with the quality of counseling services. However, interviews with faculty suggested that there is an insufficient counseling and advising access to meet student needs. (II.B.3.c.)

The college has comprehensive and appropriate services offered through different modes of delivery. The college has worked to address student needs by making additional services available online and by employing technology to increase efficiency and access. Several programs are available to address the diverse needs of their students, through West's TRIO grant, *UMOJA* and *Puente* programs, as well as the initiation of participation in *Achieving the Dream*. The Student Services faculty/staff evince a commitment to identifying interventions to address equity gaps in student achievement, as well as a sincere desire to meet student needs. Although Student Services faculty/staff are aware of the existence of available data, evidence did not demonstrate that data and its evaluation is consistently and systematically used to ensure that equitable and sufficient access is provided to all students. (II.B.3.a)

Student life activities, courses, speakers and events are consistent with the Standard and with the demographics of the campus. Interviews and evidence confirm and substantiate the encouragement of personal and civic responsibility. Students are active participants within the participatory governance process, consistently serve on committees and are well represented through the Associated Students Organization (ASO). (II.B.3.b.)

West recognizes the need to reflect an institutional commitment to the support needs of its student population. The mission specifically mentions, "West fosters a diverse learning community dedicated to student success." Activities and clubs described are appropriate to the requirements of the Standard. The Office of Student Activities and ASO have the "lead" in developing activities designed to increase the appreciation for and understanding of diversity. The college has developed programs directed toward reducing achievement gaps for disadvantaged students. The International Center program provides activities and resources to promote broad-based respect of diverse customs. Interviews confirmed an environment that is sensitive and attentive to the needs of West's diverse student population. (II.B.3.d)

Placement tests are administered to students to assist in class placement in reading, English, mathematics, and English-as-a-second-language. The college uses ACT COMPASS and provides testing in both group and drop-in formats. Evidence was provided of the 2009 validation study, and the college is conducting a cut-score validation which is being coordinated with COMPASS currently. Test bias is evaluated on an ongoing basis and work is being coordinated between the assessment program and the math department to identify strategies to better mitigate this impact, particularly in the area of math. The Matriculation Advisory Committee and Institutional Effectiveness Committee work together in a coordinated review of the assessment process. (II.B.3.e.)

Student records are stored securely, with electronic records backed-up daily. As of spring 2010, all permanent records from 1998 have been imaged. Student records are imaged and stored on the imaging system for safety and security. The District is in the process of moving to a new student information system, which will further improve these processes. (II.B.3.f.).

Student Services has participated in the program review process, as evidenced by the Fall 2010 comprehensive program reviews. An annual review cycle is described that is associated with substantiating requests for additional resources primarily. However not all programs identified as student services programs are included in the program review process.

The most common technique employed for the evaluation of programs within Student Services is the use of surveys, with *Survey Monkey* as the tool, to assess student satisfaction, perceptions, and in some cases, demand for services. Interviews during the team visit adduced some evidence of other sources of data for evaluation; such as *SARS* usage data, data for certain programs and services provided by the state chancellor's office, queuing data, and student demographic data. However, evidence did not support that the use of this information for evaluation is systematic and ongoing. Other qualitative measures are described for some programs, although it is unclear whether Student Services employs a formal or systematic process for evaluating information gathered through interviews and other types of student feedback (program reviews, SLO website). Although a 6-year program review cycle is employed, the data reflected in the program review tends not to be longitudinal. While some of the student services program reviews reference elements of data analysis, clear evidence was not provided that the use of data in planning and evaluation of student needs and access to services is consistent, ongoing, and well integrated into the planning and evaluation process. Evidence and interviews suggests that the college and these programs will benefit from participation in *Achieving the Dream* and the guidance the college will receive as part of this process.

In the self-study and in interviews, strong assertions were made regarding the completion of SLO development and ongoing assessment cycles. As stated in the Self Study Report:

“Since the 2006 accreditation visit, all Student Services programs have developed student learning outcomes (SLOs) or service level outcomes, which are imbedded in the program reviews. In addition to annual updates, each department has completed two comprehensive program review cycles since the last accreditation visit.” (p. 210 WLAC Self study, 2012)

These assertions could not be substantiated by evidence. Student Services was able to provide evidence of student learning and service level outcomes development and assessment in the 2010 comprehensive program review as well as in recent assessments as provided by some programs during the course of the visit. However, evidence did not substantiate that this process is

systematic and ongoing, nor consistent from program to program. Discussion of assessment results is often associated with a point of contact survey or district wide survey as the assessment instrument. In some cases, the connection is not clear between the established SLOs and the questions on the survey; moreover, the methodology and response rate to the survey is not always discussed as it relates to SLO assessment (Point of Contact Surveys, District wide Surveys, SLO website). Improvements or changes described in the 2010 program review as a result of SLO assessment cannot always be connected to the identified SLOs for the program. In the more recently developed service level outcomes and assessments completed by some of the programs, the identified outcome, method of assessment, and findings are more consistent and clearly connected (II.B.1, II.B.3, II.B.4.)

Conclusions

The college partially meets this standard.

The team found evidence of progress on planning, evaluation and student learning and service level outcome development and assessment. Student Services participates in the 6-year program review cycle and to some extent in the annual review cycle. Elements of assessment and evaluation are present in these processes, but the college needs to ensure that they are systematic and ongoing and clearly documented. Student Services needs to continue to build on the progress already made to ensure that:

- Program review processes are ongoing, systematic and used to assess and improve student learning and achievement.
- The results of program review are used to continually refine and improve program practices resulting in appropriate improvements in student achievement and learning.
- Decision-making includes dialogue on the results of assessment and is purposefully directed toward aligning institution-wide practices to support and improve student learning.
- Comprehensive assessment reports exist and are completed and updated on a regular basis employing longitudinal data wherever possible.
- Use of data in planning and evaluation of student needs and access to services is consistent, ongoing and well-integrated into the planning and evaluation process.

WLAC Recommendation 4– Student Learning and Service Level Outcomes

In order to fully meet the Standards, the team recommends that the college review and revise as necessary its developed student learning and service level outcomes to assure that they are measured in both quantitative and qualitative terms. These measures should be adequate for evaluating whether services are meeting identified student needs so that results can be used to improve the delivery of support services. (Standards IB.3, IIB.4, IV.A.2.b., IV.B.4.).

WLAC Recommendation 5 – College Catalog Currency

In order to fully meet the Standard, the college should include both an academic freedom statement, as well as a statement on the acceptance of transfer credit in its next catalog. (Standard II.B.2.a. & c.)

Standard II. C – Library and Learning Support Services

General Observations

The Library staff has created a welcoming environment for students and, through an agreement with *OCLC QuestionPoint*, is able to provide students with access to a reference librarian 24/7. *QuestionPoint* is currently funded through a Title V grant; however, funding for the institutionalization of this service beyond the life of the grant will need to be identified (Interviews).

As noted in the previous two accreditation reports (2000 and 2006), funding for the Library has historically been inconsistent and inadequate. The Library relies heavily on electronic resources, and most of the available acquisitions budget provided through the general fund must be used to pay for West's part of district negotiated database subscriptions. While librarians have mechanisms in place to seek out faculty input on Library resources (i.e. surveys, Curriculum Committee procedures), the chronic lack of funding creates a sense of reluctance on the part of the librarians to actively seek out this input (interviews) (II.C.1.a)

A security system has recently been installed in the Library. This has cut down on the theft of Library resources and has allowed a direct connection between the Library and the Learning Resources Center to be reopened (interviews, observations). However, there are still theft problems resulting from an unusual architectural feature between the second and third floors of the building. Students are able to drop materials over the side of the wall and outside of the Library (II.C.1.d).

The Library staff offers orientations to Library services in a small computer classroom that seats approximately 20 students. The Library has historically offered this service to classroom instructors who schedule customized orientations for their classes. However, the classes typically scheduled for orientations, such as English classes, have 40 or more students, making it impossible to conduct the orientation for the entire class at the same time (interview, observation). With the opening of two new buildings on campus and a variety of student support services moving to new locations, the college may now have an opportunity to identify space that will enable the Library staff to more effectively orient students and prepare them to utilize the valuable resources the Library has to offer. (II.C.1.b)

The Learning Resources Center is a dynamic hub of student activity and a space for students to build academically supportive relationships. Through tutoring and learning courses and workshops, students are provided opportunities to develop the foundational skills that will enable

them to succeed in all of their courses. Two full-time faculty members, one for writing and one for math, have been hired to oversee and develop the Learning Resources Center services. This has added credibility and continuity to the existing services as well as provided a sense of rejuvenation to the center. The newly-hired faculty members have taken on the challenge of building a campus resource that has the potential to be the central component of the campus commitment to student success.

In addition to face-to-face tutoring, the Learning Resources Center offers online tutoring in writing and general education topics, including math. Learning Resources Center tutors work both in the center and online, utilizing laptop computers provided by the college. The *Etudes* platform used for online tutoring is the same platform used for online and hybrid courses, so students have a direct link to the tutoring services. The *Etudes* platform also allows Learning Resources Center faculty to monitor student participation in tutoring as well as tutor hours. The tutoring is asynchronous, and the turn-around time for submissions is 24 hours or less, and for writing tutoring, the bulk of submissions come in on Sunday. The submission pattern for the subject tutoring is less predictable. Tutors are paid through a Title V grant and BSI funds, and there is currently no plan in place for funding beyond the grants. Utilization of the existing *Etudes* platform keeps the cost of the online tutoring program relatively low. In addition, *Etudes* has developed a mobile phone application which will enable students to access the platform from their smart phones (interview, observation)

Findings and Evidence

Findings are based on interviews, observations, examination of the Library and Learning Resources Division program review, 2007 LACCD Student Engagement Survey, 2010 Faculty Evaluation of Library Services, Library Terms of Use document, reference desk logs, Academic Libraries Survey, West's Library Collection Development Statement, *MyQuestionPoint* data, Library and Learning Resource Center grade distribution, Library and Learning Resource Center files and forms, course outlines and syllabi, 2011 Learning Skills & Tutor Program Student Surveys, Library and Learning Resources website.

The Library has holdings of 64,508 books, 15,364 E-Books, 3,156 Microfilms, 2,220 Audiovisual materials, 66 current serial titles, 15 electronic reference sources (2010 Academic Libraries Survey), 120 computer workstations, and a laboratory classroom with 22 student workstations (interview). The Library resource budget for the 2011-2012 academic year is \$48,000, and \$35,000 of that budget is earmarked for West's contribution to the District database subscription. Of the remaining \$13,000, approximately \$5,000 covers newspaper subscriptions, continuation titles, and standing titles, leaving approximately \$8,000 for the Library to attempt to develop its collection. In 2009-2010, the Library received \$90,000 in categorical funds to enhance the book and media collection (Interview). Specific programmatic funding for Library materials in support of programs such as the paralegal program and dental hygiene program is also available. Computer printing fees and copy machine fees make these services self-supporting. Selection of materials to support courses is done by Library faculty, with some input from faculty, administration, staff, and students. The Library faculty follows a Collection

Development Policy that is regularly reviewed by the librarians (last reviewed 2-23-11) (Standard II.C.1).

The chair of the Library is a permanent member of the curriculum committee and must sign off on all new course outlines, signifying that together with the faculty author of the course, the Library collections and periodical databases have been reviewed to determine that “both the content and currency of the collections are appropriate for the topics covered in the course” (self-study). However, there is little evidence that this interaction leads to significant faculty input on Library collections. According to interview data, faculty will typically provide a copy of the textbook for the reference section, but the Library holdings are not examined in depth, and there is little effort to encourage such an examination as there is inadequate funding to address the needs that might arise from such an examination. Interviews document that the lack of funding for collection development is demoralizing for both librarians and faculty members. (II.C.1.a)

Seven Library courses have been identified, but currently only four of the seven are being taught. All of the four are CSU transferable, and three of the four are also UC transferable (course outlines, interviews). (II.C.1.b)

In addition to the 24/7 access to a reference librarian, the Library is open Monday through Thursday from 7:30am to 8:00pm, Fridays 9:00am-1:00pm, and Saturdays 11:00-3:00 (website). The Library is also open additional hours on Friday and Saturday before finals week (interviews). The Library is not open during the summer or on school holidays. Students are able to access online databases 24/7 (website). (II.C.1.c)

The Library is currently using *My QuestionPoint*, a service that provides 24/7 access to a librarian for questions and assistance. In 2011, 338 “session requests” were initiated. The highest usage was in the months of May and November, and during the evening hours, between 8:00 p.m. and 4 a.m., when the Library is closed (*My QuestionPoint* Institution Report). However, the tool does not appear to receive strong reviews. In the 2010 Faculty Evaluation of Library Services, 15 respondents rated “Ease of Use” a 2.25 (Fair) and “Quality of Service/Answer” 2.00 (Fair) out of a 4 point scale. It is not clear from the evidence provided how the results of the survey were analyzed or addressed. (II,C,1,c, II.C.1.e, II.C.2)

West students are active users of the Library services. The spring 2007 LACCD Student Engagement Survey indicates that only 26% of students at West had not used Library services, and 44.8% reported they had used the services multiple times.

The Learning Resources Center and Learning Skills Courses are viewed favorably by students. Female students (75%) are far more likely than male students (25%) to utilize the services (Learning Center Survey), indicating an area of opportunity for Learning Resources Center outreach. (II.C.1.c)

The available Learning Resources Center data primarily consists of satisfaction surveys and grade distributions for the Learning Skills courses, as well as Learning Center use statistics (number of students served and the number of hours logged). Data that indicates the effectiveness of the programs and their impact on student retention and success is a noticeable omission. The campus plan developed during the “Summer Think Tank” identified tutoring

programs as one campus service to build (Goal 2.11.B). As the future campus goals with regard to tutoring are identified, it would be helpful to understand the effectiveness of the current tutoring programs. (II.C.2)

A review of Library and learning skills course outlines reveals SLOs have been added to the Library and Learning Skills course outlines; however, the identified course SLOs are not always clearly measurable, and in some cases course level SLOs have not been identified; instead, program level SLOs have been applied to the courses. Further there is no evidence that systematic assessment tools or rubrics for assessing student work have been developed. There is also little evidence of ongoing dialogue around SLO assessments or development of specific improvement plans. For example, the program review for the Library and Resources Division indicates that the Library courses rely on a culminating project, but it is not clear which SLO is being assessed through the selected student work, nor how faculty will assess the work. Similarly, the SLO work connected with the Learning Skills classes describes how faculty would determine the course grade rather than a specific assessment of an SLO. Interviews indicate there is clearly a desire on the part of the librarians and Learning Skills course instructors to engage in a meaningful process, but the current efforts that focus on individual interpretations of SLO's and SLO data are not part of a systematic use of the SLO data that would indicate proficiency in the analysis and application of SLO assessments for the improvement of courses and instruction. (II.C.2)

Interview data also indicates that the underlying purpose of program review is misunderstood. While the program reviews for the Library and Learning Resources Division were completed, the focus of this activity, as expressed during interviews, appears to center around resource allocation more than establishing an "ongoing, systematic" process "to assess and improve student learning and achievement" (Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness - - Part I: Program Review).

Conclusions

The college partially meets this standard. Based on observations and interviews, librarians and Learning Resource Center staff evince a strong commitment to provide meaningful learning experiences and quality academic resources that will lead more students to successfully complete their coursework. Librarians, faculty, and staff are responding to the information collected in faculty and student satisfaction surveys by initiating those actions that are amenable to improved services within the current budget restrictions. However, the absence of clearly articulated assessment tools and rubrics for assessing identified student learning outcomes is at cross purposes with a systematic and sustained dialogue or purposefully directed decision-making.

Finally, the lack of a consistent funding source has harmed the Library's ability to effectively utilize the expertise of the faculty to develop and maintain a high quality Library collection that can support students in programs campus wide. Standard II.C emphasizes the institutional commitment to Library services and resources to support the institution's programs. However, although the college has received two prior recommendations to "ensure the currency of the Library collection" (Recommendation 8 in 2000) and to "address the inadequacy of its Library collections" (Recommendation 7 in 2006), as evidenced by interviews and yearly budget reports,

it appears the college has not sufficiently addressed the chronic lack of consistent institutional funding for development of Library resources.

WLAC Recommendation 6 – Library Collection Development and Security

In order to meet the 2006 recommendation and to meet the Standards, the college should develop a consistent, sustainable and sufficient funding stream to develop quantity, quality, depth, and currency in Library resources and services. Moreover, the college should take necessary steps to evaluate and correct security measures to protect the Library collection. (Standard II.C.1, II.C.1.c, IV.A.2.b.)

Standard III – Resources

Standard III A – Human Resources

General Observations

Since the 2005-06 academic year West Los Angeles College has had five different presidents with two of them in interim positions from 2005-06 & 2010 -11; one in an acting position during the summer of 2010; one as the president from 2006-10 and the current president having been appointed August 1, 2011 to the present. Despite this record of leadership turnover the college is stable and the faculty/staff evince confidence and pride in both the current status and the prospects for the college community.

A carefully developed shared governance process draws upon program review and integrates the views of faculty with administration committee members to prioritize faculty hiring decisions in accord with both quantitative and qualitative indicators applied uniformly to the needs in five categories of faculty positions. Staff positions likewise are identified and prioritized based upon program review documentation before being advanced through the budgetary channels to the Budget Committee, the College Council and the President. (III.A.2; II.A.6) Balanced responsibilities and authority describes the relationship between the campus and the district Human Resources Office wherein EEO responsibilities are shared out among three officers who report directly to district in carrying out their respective duties to assigned campuses. (III.A.3.a., 4.a., b., c.) Moreover, the district has facilitated the challenge of guaranteeing timely evaluation of staff by developing an EZ system of periodic reminders to help prompt the completion of annual evaluations for this classification of employees. (III.A.1.a.) Additionally, the district maintains personnel records centrally and provides access only on a need to know basis with the normal requirement that records do not leave the district office. (III.A.3.b.)

The college is responsible for upholding minimum qualification standards as defined by the district in all of its recruitments which are of course conducted by the campus. Likewise the college enforces the annual evaluations of probationary faculty and triennial evaluations of tenured faculty members. (III. A.1., A.1.a.)

The college maintains an active agenda of staff development activities, and in fact it has shown great resourcefulness in developing its Tech Fair activities as an ongoing festival of staff development opportunities throughout the academic year. West's Tech Fairs include workshops on using technology in the classroom and encourage faculty-to-faculty exchanges in using technology in courses and student services. Tech Fair workshops are open to faculty and staff, and faculty can receive Flex Credit for attending. Additionally, the college has shown ingenuity in managing the evolution of the Leadership Retreat as a vehicle to drive the *Achieving the Dream* program development. Peer observation also provides opportunities for faculty interaction and exploration of innovative teaching methodologies. Finally, the college has institutionalized staff development as a requirement written into the faculty contract for those faculty members planning to apply to teach on-line courses. (III.5; 5.a., 5.b.)

The district is responsible for negotiating the contracts of faculty and staff, and the faculty contract has incorporated a clause requiring all faculty members to be involved in the student learning outcome identification and assessment process. This obligation extends to adjunct faculty who must participate in the learning outcomes assessment process. (III.A.1.c.) The Academic Senate at West assures compliance with Faculty Professional Standards as an example of professional self-regulation; moreover, classified employees adhere to the District Personnel Commission's Standards of Conduct. (III.A.1.c.) Finally, the district is responsible for distributing the Full-time Obligation Number (FON) to the campus to assure a proper balance of full-time faculty in proper proportion to adjunct faculty. (III.A.2.).

Findings and Evidence

To further insure high-quality instruction, a comprehensive evaluation process is in place for tenure-track faculty as described in the AFT Contract. Classroom observations, syllabi review, faculty mentors, best practices, tailored staff development as well as special events such as "Meet and Greet" for new faculty and orientations to the college's organization and services provide support for new faculty through tenure review. Division chairs and deans in the Office of Instruction ensure constant oversight of the quality of instruction through the regular cycle of evaluation. The AFT Contract also describes the evaluation process for tenured faculty and faculty who are assigned to duties other than teaching. (III.A.1.b.)

The Faculty Position Identification and Prioritization (FPIP) Policy adopted since the last comprehensive visit and revised in April 2011 represents an effective campus response to Recommendation #8 (2006) at least at the level of faculty position prioritization and allocation.

The policy provides for the formation of an FPIP Committee composed of five full-time faculty and three administrators appointed by the president. The committee has identified five categories of faculty positions and the accompanying quantitative and qualitative data to determine prioritization of faculty hiring decisions in each category. The committee is guided by the goals of the Educational Master Plan as it pursues its duties. Its presumed result will be recruitment and hiring authorizations horizontally across the categories before hiring a second priority position is authorized in any of the categories. Although this norm may fit the theoretical world of equal advances in each category, it may not fit the real world as defined by facts on the ground as described by program reviews and a campus wide overview. In this regard the FPIP leadership and its formal procedures are to be praised for openness to annual review of the procedures in consultation with the president, as well as a willingness to accept a presidential departure from the horizontal hiring principle when appropriately explained in writing. The filling of staff positions is likewise amenable to program review and analysis by deans, vice presidents and the appropriate budgeting and planning committees. The process for approval of recruitments and hiring for these positions is not as clearly defined as the FPIP. (III.A.6.)

The district office's development of an EZ prompting system for the completion of classified employee evaluations has produced noticeable improvements in the record for completed evaluations. The failure to complete an evaluation has become an anomaly rather than a frequent occurrence at West since the advent of the prompting system. With 99% of the evaluations having been completed among classified staff and 94% of the faculty evaluations having been completed in the triennial cycle for faculty this issue is resolved. (III.A.1.b.)

Conclusions

The college meets the Standard requirements for Standard III. A. West Los Angeles College has substantially resolved issues that drew recommendations for the college during its previous comprehensive visit and it meets the standard. Both in terms of planning and evaluation, it adduces a record of improvement and significant effort to turn the corner and move on. The efforts in this regard are works in progress as are all such endeavors at all times.

The college's spirit of optimism in its future is best exemplified by a vibrant atmosphere of commitment to staff development activities most notably illustrated with the huge success of the Tech Fair concept.

Recommendations

None.

Standard III B – Physical Resources

General Observations

West Los Angeles College continues to anticipate and plan for its future educational facilities requirements in its Facilities Master Plan, which was initially completed in 2003 and updated in 2010. The district also has a Facilities Master Plan. The college and district's facilities plans are both tied to the district's strategic plan. West's Facilities Master Plan lays out the building construction program on the campus based upon need and available budget allocated to the college from the bond measures approved by the district voters. Three large district-wide bond measures (Proposition A, AA, and J) have allowed the college to make progress in building out the campus in order to support the 4% predicted annual enrollment growth anticipated in its Facilities Master Plan through 2022.

In addition to the funding provided in the bond measures for facilities requirements at the college, West annually submits the appropriate space inventory documentation to the State Chancellor's office in order to compete with other California community colleges based upon identified need for available capital outlay funding. The state has provided some funding in the past for these initiatives because West has successfully demonstrated its need for new buildings, deferred maintenance, and hazardous waste funding.

Findings and Evidence:

West has been planning since 2002 as evidenced by its 2003 Integrated Master Plan (subsequently renamed the College Strategic Planning Documents). Its 2003 plan was updated in 2005 based upon an environmental impact report (EIR) completed for the campus build-out under Proposition A (approved by voters in 2001), Proposition AA (approved by voters in 2003), and Proposition J (approved by voters in 2008). The total allocation from the three Propositions for West Los Angeles College is \$414 million with \$111 million from Proposition A; \$67 million from Proposition AA, and \$236 million from Proposition J. West concurs that overseeing a \$414 million building program while continuing with normal operations has been a challenge; however, they continue to stay focused on the task at hand and use data-driven information for facilities planning. (III.B.1a; III.B.2b.)

West Los Angeles College presently uses a combination of internal planning mechanisms at the program and unit level combined with demographic forecasting data and consultant analyses of opportunities to acquire, renovate, update, and construct facilities to create long-range capital improvement plans for the college. (III.B.2.a).

West's facilities plan was updated to reflect data provided when its 2005 EIR was modified in 2009 as the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (FSEIR). The FSEIR reduced West's projected 2003 enrollment growth number of 4% a year for a total of 18,900 by 2022 down to 11,000 students by 2022 for the college. West's building program funded by the bond measures allocation to the college will result in replacement of aged facilities that is anticipated to accommodate the future demand; however, given the state's current fiscal crisis and its imposed impact on California Community Colleges West may find itself with excess capacity on the campus until the state reverses the imposed workload reductions. (III. B.1a; III. B.2a)

As a result of the three bond measures passed by the voters for the Los Angeles Community College District, the college has undergone a number of improvements and renovations since 2006, and more are planned for the future. Several aged bungalow temporary buildings have been replaced with state of the art sustainable buildings. Unfortunately, several assumptions regarding additional funding opportunities for the West campus construction program were previously made and didn't come to fruition which resulted in an over-commitment of projects for the campus. As a result, a Teaching Learning Center (TLC) building has been suspended indefinitely as part of a district-wide moratorium on bond program projects. The TLC was suspended as a result of the district placing a temporary and expanded moratorium on its entire bond program. The district is in the process of reviewing and re-prioritizing projects in an attempt to release the moratorium on district-wide projects as appropriate. West has indicated that it is in the process of submitting the required documentation to the district for its consideration of removal of its TLC project for an early release from the moratorium on bond funded construction projects. The moratorium has been inconvenient and perhaps embarrassing because an excavation for the planned TLC has been completed. However the services to be situated in the new building currently occupy very old bungalow buildings, and faculty/staff assigned to the space will continue to provide services as they have for years until the lifting of the moratorium.

In 2006, the serving president formed an administrative committee, the Building Program Management Committee (BPMC) to address construction matters. The BMPC was chaired by the serving president and operated as an information meeting with little opportunity for input to building project decisions before they were made. The last set of minutes provided as evidence for the BMPC was dated July 2010. The Building Program Progress Report dated August 2011 indicates that the construction program has gone through the shared governance process; however, no minutes were provided as evidence of this having occurred in the documentation provided for Standard III. B. Physical Resources.

However, this lack of minutes available may be because the BPMC has since been disbanded and is once again operating as the Facilities Committee. The Facilities Committee as it currently exists is co-chaired by a faculty member and the VP of Administrative Services. Due to the bond project moratorium on construction projects, the reconstituted Facilities Committee has once again shifted its emphasis to be more focused on facilities M & O issues as well as campus

renovations and improvements. The Plant Facilities staff struggles with maintenance of aged buildings many of which are “temporary” buildings that were built 43 years ago. Maintaining these aged buildings is particularly difficult in these times of revenue reductions and cuts by the state government. Therefore, in its facilities planning for the future, West has committed to having all of the new buildings LEED (Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design) certified. A LEED certified building is one that meets standards and operating procedures which are intended to be more sustainable and cost effective in future years than the existing buildings.

During the site visit, the entire visiting team was impressed with and commented on the cleanliness of the campus facilities and the appearance of the newly constructed buildings. This is particularly noteworthy given the budget cut, which has resulted in several vacant staff positions in the Facilities Department.

The college continues to plan for its long-term facilities needs including the total cost of ownership of new facilities and equipment by considering alternative sources of funding such as, leasing of owned property that may provide an endowment to fund operating and replacement costs of facilities and equipment. The college actively pursues energy incentives through its local power provider and has made changes to its M & O supplies used and equipment installed that reduces the number of man hours needed to operate. The college has not actively pursued naming rights for the new buildings or sections of buildings e.g., labs; however, some have indicated a desire in doing so in order to provide a possible stream of income to support on-going facility and equipment operating and replacement costs. (III.B.2.a. and b.)

The college has an Emergency Evacuation Plan to deal with natural or man-made emergency events to provide a safe and secure environment for staff and students. The plan is part of the college’s Administrative Procedure Manual and identifies actions to be taken depending upon the type of incident; however, that administrative procedure does not indicate a date when the Emergency Evacuation Plan was originally created, last updated, or when the most recent version available on the college’s website was enacted. In addition to this emergency procedure, the Director of Facilities and his staff meet on a monthly basis to address operational functions including safety issues. A Work Environment Committee consisting of faculty and staff also meets regularly to discuss issues of concern and improvements to the services offered to the campus community by the Facilities Department. Also, the college works closely with the local Sheriff’s Office and is developing a plan for consideration by the Facilities Committee to increase the number of “blue phones” i.e., direct phone contact to the Sheriff’s Office along with a plan to increase the number of security cameras located throughout the campus as well as a plan to increase lighting in walkways and parking areas. (III. B.1.b)

Conclusions:

This college meets all accreditation standards for Standard III. B - Physical Resources. However, in the aftermath of discovering evidence of mismanagement in the implementation of the construction bonds, the district underwent both internal and state audits to identify areas for remediation. In response to the identified problems, the district created positions within its management structure to ensure better oversight. The district also imposed a temporary moratorium on construction projects as a means to evaluate construction plans going forward.

Recommendations:

District Recommendation 1:

In order to meet the Standards and Eligibility Requirements, the Teams recommend that the district actively and regularly review the effectiveness of the construction bond oversight structure and the progress in the planned lifting of the moratorium to ensure the financial integrity of the bond programs, and the educational quality of its institutions as affected by the delays of the planned facilities projects. (*III.B.1.a.; IIID.2.a; IVB.1.c; Eligibility Requirements 17 and 18*)

Standard III. C. - Technology

General Observations:

West Los Angeles College's faculty, staff, and students technology needs are supported by a combination of district-based systems supported by staff at the downtown district office and the campus Information Technology (IT) Department staff. The LACCD decentralized all of its information technology services in 1998; however, in 2006 the district returned to a modified centralization of its information technology functions by creating a service unit concept at the district office. The district's technology plan, *Vision 2020*, defines and supports the technology services that are shared by the nine colleges as well as the district office, and it is linked to the district's Strategic Plan.

In addition to the shared technology and network support services provided at the district level, each of the nine colleges has its own information technology department to support the technology and network needs at each college campus. West's IT Department is staffed by a manager, a supervisor, and three computer and network support specialists. The IT department maintains the college's e-mail system, telephone voicemail system, and inventory of computer

hardware and software. Additionally, they provide technical assistance when required or requested for classrooms, labs, and campus offices.

In 2006 West formed the Technology Master Plan Committee (TMPC) which was tasked with creating a technology master plan by January 2009 for the college. The TMPC defined a committee structure that would continue to provide an environment where the technology and network needs of the campus could be reviewed, discussed, and acted upon in order to support student learning programs and services to improve institutional effectiveness.

West's Technology Master Plan 2016 was created with the vision of a focus on academic computing and its impacts on student learning. The Technology Plan of 2009-2016 established seven (7) goals addressing academic computing and identified specific strategies towards achieving those seven (7) goals. The TMPC also reconstituted the Technology Committee and recommended that the committee be co-chaired by a faculty member and an administrator in order to ensure that technology planning was integrated with institutional planning to support student learning programs and services.

Findings and Evidence:

Upon completing the TMPC, the reconstituted Technology Plan Committee was established as a standing Information Technology Committee reporting to the College Council. The committee, co-chaired by a faculty member and the VP of Academic Affairs, draws membership from the faculty and Information Technology department. During the team site visit and interviews conducted with members of the reconstituted Technology Committee, faculty and staff participants repeatedly emphasized that the open and inclusive approach with regard to technology planning has provided a voice to the Academic Senate, allowing for improved accountability and opportunities for dialogue between technical and academic members in regard to technology and network decision-making. In addition to evaluating the effectiveness of technology to improve institutional effectiveness in support of student learning, the Technology Committee considers the total cost of ownership in its decision-making with regard to technology at the college and district level and effectively tying outcomes to the District Strategic Plan. (III.C.1. and 2).

In a survey provided as evidence to the team and validated through interviews of faculty and staff, the majority of respondents indicated that technology hardware and software were an integral part of the tools needed to support student learning. According to the results of the survey, the faculty overwhelmingly stated that technology resources are a necessary part of instruction. The survey provided evidence of general satisfaction with the availability, training and use of technology at the college. (III.C. 1.a, d and 2.)

The college offers a robust distance education program with an emphasis on pedagogical standards for instruction offered in an on-line, hybrid, or blended modality. The college employs *Etudes* to offer centralized hosting, site/account management support, and faculty training for West's distance education offerings. As an application services provider, *Etudes* supports over 270,000 student enrollments annually across 25 client institutions with its platform to include West Los Angeles College. The *Etudes* platform supports fully on-line, hybrid, and blended classes offered each semester. In addition, it leads open source software development, focusing on building content authoring as well as collaboration and assessment tools with an emphasis on e-learning and the needs of its *Etudes* users and clients.

The college initiated its distance education program in 2000 and has grown in course offerings that cover multiple academic disciplines by dedicated faculty as validated through documentation provided as evidence and further supported by site team interviews with faculty and administrative staff. In addition, the college's commitment to faculty and development in regard to teaching technology and student learning is also evidenced by its annual Tech Fair program which has grown to approximately 100 workshops initially offered each spring, and now a year round phenomenon. Examples of workshops being offered for faculty and staff during the spring 2012 include topics such as Instructional Media Training for Smart Classrooms, Increasing Student Retention, SLO Assessment Cycles and How to Approach It, Interactive Clickers and Increasing Student Engagement, and Education on the Move. (III.C.1.b.)

The college's commitment to student success in its distance education offerings is further evidenced by it also providing on-line student support services for students that include access to an on-line Library data base, counselors available to students either on a drop-in or appointment basis, and helpdesk support services for students to name a few.

The college's information technology and network systems have been integrated with other district systems such as *Etudes* and the Exchange e-mail system to ensure seamless transition between information systems at the college and district level and in an effort to leverage the integration of data for decision-making support such as class schedule development. (III.C.1.a)

Security issues such as system back-up and disaster recovery are provided for by the District Information Technology Office for those applications supported by the district and by the college Information Technology Office for those platforms and applications supported by the college's Information Technology Department. The team was particularly impressed by the service-oriented mentality and commitment of the department staff to provide technology support to the campus community. As with other administrative departments, the IT department operates with a lean staff, yet they continue to provide service and look for ways to improve their network and technology services to the faculty and staff on a regular basis.

The college's Information Technology Department is responsible for managing warranty cycles as well as purchasing new computers and software for the campus technology and network needs in order to meet institutional needs to support student learning programs and services. (III.C.1.c.)

The college is leveraging funds from the district's local bond measures to replace lab, classroom, and office computer equipment on the campus. A set of technology related standards for infrastructure in classrooms has been drafted by the district to use as a facilities planning and upgrading tool. All new construction is incorporating the minimum standards for technology infrastructure to support the network and technical requirements in its new facility designs and construction projects on the campus.

Conclusions:

The team has determined that the college meets Standard III. C. Technology Resources. The college has adopted a technology plan that provides an equitable distribution of information technology, and includes the total cost of ownership for technology. The plan aligns with the college's Educational Master Plan. Its implementation is reviewed annually and updated every three years by the college's Technology Committee, a standing committee of the College Council. West is building a technology infrastructure that can accommodate the rapidly evolving needs of the students, faculty and staff with an ability to accommodate emerging demands and new technologies.

Each unit of the college identifies technology needs pursuant to the program review process and prioritization follows established budget processes. The Distance Learning Office along with the Office of Teaching and Learning, Resource Development supports student learning needs by enabling faculty to teach effectively using technology and by supporting grant proposals to bolster these efforts. When the college identified technological infrastructure improvements as a priority significant resources were incorporated into the construction contracts resulting in upgraded campus server, storage, backup, email, wireless access and telephone support structures. Finally the Tech Fair annual staff development event is emblematic of an institution-wide commitment to cutting edge technology availability and maximized usage.

Recommendations:

None

Standard III. D. – Financial Resources

General Observations:

The state continues to operate in a deficit, and the impacts of its current budget and fiscal condition have necessitated all California Community Colleges to reduce class offerings and operate its institutions at significantly reduced levels of revenue. LACCD's current budget allocation model is based upon the State's SB361 funding model, which provides for base budget allocations tied to whether an institution is a small, medium, or large college as defined by the state in regard to student enrollment. However, most of the SB361 budget allocation model is tied to state earned and funded FTES (full-time equivalent students) at various levels based upon whether FTES is generated from credit or non-credit course offerings.

LACCD is in the process of reconsidering its budget allocation model to include a factor related to square footage at each college to provide additional funding for maintenance and operations (M&O) expenses for campus operations. According to discussions held with the Chief Financial Officer during the team site visit, the amended Budget Allocation Model has been accepted through the appropriate shared governance committees and is awaiting action by the district chancellor.

If approved, the new LACCD Budget Allocation Model would be used for FY2012-13 and would likely increase funding to West for the M&O operational needs. However, as the state defunds FTES apportionment revenue, less revenue will be assigned to West and the other colleges. This is of particular concern given that the college has been operating at 95% of its annual expenses committed for compensation costs. According to the VP of Administrative Services and the Budget Director, the current projection for FY2012-13 is that compensation expenses will be closer to 96.5%. As a result compensation and fixed operating costs leave very little remaining budget for discretionary expenditures. That said, West has taken steps to constrain costs wherever possible and adopted strict prioritization steps finalizing its 2011-12 budgets, which will have to be done again for 2012-13 budget planning. It is likely that in order to balance its budget, West will need to begin to look at significantly reducing its compensation costs, which may prove to be difficult and somewhat out of the college's control (III.D.1.b.).

Findings and Evidence:

The district's 2011-12 Final Adopted Budget totals \$3,893,376,000 for the General Fund and all other special and restricted funds. The district's budget includes \$2,808,273,000 of Proposition A, AA, and Measure J bond funds and \$597,901,227 for General Funds to support district-wide operations. The State's 2011-12 adopted budgets included approximately \$400 million in cuts to all California Community College Districts. The cuts represented approximately 6.2% in imposed cuts resulting in a loss of \$28.9 million in general revenue apportionment for the LACCD. Additional mid-year cuts for 2011-12 further impacted the district's adopted budget. In addition, there is a strong possibility that the state will further impose cuts in 2012-13 on all

community colleges depending upon the state's ability to generate additional revenue through increased taxes to support its expenditure projections for the upcoming fiscal year.

Based upon the district's budget allocation model for each of the nine colleges and other shared operating costs at the district level, West Los Angeles College was allocated \$30,413,188 in unrestricted general funds for its campus operations including compensation expenditures in fiscal year 2011-12. West estimates that in spite of the state imposed cuts, which have been passed down to the colleges, it will have a contingency reserve remaining of approximately \$1.0 million. If that ends up being the case, West will be able to use that \$1.0 million to assist with balancing its annual budget; however, this represents one-time funds as compared to continuous savings that can be depended upon to balance subsequent year budgets.

The district has an estimated unfunded post-employment benefits (OPEB) liability of approximately \$536.1 million for benefits offered to eligible employees who meet specific vesting requirements as of a valuation date of July 1, 2009. The liabilities and annual costs for active employees and the future costs upon retirement are required by the Government Accounting Standards Board Statement No. 45 (GASB 45) to be reported as a liability on the annual financial statement reporting; however, GASB 45 does not require funding of the OPEB liabilities. In addition to reporting requirements GASB requires an Annual Required Contribution (ARC) to be calculated in an actuarial study based upon a Plan's assets and liabilities. The actuarial study is to be updated every two years. An independent actuary is contracted with by the district to prepare an analysis to determine, as of a specific valuation date, the projected ARC and the accrued OPEB liabilities. The district's last available study was prepared by an independent actuary in 2010. An actuary has been contracted with by the district and is in the process of preparing a 2011 actuarial analysis for the district's consideration. The costs associated with active employees benefit costs and future estimated benefits costs for each college's faculty and staff are included in each campus' budgeted compensation costs.

Although GASB does not require prefunding of the liability, the portion of the ARC that is not funded each year accumulates as a liability on the district's financial statements. In order to address the unfunded liability, the district established an irrevocable trust with CalPERS. The latest actuarial study with a July 1, 2009 valuation date indicates that the ARC for fiscal year ending June 30, 2010 is \$39,658,000. The "pay as you go" funding amount is \$25,789,000. In addition, the district currently prefunds another 1.92% of the total full-time salary expenditures beyond the pay as you go amount. The district's Chief Financial Officer reported during the team site visit that this has resulted in the ARC being funded at 82% of the amount recommended. GASB provides for the amortization of unfunded OPEB liabilities over a 30 year period; the most recent actuarial study indicates that based upon current contributions and assumptions, the OPEB liabilities will be funded in a little over 20 years. (Standards III.D.1.c.; III.D.2.a.)

Another significant district event that impacts each of the nine colleges is the voter-approved general obligation bond measures Proposition A, AA and J, which has provided authorization

from the local voters for a total of \$2.8 billion to replace and renovate district-wide aged buildings, equipment, and other infrastructure needs. The district has allocated to West Los Angeles College approximately \$414.0 million from Proposition A, AA, and J in order to augment the college's operating budget and provide for the renovation and replacement of buildings, equipment, and infrastructure needs on the West campus.

The last Independent Auditor's Report submitted to the Board of Trustees was for the year ending June 30, 2010. The audit resulted in an "unqualified" report by the independent auditors; however, there were four (4) findings related to internal control over financial reporting, of which one (1) was identified as being a "material weakness" and the other three (3) as being "significant deficiencies" that are not considered to be material. A "material weakness" is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control over financial reporting, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected in a timely manner. A "material weakness" in financial reporting can result in a lack of investment confidence in an entity. A "significant deficiency" is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control over financial reporting that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance. The auditors determined that the control deficiencies identified in the 2010 audit were in the aggregate material weaknesses in internal control. The 2010 audit also identified twelve (12) significant deficiencies that were not considered to be material weaknesses in internal controls over major Federal Awards program.

Of particular concern to the team is that the 2011 audit was not finalized and reported to the State Chancellor's Office by the customary annual December 31st deadline. The Chief Financial Officer initially indicated that the district had received approval to file the audit with the State Chancellor's Office by March 15th; however, the team was notified during the site visit that the audit was not going to be completed until early April. Because the audit was not available for review, the team could not confirm whether the weaknesses and deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting and over major programs identified in the 2010 audit have been satisfactorily addressed. (III.D. 2.a)

The district maintains an unrestricted end of year reserve of 5% of the total unrestricted General Fund expenditures. Prior to 2009-10 fiscal years, West consistently ended the year with a deficit operating fund balance. However, for the past two fiscal years, West has ended the year with positive ending operating fund balances and anticipates that it will similarly end the current budget year with a \$1.0 million operating fund balance, which will assist the college in navigating what is clearly anticipated to be another challenging budget year going into 2012-13. (III.D.2.c and d)

West's College Foundation is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization that is a separate legal entity operating under the governance of its own governing board. The Associated Students Organization (ASO) is funded by student fees and is administered in accordance with provisions

of the California Education Code. Food services on campus are primarily provided by an outside vendor. Vending machines are contracted out through the college's Enterprise Services and administered by the Vice President of Administrative Services along with the college's bookstore. (III.D. 2.d, e and f)

During the site visit, the team interviewed faculty and staff in order to validate statements made in the self-study regarding appropriate opportunities for constituencies to participate in the development of the college's plans and budget operations. Comments were made that the budgeting process at West had become more transparent in recent years. Moreover, interviewers determined that budget information was provided regularly and systematically to enable informed dialogue and discussion to take place in the Budget Committee (III.D.2.b.). In addition, comments were made that when presented with information from the administrative services team more emphasis has been placed on teaching committee members to understand the budget and the mechanisms used to create the budget along with the challenges associated with the budget. (III.D.1.d)

It was not clear to the team what criteria are used in resource allocation decisions or how the use of resources are assessed and ultimately tied back to budget planning in order to determine if the resource allocations achieved the desired objectives. Additionally, there is no evidence to verify how resources were evaluated and then whether any evaluations were used as a basis for improvement. (III.D.3).

Conclusions:

The district's annual audits and identified findings are an integral component of an organization's ability to ensure investor confidence, which is a critical component for LACCD in regard to its bond measure projects. The state budget situation is expected to continue to impact all community colleges and districts negatively. In addition the level of apportionment of revenue cuts that have been imposed by the state on the colleges is unprecedented in the history of the California Community College System. The state's process of enacting mid-year cuts makes it difficult to project fund balances until well into a fiscal year making it difficult to make timely and appropriate changes to a budget before the fiscal year's books are closed. In spite of the state imposed reductions, West has managed to operate with a balanced budget and end the year with reserves to absorb unanticipated financial events should they occur. The college faculty and staff engage in dialogue regarding annual budget development; however, the team could find no evidence of integrated evaluation processes tying resource allocation to planning to determine how well resource decisions influence subsequent allocation decisions as the basis for institutional improvement (III.D.1.a., 2.g. and III. D.3.).

The Standard has been partially met in regard to financial resources except for requirements associated with planning and resource allocation, and assessment of resources allocated to determine whether resources achieved desired or anticipated outcomes. Aspects of the standard

related to financial documents, including the independent audit and long-range financial planning for the institution are of particular concern as the financial integrity of the colleges could be jeopardized due to the lack of timely completion of external annual audits and any associated findings by the independent auditors. The district's 2011 financial audit and management letter, due in December 2011, is overdue. The Teams recommend the timely completion of audits. The district's 2010 financial audit and management letter note a number of significant findings related to federal and state awards, among other issues. Additionally, the Standard requires institutions to consider its long-range financial priorities when making short-term financial plans to assure financial stability. (III.D.1, 2 and 3).

In response to a Commission concern first communicated in 2008 and reiterated in 2009 and 2010, the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) established a plan to: 1) fund the medical retiree benefits on the pay-as-you-go basis, and 2) fund the ARC (annual required contribution) partially at 82%. To date, the district has not fully funded the ARC as planned. As a consequence, the concern for long-term financial solvency and the potential for significant out-year impact on the general operating funds of the district and its colleges persist (III.D.1.c).

Recommendations

District Recommendation 1:

In order to meet the Standards and Eligibility Requirements, the Teams recommend that the district actively and regularly review the effectiveness of the construction bond oversight structure and the progress in the planned lifting of the moratorium to ensure the financial integrity of the bond programs, and the educational quality of its institutions as affected by the delays of the planned facilities projects. (III.B.1.a.; IIID.2.a; IVB.1.c; *Eligibility Requirements 17 and 18*)

District Recommendation 2:

In order to ensure the financial integrity of the district and the colleges, and to meet the Standards and Eligibility Requirements, the Teams recommend the resolution of the material weakness and significant deficiencies cited in the 2010 financial audit be fully effected by the completion of next year's audit, and appropriate systems be implemented and maintained to prevent future audit exceptions. (IIID.2.a; IVB.1.c, *Eligibility Requirements 17 and 18*)

District Recommendation 3:

In order to meet the Standards and Eligibility Requirements, the Teams recommend the district adhere to the ARC guidelines and closely monitor the planned process. (*IIID.1.c; IVB.1.c, Eligibility Requirements 17 and 18*)

District Recommendation 4:

To fully respond to the recommendation first tendered by the Comprehensive Evaluation Team in 2006, and to reflect a realistic assessment of financial resources, financial stability, and the effectiveness of short- and long-term financial planning for the district and the colleges, and in order to meet the Standards and Eligibility Requirements, the Teams recommend that the district adopt and fully implement as soon as is practicable an allocation model for its constituent colleges that addresses the size, economies of scale, and the stated mission of the individual colleges. (*IIID.1.b, IIID.1.c, IIID.2.c, IVB.3.c; Eligibility Requirements 17 and 18*)

WLAC Recommendation 7 – Financial Resources (2012)

In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the college integrate planning, evaluation, and resource allocation decision making in order to systematically assess the effective use of its financial resources and use the results of the evaluation as the basis for institutional improvement and effectiveness in a manner that assures financial stability for the institution. (Standard III. D. 1.a.; III.D.2.g. and III.D.3.)

STANDARD IV - Leadership and Governance

IV. A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

General Observations:

In general, the West Los Angeles College self-study report is of good quality for Standard IV. Previous accreditation issues with college governance have been resolved. There is a need to evaluate and report on the effectiveness of the changes in future reports. The quality of quantitative evidence was occasionally weak. Evidence cited in the self-study for this standard at times seemed incomplete; however, the college was very responsive in making sure the additional evidence requested by the team was provided. A prime example of additional useful information provided when requested was the submission to the visiting team of the “College Participatory Governance and Planning Policy and Procedure Handbook” dated Spring 2012.

According to the self-study, the institution recognizes that ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization enables the institution to identify institutional values, set and achieve goals, learn and improve. Important to note is that the college seems to now be in a period of stable leadership and governance in all constituency groups – faculty, classified, student and administration. Yet wide spread participation continues to elude the college despite encouragement by current leaders and concerted institutional efforts to recruit new participants. While new to the position, the president has established a good working relationship with the college and district community. (IV.A.1.)

III. Findings and Evidence:

The College Council is West’s key participatory governance committee that is charged with addressing pertinent issues and advancing the mission and objectives of the college. Membership is composed of representation from the following committees: Accreditation, Budget, Enrollment Management, Facilities (formerly BPMP), Planning, Resource Development (formerly Grants Management), Technology, and Senate. These committees function well as the venue for collegiality, discussion and problem solving--with many adopting a “co-chair” approach that represents administration, faculty and staff. The committees also serve as the venue for vetting and formation of policies and practices that directly impact instructional programs and services and ultimately the success of West LA college students. (IV.A.1-5)

The Academic Senate and its Curriculum Committee assures that faculty input will be central to the planning of student learning programs and services. The Senate is able to bring to bear perspectives, dialogues and policy directions gleaned from interaction with District and State officials that informs the faculty as participants in decision making processes. The combination of the Joint Administrative Council and Divisional Council since 2007 has provided an arena for leaders of programs, divisions and departments to meet together with key academic administrators preparatory to disseminating information to the college at large. The foregoing demonstrates how collaboration between academic administrators and the faculty guides the initiation, development and monitoring of effective course and program development (IV.A.2.b.).

The institution has provided ample opportunities for faculty, staff and students to learn about issues and make recommendations about the governance of the college. The self-study states, “Since the 2006 self-study, West has worked diligently to improve its planning and governance processes to encourage all constituencies to take the initiative to improve practices, programs and services. The intent of this work has been to ensure broad participation in shared governance bodies and decision-making processes.” (pps. 327-328) One positive finding is that the college now has a number of standing committees that are now co-chaired by a faculty member and an administrator. Among these are Enrollment Management, Facilities, Student Success and

Technology Committees. However, it appears that participation in the committees is still limited to a relative few dedicated faculty, staff and administrative members. The college has begun to identify ways to increase participation in governance and develop trust throughout the institution by conducting meaningful, timely dialogue that acknowledges different perspectives and ideas for making informed decisions. The Academic Senate and AFT Faculty Guild have held several workshops and made concerted efforts to engage and promote increased participation among faculty ranks in committee work. The Academic Senate has also begun to examine contract language as it relates to “committee” engagement and has begun to define “committee work” (IV.A.1)

West Los Angeles College and the district have a well delineated process for mutual communication. With many policies and practices, the district initiates the discussion and requests input from the college constituents (faculty, staff, administration and students). From the review of material evidence and interviews with constituency groups, it appears that the input that came from the college has been taken into consideration when decisions are made at the district level and conversely, information gleaned from the district is considered in college decisions. Through interviews with constituent groups the perception is that there is considerable dialogue, mutual respect and all are working towards increased transparency. The notion of having a “voice” in the decision making process at both the college and district level was palpable. (IV.A.1-5, IV.A.2.a)

The recent Bond Program Budget over-commitment crisis coupled with leadership turnover created a challenge that was a defining moment for the college. Through an examination of the Building Program Management Committee and other college-wide committee meeting minutes along with multiple interviews with key faculty, staff and administrators at the college and district level, it is clear that there is a heightened level of respect, civility and trust that has emerged as a result of college groups “coming together.” The acting president, interim president, faculty leaders, staff leaders and their constituencies worked together to solve their fiscal problem as it relates to the Bond Program over-commitment. The resulting dialogue also brought about changes in chairmanship of committees to evolve to a “co-chair” approach utilizing the talents of faculty and administration to improve the institutional decision making and increase planning effectiveness. (IV.A.2)

Overall, through examination of the documentation and college interviews, West Los Angeles College is clearly pursuing a governance structure that embraces open, candid dialogue and encourages involvement from all constituent groups in the planning and decision making process. The college shared governance decision making process and affiliated committees have fostered communication across the college community to bring ideas forward, review proposals for continuous improvement and effectively deal with major problems. College Council Executive Council, Divisional Council, Enrollment Management and Facilities Committee are essential committees to the college operation. These committees function well as the venue for collegiality, discussion and problem solving--with many adopting a "co-chair" approach that

represents faculty, staff and administration. These committees also serve as the venue for vetting and formation of policies and practices that directly impact instructional programs and services and ultimately reach institutional goals. Team members observed the spirit of trust and collegiality during the campus visit and through examination of meeting minutes. (IV.A.2, IV.A.2.a, IV.A.3, IV.A.4., IV.A.5)

However, the team found through analysis of meeting minutes it was difficult to determine which constituency groups were represented as only a list of names would appear in the minutes. The practice of identifying participants by title/position should be replicated by all governance groups to assure transparency. On the recent Campus Climate Survey, only 48% responded either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” on the test item “There is regular and transparent communication among faculty, administration and staff.” The foregoing is an artifact of the ongoing problem with a low participation rate by faculty/staff in the campus governance activities. However the team through its interviews found evidence of a new spirit of trust is apparent and the new presidential leadership, in place less than a year, is deserving of a reasonable interval to improve the response rate.

The issue of participation was also seen in the relatively low Campus Climate Survey response rate among certain participatory governance groups. The self-study acknowledges that participation among the various constituencies continues to be a concern “we still have much room for improvement” and have addressed this by making it a planning agenda item. The college must take more active steps to engage more faculty and staff. (IV.A.3, IV.A.5)

The college developed an evaluation of the institution’s governance and decision-making processes that included faculty, staff and student participation. Associated with their inaugural launch of its integrated program review, planning, and budget augmentation system, a document entitled “College Participatory Governance and Planning Policy and Procedure Handbook” was published on March 12, 2012 to formally document the new planning system, casting it in the context of participatory governance. The document serves well as a guide for understanding the structure, charge, meeting pattern, and information flow of committees, as well as providing information for how to complete related program review and planning forms. While the process includes forms for validating governance structures, program review and planning documents, no direction is provided to assure a uniform approach to evaluating the content. Although the Handbook articulates the committee membership and communication links, it is unclear how the college will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of these processes and, in turn, improve them. (IV.A.2-3, 5)

Conclusions:

The college has a working governance structure that facilitates decisions that support student learning programs and works towards improving institutional effectiveness. Faculty, staff and

administrators have a collegial working relationship and it is evident that the educational needs and interests of the West LA College students are at the forefront of the work they do.

The college's documentation of its planning policy and procedure handbook in the context of its participatory governance system demonstrates its conscious effort to review and strengthen the college's participatory governance process.

Although committee leadership and participation is not widely disbursed among the ranks of faculty and staff, the participants who do serve are the highly professional, extremely dedicated individuals who appreciate the improved atmosphere on campus. However, the team notes that the stated planning agenda item in the self-study provides a broad mandate to College Council with very little specificity about the goals of the item related to this low participation rate. (St. IV.A.3)

Recommendation 1: Measurable Goal Setting (2012)

In order to fully meet the Standard, the college must specify its goals on all its master plans and its annual plans in measurable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be assessed, discussed, and applied to decisions regarding improvement of institutional effectiveness (Standard IB.2, IB.3, IB.4, IV.A.).

Recommendation 2: Systematic Evaluation and Planning (2012)

In order to increase effectiveness and improve its compliance with the Standard, the college should develop and implement a formal, organized process that is regularly evaluated for assuring quality of data and assessment definitions, interpretation, and application that builds upon the established governance and planning system. This will further college efforts to develop a process where decisions are based on a culture of evidence that results in cohesive planning, evaluation, improvement, and re-evaluation (Standard I.B.3; IV.A.1.).

Recommendation 3 – Student Learning Outcomes (2012)

As noted by the 2006 team and in order to fully meet the Standards and facilitate the college's achievement of commission expectations of proficiency by AY 2012-13, the team recommends that the college identify student learning outcomes that are related to course objectives for all courses; evaluate all courses and programs through an on-going systematic review of the relevance, appropriateness, and achievement of student learning outcomes, currency, and future needs and plans; and conduct authentic assessment of student achievement at the course,

program, and institutional levels in order to improve student learning.(Standard II.A.1.c, 2.a, 2.e, 2.f, 2.h, 2.i; II.B.4; II.C.2., IV.A.2.b.)

Recommendation 4– Student Learning and Service Level Outcomes (2012)

In order to fully meet the Standards, the team recommends that the college review and revise as necessary its developed student learning and service level outcomes to assure that they are measured in both quantitative and qualitative terms. These measures should be adequate for evaluating whether services are meeting identified student needs so that results can be used to improve the delivery of support services. (Standards IB.3, IIB.4, IV.A.2.b., IV.B.4.).

Recommendation 6 – Library Collection Development and Security (2012)

In order to address recommendations made by two previous visiting teams and to meet Standards, the college should develop a consistent, sustainable and sufficient funding stream to develop quantity, quality, depth, and currency in Library resources and services. Moreover, the college should take necessary steps to evaluate and correct security measures to protect the Library collection. (Standard II.C.1, II.C.1.c, IV.A.2.b.)

IV. B. Board and Administrative Organization

General Observations:

The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) is composed of nine related colleges, each of which is directly answerable to a seven-member Board of Trustees, in accordance with Education Code 70902. LACCD board members are elected for four-year terms district- wide by voters in the city of Los Angeles and in neighboring cities without their own community college districts. Trustee elections are held on a staggered basis, with three or four seats being filled every two years. At its annual organizational meeting, the board elects a president and vice president to serve one-year terms. A district-wide student election is held annually to select a student member – who has an advisory vote – for a one-year term (IV.B.1.a.)

The district has been fortunate to have a relatively stable board membership over recent years, and this along with an effective chancellor will benefit the students of the district as they face numerous challenges. The board needs to continue to recognize the designated responsibilities of both district as well as campus prerogatives and not delve into operational issues directly. To their credit, they have a well delineated set of policies and procedures in place to ensure that the

chief administrator can effectively lead the district to ensure advancement of student learning programs and campus initiatives (IV.B.1.a.&b.).

The chancellor of the district and his administrative team has accomplished a great deal in a difficult economic situation and in a relatively short time. The chancellor delegates the management of the college to the college president. Recent turnover of leadership in the West Los Angeles College's presidential position as well as the Bond Program Budget over-commitment crisis could have caused a great deal of college consternation. To their credit, this crisis was partially alleviated and the college has experienced enhanced confidence in problem solving and views the district as a true partner in advancing institutional effectiveness (IV.B.2.c.)

The President of West Los Angeles College, appointed as of August 1, 2011, reports directly to the district Chancellor who reports to the Los Angeles Community College District elected Board of Trustees. The college president is responsible to the chancellor to implement and enforce district policies and is the final authority at the college level. The district is under the leadership of the Chancellor who is also newly appointed (IV.B.1.b., and 1.j)..

In general, the West Los Angeles College Self Study Report is of good quality for Standard IV. Through district interviews and upon a review of documents, it is clear that West Los Angeles College is given respect by district officials. This is also evident by the revisions of administrative regulations to decentralize certain aspects of the district and empower local college campuses. In addition, the district has adopted a series of board rules mandating program review, biennial review of vocational programs, program viability review and program discontinuance processes at the college level. These and other aspects of decentralization allow local college academic programs to be more responsive to local conditions. (IV.B.3.)

Findings and Evidence:

The LACCD Board of Trustees is an independent policy-making body charged with oversight responsibility of the colleges' educational programs, fiscal integrity and financial health. The Board comprises seven at-large elected Trustees who serve four-year staggered terms. Additionally a district-wide student Trustee is elected to a one-year term. College stakeholders understand the Board to be the final voice on district matters subject to state laws and regulations. The Board has developed procedures for annual orientation of the student Trustee in addition to Board Rule 2105 providing a formal policy for the orientation of all other newly elected Trustees. Board Rule 2301.1 provides for conducting annual self-evaluations in which Trustees score their performance in 20 general functional areas, as well as providing a summary of evaluations of constituency representatives including college presidents, district senior staff and union and academic senate representatives. *The District Governance and Functions Handbook* provides a very accessible published source of information on the board's duties, responsibilities, structure and operating procedures. The Board has a Code of Ethics Policy

Chapter II, Article III, 2300.10 last modified in 2007. This Policy outlines the expected board behaviors and standards of practice, as well as a process for dealing with a board member's actions that violate the standards. Although the foregoing policies should be followed always, re-emphasis upon the importance of Board communications via the chancellor to constituent campus officials can not be emphasized too strongly. Finally, the Board is responsible for monitoring and assuring the quality of all programs and activities at district colleges by overseeing the accreditation process through its Committee on Institutional Effectiveness. The foregoing committee requires annual reports from each of the colleges on strategic planning goals, and progress relating to student success and educational excellence outcomes (IV.B.1, 1.a., 1.b., 1.c., 1.d., 1.f., 1.g., 1.h, 1.i.).

The Chancellor is accountable to the Board for the operation of the district, as well as for making policy recommendations to the Board. The Board both selects the Chancellor and annually evaluates the incumbent's performance. In accord with the Education Code, the Board delegates authority to the Chancellor to make decisions without interference. The Board shares the authority with the Chancellor to hire and evaluate college presidents in the district. Board rules mandate that Chancellor and presidents consult collegially with the faculty academic senates, collective bargaining organizations and the Associated Students Organizations on all policies and decisions (IV.B.1.j.). District administration has worked to streamline procedures for the approval of academic programs and courses, as well as to provide the needed data to help guide the colleges in the decision making process. (IV.B.2.)

In response to concerns expressed by the California State Controller's Office, the district has instituted a variety of reforms to the building program. This is evident by a review of the district's Finance and Audit Committee, College Citizen's Oversight Committee and Bond Oversight website.

The district has a well delineated process of internal management consultation and decision-making processes that is outlined in 2011 District Governance and Functions Handbook. The ultimate responsibility for policies and decision making that has far-reaching impact lies primarily with the board. The district has a governance structure assuring that the college has multiple venues and opportunities to provide input in policy making and planning efforts. Interviews validated the evidence that the district has an effective board that is focused on policy-making that ensures the effective operation of the district and greater public interest. (IV.B.3. & 3.a.)

The president, administration and college governing committees routinely refer to relevant statutes and governing board policies when making policy decisions at the college. Minutes and agendas of various meetings indicate that regulations are discussed prior to making final decisions to forward to the president, chancellor and ultimately to the board. (IV.B.2.c)

The role of the district vis a vis the colleges has gone through a transition from a highly centralized command and control district office prior to 2000 to the present coordination and service orientation model. Under the current model colleges have the autonomy and authority for local decision making, and strategic leadership to streamline administrative processes and make college decision makers more accountable to local communities. (IV.B.3.a.)

The district provides effective services to the colleges to include areas such as:

- Strategic institutional development;
- A framework for institutional self-assessment, accountability and organizational improvement;
- Compliance with state and federal laws and mandates;
- Essential administrative support services;
- Sharing of best practices;
- Collaborative projects and joint services to increase efficiencies and economies of scale;
- Developing relationships with external stakeholders and constituencies (IV.B.3., 3.a. &b.)

The Chancellor gives full responsibility and authority to the president to fulfill the following expected functions:

- Providing effective educational programs and student support services leading to verifiable student learning outcomes;
- Providing current and prospective students with clear information about the college, its resources, offerings and access to financial aid;
- Complying with accreditation eligibility requirements and standards;
- Developing effective partnerships with K-12 and 4-year partner institutions;
- Planning and managing operational budgets
- Creating, implementing and assessing the effectiveness of all college planning efforts;
- Providing effective human resources services;

- Maintaining positive and productive relationships with local business, civic and community organizations;
- Providing students and staff with a safe, clean, welcoming and culturally responsive campus environment (IV.B.3.e.).

The district structure rests on a foundation of multiple district-wide committees organized into three sub-divisions; Council of Academic Affairs, Council of Student Services, and District Administrative Council. Six or more district wide committees are subsumed by each of the foregoing sub-divisions and representation from throughout the district on each of the committees assures effective communication and exchange of information (IV.B.3.f.).

The district/system led by its Board of Trustees has adopted a strategy of gauging the effectiveness of its constituent colleges as well as its own targets defined in the strategic plan. During the academic year the chancellor and the constituent presidents report on the alignment of their respective goals to the Board's goals. The linch pin of the evaluation strategy is the annual college/district effectiveness reports. The reports draw upon seven categories of measureable outcomes to include Access, Financial Aid, Student Success, Institutional Efficiency, Educational Excellence and External Partnerships (measured in terms of grant and donation dollars). Each report presents a three-year longitudinal report that juxtaposes the college trends in the preceding categories with trends district-wide. The team was satisfied that this approach represents an effective evaluation technique (IV.B.3.g.)

West has experienced much turnover in presidential leadership since 2005-06. Two interims, one acting and two presidents have served in that time period. The latest president has been in office less than a year, but the team has learned that the campus is confident that it has found the leadership that will provide chief executive stability for the foreseeable future. The current administrative structure of three vice presidents and their ten respective deans and associate deans provides more than sufficient administrative personnel. The current president has filled one vice presidential position himself due to a recent retirement. The senior administrative team meets frequently with the president as a group as well as in one on one meetings on a regular basis (IV.B.2., B.2.a.).

The president consults regularly with senior staff and leaders of key constituency groups to set values, goals and priorities. With the hiring of a dean of research and planning the college is able to rely on a flow of data on demand for enrollment management, outcomes analysis and fiscally sound decisions. The sharing of information and collaboration between administration and faculty/staff has been facilitated by the College Joint Council's monthly meetings which combine administrators with the academic and student services divisional chairs and directors (IV.B.2.b.).

The president is the ultimate campus authority responsible for the annual budget that goes to the Board of Trustees for approval. For the past two fiscal years, West has ended the year with

positive ending operating fund balances and anticipates that it will similarly end the current budget year with a \$1.0 million operating fund balance, which will assist the college in navigating what is clearly anticipated to be another challenging budget year going into 2012-13. During the site visit, the team interviewed faculty and staff in order to validate statements made in the self-study regarding appropriate opportunities for constituencies to participate in the development of the college's plans and budget operations. Comments were made that the budgeting process at West had become more transparent in recent years. In addition, comments were made that when presented with information from the administrative services team more emphasis has been placed on teaching committee members to understand the budget and the mechanisms used to create the budget along with the challenges associated with the budget (IV.B.2.d.).

The president prioritizes college efforts to strengthen college connections to local and regional stakeholders in business, government and education. These connections include governing bodies and civic organizations, as well as homeowners associations. Twice annually the president leads meetings with the City of Culver City officials and its constituent homeowners association officials. A sound absorbing wall between the college's athletic fields and its closest sub-division of neighbors provides an example of sensitivity to community concerns (IV.B.2.e.).

LACCD is in the process of reconsidering its budget allocation model to include a factor related to square footage at each college to provide additional funding for maintenance and operations (M&O) expenses for campus operations. According to discussions held with the Chief Financial Officer during the team site visit, the amended Budget Allocation Model has been accepted through the appropriate shared governance committees and is awaiting action by the district chancellor. West will benefit if the long awaited allocation model is implemented, however expected declines in the funding of FTES by the state will work to the opposite effect. (IV.B.3.c.)

The district has an estimated unfunded post-employment benefits (OPEB) liability of approximately \$536.1 million for benefits offered to eligible employees who meet specific vesting requirements as of a valuation date of July 1, 2009. The liabilities and annual costs for active employees and the future costs upon retirement are required by the Government Accounting Standards Board Statement No. 45 (GASB 45) to be reported as a liability on the annual financial statement reporting; however, GASB 45 does not require funding of the OPEB liabilities. In addition to reporting requirements GASB requires an Annual Required Contribution (ARC) to be calculated in an actuarial study based upon a Plan's assets and liabilities. The actuarial study is to be updated every two years. An independent actuary is contracted with by the district to prepare an analysis to determine, as of a specific valuation date, the projected ARC and the accrued OPEB liabilities. The district's last available study was prepared by an independent actuary in 2010. An actuary has been contracted with by the district and is in the process of preparing a 2011 actuarial analysis for the district's consideration. The

costs associated with active employees benefit costs and future estimated benefits costs for each college's faculty and staff are included in each campus' budgeted compensation costs.

Although GASB does not require prefunding of the liability, the portion of the ARC that is not funded each year accumulates as a liability on the district's financial statements. In order to address the unfunded liability, the district established an irrevocable trust with CalPERS. The latest actuarial study with a July 1, 2009 valuation date indicates that the ARC for fiscal year ending June 30, 2010 is \$39,658,000. The "pay as you go" funding amount is \$25,789,000. In addition, the district currently prefunds another 1.92% of the total full-time salary expenditures beyond the pay as you go amount. The district's Chief Financial Officer reported during the team site visit that this has resulted in the ARC being funded at 82% of the amount recommended. GASB provides for the amortization of unfunded OPEB liabilities over a 30 year period; the most recent actuarial study indicates that based upon current contributions and assumptions, the OPEB liabilities will be funded in a little over 20 years. (Standards III.D.1.c.; III.D.2.a., IV.B.3.d.)

In response to a Commission concern first communicated in 2008 and reiterated in 2009 and 2010, the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) established a plan to: 1) fund the medical retiree benefits on the pay-as-you-go basis, and 2) fund the ARC (annual required contribution) partially at 82%. To date, the district has not fully funded the ARC as planned. As a consequence, the concern for long-term financial solvency and the potential for significant out-year impact on the general operating funds of the district and its colleges persist (III.D.1.c., IV.B.3.d.).

Another significant district event that impacts each of the nine colleges is the voter-approved general obligation bond measures Proposition A, AA and J, which has provided authorization from the local voters for a total of \$2.8 billion to replace and renovate district-wide aged buildings, equipment, and other infrastructure needs. The district has allocated to West Los Angeles College approximately \$414.0 million from Proposition A, AA, and J in order to augment the college's operating budget and provide for the renovation and replacement of buildings, equipment, and infrastructure needs on the West campus (IV.B.3.d.).

The Standard has been partially met in regard to financial resources except for requirements associated with planning and resource allocation. Aspects of the standard related to financial documents, including the independent audit and long-range financial planning for the institution are of particular concern as the financial integrity of the colleges could be jeopardized due to the lack of timely completion of external annual audits and any associated findings by the independent auditors. The district's 2011 financial audit and management letter, due in December 2011, is overdue. The Teams recommend the timely completion of audits. The district's 2010 financial audit and management letter note a number of significant findings related to federal and state awards, among other issues. Additionally, the Standard requires

institutions to consider its long-range financial priorities when making short-term financial plans to assure financial stability. (III.D.1, 2 and 3, IV.B.3.d.).

Conclusions:

The board, district, and college have appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure that the district meets the Standards. The district and college have undergone a great deal of change and fiscal crisis. As a result, the district needs to continue to fully review, evaluate, and make the necessary changes based on data to continue to be successful in institutional effectiveness and to advance student learning initiatives. Moreover, the district and its board need to review protocol to re-dedicate themselves to the assurance that the autonomy of the constituent campuses is always maintained.

In response to a Commission concern first communicated in 2008 and reiterated in 2009 and 2010, the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) established a plan to: 1) fund the medical retiree benefits on the pay-as-you-go basis, and 2) fund the ARC (annual required contribution) partially at 82%. To date, the district has not fully funded the ARC as planned. As a consequence, the concern for long-term financial solvency and the potential for significant out-year impact on the general operating funds of the district and its colleges persist.

In the aftermath of discovering evidence of mismanagement in the implementation of the construction bonds, the district underwent both internal and state audits to identify areas for remediation. In response to the identified problems, the district created positions within its management structure to ensure better oversight. The district also imposed a temporary moratorium on construction projects as a means to evaluate construction plans going forward.

The district's 2011 financial audit and management letter, due in December 2011, is overdue. The Teams recommend the timely completion of audits. The district's 2010 financial audit and management letter note a number of significant findings related to federal and state awards, among other issues. Finally, the district is on the cusp of approving a new allocation model that would include a factor related to square footage at each college to provide additional funding for maintenance and operations (M&O) expenses for campus operations. The approval process for this new development should not be delayed.

Recommendations:

See District Recommendation 1.

See District Recommendation 2.

See District Recommendation 3.

See District Recommendation 4.

District Recommendation 5:

To meet the Standard, the Teams recommend that the Board of Trustees make visible, in behavior and in decision-making, their policy role and their responsibility to act as a whole in the public's interest. Further, the Teams recommend continuing professional development for the Board of Trustees to ensure a fuller understanding of its role in policy governance and the importance of using official channels of communication through the chancellor or his designee. *(IVB.1.a)*