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)*

West has been doing program review since 1999, steadily improving its process over time. The process is now fully online, with significant data prepopulated for the authors—division chairs, deans and program managers. As the college has developed and updated its overarching plans, the program review instrument has instructed authors to link their goals to those of the plans. Since 2008, this linkage has stressed the Educational Master Plan. Program Review feeds directly into resource allocation through a process that is grounded in West’s well-established structures of participatory governance. *[Documentation: PR instruments since 2008]*

Improvements for the 2012-2013 cycle focus on fuller data collection and analysis, especially in assessing the effects of resource allocations; more robust validation and prioritization, both guided by rubrics; and the evaluation of these changes at the end of the 2012-2013 fiscal and academic year. *[Documentation: CC minutes on PIEC incorporating PR]*

In 2010-11, program goals were already explicitly linked to institutional goals and program assessment results, and action plans were linked explicitly to program goals. Programs indicated for each action whether it would require additional resources, and the resource request was supposed to follow from that indication, though the resource request itself did not point back to the action. Finally, programs were asked to list other programs on which each resource request has an impact. Overall, the quality of the submitted documents was uneven, as the 2012 evaluation team noted.

Some participants lacked a thorough understanding of the process and its purposes, or perceived program review more as a mechanism for justifying resource requests than as a process to facilitate program and institutional improvements, some of which might require additional resources. Thus, some program goals in the 2010-11 Program Review, despite instructions in the Guides to the contrary, were merely resource requests. A few examples: “Hire 4 new Custodians”; “Electronic Resources – Two (2) Desktops”; “Create classified positions which support Distance Learning” “Hire a Full Time Dance Instructor” (even though the handbook pointed out explicitly that obtaining a new faculty member was not a goal, but rather a resource request in support of an action plan that was aligned with a program goal). The title of Part 2 in 2010-11: “Linking Planning to Budget” may have contributed to this misunderstanding.

In fall of 2012, the College Council combined the Program Review Committee with the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee (PIEC) to more logically organize the program review process within the planning cycle. At the same time, the college engaged a consultant who
assisted the PIEC in reviewing planning and program review procedures for cohesion, incorporation of existing policies, and meaningful evaluation.

The Planning Committee and the Program Review Committee (later reconfigured as PIEC) had began its periodic revision of the program review instrument in the spring of 2012. Additions to the 2012-13 Program Review instrument include:

i. Assessment of progress on division/department goals

ii. Evaluation of the effects of resources requested/received over the past two years

iii. Response to recommendations from the prior program review (a requirement that had applied only to non-instructional programs in 2010-11)

iv. Table of course outcomes, assessment methods, summaries of results, planned actions, and whether or not the planned actions will require additional resources

v. A similar table of program outcomes

vi. Separate assessment plans for course and program outcomes

vii. Documentation of faculty dialogue regarding SLO assessment results and improvement plans

viii. A new module on challenges and goals related to facilities, and how the facilities goals relate to the Educational Master Plan and the program’s overall goals

ix. A new module on the likely implications of budgetary reductions and of program termination

x. Assessment of the impact of improvements in CTE programs

xi. Measurable results at the planning goal level

Extensive training on the new software used in program review and on the revised instrument took place in the fall of 2012 and incorporated a new Program Review Handbook. The series of program review workshops conducted emphasized several points:

- The purpose of program review is to assess and evaluate the progress of the department in addressing its goal and set new goals. Resource requests may flow from this assessment.
- The completed program review must show how its goals align with college goals.
- Goals must be distinguished from action plans.

Another improvement in the 2012-2013 program review process came in the validation stage. Each program review is now to be validated by a team, using a rubric designed to assure
completeness and cohesiveness. In a pilot cross-divisional validation, the teams will be drawn from more than one of the main divisions of the college (Academic Affairs, Student Services and Administrative Services).

The PIEC also laid plans for committees to evaluate progress towards the goals of the Educational Master Plan, Technology Master Plan, Student Services Plan, and Facilities Master Plan, using the results of Program Review. In addition, program reviews are being used in a comprehensive facilities needs assessment.