



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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June 29, 2006

Dr. Doris Givens
Interim President
West Los Angeles College
4800 Freshman Drive
Culver City, CA 90230

Dear President Givens:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on June 7-9, 2006, reviewed the institutional self study report and the report of the evaluation team that visited West Los Angeles College on Monday, March 20-Thursday, March 23, 2006. The Commission took action to reaffirm accreditation, with a requirement that the college complete two Progress Reports.

The Commission asks that a Progress Report be submitted by **March 15, 2007**. The report will be followed by a visit by Commission representatives who will address the college issues during a visit to the campus. The Progress Report should focus on the institution's resolution of the recommendations and concerns as noted below. The Commission notes that some of these issues were also cited during the last comprehensive visit in 2000, and may have been stalled during turnover in administrative staff. The Commission urges the college to institutionalize its progress toward meeting standards.

COLLEGE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: The college should create a campus climate that embraces open, candid dialogue that embodies 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)

Recommendation 5: 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, I.B)

Recommendation 6: The college should periodically review its staffing practices, hours of operation, 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)

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

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Recommendation 13: 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)

2000 Evaluation Team Recommendation 4: The college should develop and evaluate strategies to ensure the communication, use, and integration of existing and planned research and evaluation throughout the college community. This will further college efforts to develop a process where decisions are based on a culture of evidence.

The Commission also asks that a second Progress Report be submitted by **March 15, 2008**. The report should address the following recommendations and concerns:

DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 4: 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)

In addition, the Commission makes the following recommendation which requires district and college collaboration in the clarification of the generic district/college functional map. This recommendation was crafted by the team that visited LA Harbor College but applies as well to West Los Angeles College.

Recommendation 14: The functional relationship between the College and the District needs to be fully defined through a dialog focused on efficient use of resources and service to students. The implementation of a decentralized relationship needs mutual definition. (IVB.3.a, c)

I have previously sent you a copy of the evaluation team report. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires you to give the team report and this letter appropriate dissemination to your college staff and to those who were signatories of your college self study report. This group should include the Chancellor, campus leadership, and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that the team report and the self study report be made available to students and the public. Placing copies in the college library can accomplish this. Should you want the report electronically to place on your web site or for some other purpose, please contact Commission staff.

The recommendations contained in the evaluation team report represent the observations of the evaluation team at the time of the visit. The Commission reminds you that while an institution may concur or disagree with any part of the team report, it is expected that the report will be used to improve the educational programs and services of the institution.

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All colleges are required to file a Midterm Report in the third year after each comprehensive evaluation. West Los Angeles College should submit the Midterm Report by **March 15, 2009**. Midterm Reports indicate progress toward meeting the evaluation team's recommendations and forecast where the college expects to be by the time of the next comprehensive evaluation. The report also includes a summary of progress on college-identified plans for improvement as expressed in the self study.

The college conducted a comprehensive self study as part of its evaluation. The Commission suggests that the plans for improvement of the institution included in that document be taken into account in the continuing development of West Los Angeles College. The next comprehensive evaluation of the college will occur during **Spring 2012**.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to remind you that federal legislation affecting accrediting agencies requires that accredited colleges conduct systematic assessment of educational outcomes (see especially Standards One and Two). A further requirement is that accrediting agencies pay close attention to student loan default rates.

On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express continuing interest in the institution's educational programs and services. Professional self-regulation is the most effective means of assuring integrity, effectiveness and quality.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Rocky Young, Chancellor, Los Angeles Community College District
Dr. Alice Taylor, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Board President, Los Angeles Community College District
Ms. Sandra Serrano, Team Chair
Evaluation Team Members

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

PREPARATION OF A PROGRESS REPORT WITH A VISIT

A Progress Report is a report requested by the Commission for special purposes. It can occur at any time in the 6-year accreditation cycle. A Progress Report requires that the institution provide information, evidence, and analysis regarding the resolution of the issues to which it was directed by the Commission's Action Letter. The institution's report will be reviewed by the Commission at its next regularly scheduled meeting, and the institution will be notified as to what action, if any, it must take next.

Visits accompanying Progress Reports are normally one-day visits by a team of two members, typically the chair of the comprehensive evaluation team familiar with the issues confronting the institution and a member of the Commission or Commission staff. The team is appointed by the Commission and reviewed by the institution in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest. *

The purposes of the team conducting this visit are to:

- ◆ verify the accuracy and relevance of the report submitted by the college in response to the specific action of the Commission
- ◆ determine the extent to which the institution now meets the Commission standards cited in the recommendations
- ◆ report findings and recommendations to the Commission

Progress Report Format

The following format for the report should be used:

1. Cover Sheet
Include the date of submission, the name and address of the institution, and a notation that this is a Progress Report.
2. Table of Contents
3. Statement on Report Preparation
The statement, signed by the Chief Executive Officer of the institution, describes the process of report preparation and identifies those who were involved in its preparation, review, and approval.
4. Response to Team Recommendations and the Commission Action Letter
Each recommendation identified by the Commission in its action letter should be identified and discussed. The report should describe the resolution of each recommendation, analyze the results achieved to date, provide evidence of the results, and indicate what additional plans the institution has developed.
5. The Progress Report must be reviewed by the Governing Board prior to its submission

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

The institution is required to send **three copies** of its report to the Commission **plus an electronic version**. The hard copies of the report should be sent to the Commission's mailing address at 10 Commercial Boulevard, Suite 204, Novato, CA 94949. The electronic version of the report should be transmitted to accjc@accjc.org.

A copy should also be sent to each team member listed on the team roster who will visit the institution. The date of the visit is listed on the team roster.

* Policy on the Rights and Responsibilities of ACCJC and Member Institutions in the Accrediting Process. (Adopted January 2005) *Accrediting Reference Handbook*

MAY 16 2006

EVALUATION REPORT

West Los Angeles College

9000 Overland Avenue
Culver City, CA 90230

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

CONFIDENTIAL

**FOR INTERNAL WLAC USE ONLY
NOT TO BE PHOTOCOPIED OR DISTRIBUTED**

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited
West Los Angeles College on March 20 – 23, 2006

Sandra Serrano

Team Members

Ms. Sandra Serrano, Chair
Chancellor
Kern Community College District

Ms. Anne Bevilacqua
Professor of Sociology
Solano Community College

Ms. Mazie Brewington
Controller
Chabot-Las Positas Community College District

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Ms. Marie Mestas
Dean of Learning Resources
San Bernardino Valley College

Mr. Michael Pecsok
Assistant Dean for Academic Services
Leeward Community College

Dr. Paulette Perfumo
Superintendent-President
Solano Community College

Introduction

A ten member accreditation team visited West Los Angeles College, March 20 through 23, 2006. Three Colleges – West, Harbor, and Southwest - collectively known as the seaside colleges of the Los Angeles Community College District were visited during this period.

West Los Angeles College is one of nine colleges of the Los Angeles Community College District. The college is referred to as West by district and college personnel, as well as by students. The campus is nestled in a residential neighborhood in Culver City, California, approximately five miles from the Los Angeles International Airport. More than 1.5 million people reside in the college's service area that extends in a six-mile radius from the campus.

West enrolls about 8,300 students representing diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The faculty, classified staff, and administration are representative of the rich ethnic and cultural mixture of the student population and the communities that lie within the West service area.

The college experienced an eight percent enrollment growth between 2000 and 2004, but enrollment has declined since peaking at 9,804 unduplicated first census credit enrollment in fall 2003. Declining enrollment exacerbates the college's ability to operate within a balanced budget. The college has struggled to overcome a one-million dollar budget deficit it incurred in 2003. Yet, the college did balance its budget and meet its enrollment targets in 2004, though this success was not sustained in 2005.

Since the last accreditation visit conducted in March 2000, chief executive leadership changed at both the college and the district. In the summer of 2000 a new college president was named. Five years later, in August 2005 an interim president was named. A new president is expected to be appointed by July 2006. Similarly, the district chancellor position has changed, with three chancellors serving during this six year period. An interim chancellor was appointed in January 2004, and a new chancellor was named in July 2005.

The college was well prepared for the accreditation visit. Both the pre-visit and visit were assisted by a warm and enthusiastic college team that included the interim president, chair of accreditation, Accreditation Liaison Officer, and members of the Accreditation Self Study Steering Committee. The visiting team was welcomed by a warm and open college community. The entire college community provided access to physical resources, college personnel and students.

Students are proud of their college and assert, "West is the best." The students attending the open forums with the visiting team, as well as those approached by team members while on campus, spoke highly about the quality and dedication of faculty as well as the support and encouragement provided by faculty and classified staff.

College personnel are engaged in learning ranging from student learning outcomes and assessment to college branding and marketing. The college has earnestly started to engage in learning about systemic planning, fiscal accountability, student learning outcomes, and the benefits of conducting research and assessment. The college governance structure has been strengthened and information for effective decision making is beginning to be used.

College personnel are discovering that the college has an identity for which it can be proud. They are recognizing the college's strengths and acknowledging there are weaknesses to address. It is noteworthy that dialogue is becoming open, honest, and collaborative.

The 2000 visiting team noted that the college struggled with a history of resentment, ineffective participatory governance, lethargy, lack of clear direction, and without integrated planning. At the root of this acerbic history is fiscal instability, which continues as evidenced by the college's deficit spending. However, in spite of the ongoing fiscal challenges, a new climate is emerging. The college has commenced to address these challenges through a strengthened participatory governance structure, improved dialogue, and the support of institutional research. The college is commended for strengthening its process of participatory governance. The College Council has created an environment where all come together to know each other and to understand issues. Communication has improved and decisions are being made by reaching consensus for the common constituencies good. It is now incumbent upon the college constituencies to put its history behind them and move forward strategically to affect needed change.

It is evident that West Los Angeles College has commenced laying the foundation upon which to build a better future. West is an institution recently revitalized and in transition. The staff has taken the first steps, which are always the most difficult. The momentum has been created, and now the agenda must be set in motion with executed plans that are financially viable and directed to meet the needs of the community and the students. The overarching challenge will be for college personnel to maintain discipline in their thought and action to create a better future. As declared at a college forum with the visiting team, "The college has never had a problem with identifying strategies; the problem is with maintaining focus and following through." The college's commitment and discipline to sustain the transition remains to be seen. The chief executive leadership will be changing within months, and the motivation inspired by an impending accreditation self study and visit may diminish. Nonetheless, the revitalized environment is encouraging and laudable.

Based on the careful reading of the self study, examination of documents, and interviews with district personnel, members of the Board of Trustees, college personnel and students, the visiting team makes the following recommendations related to the four accreditation standards.

Key Overarching Recommendations:

1. The college should create a campus climate that embraces open, candid dialogue that embodies 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)
2. 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, I.B.4, I.B.7; Standard II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.A.2.f, II.2.h, II.2.i, II.A.3, II.A.6, II.A.6.a, II.B.1, II.B.4, II.C.1.a, II.C.2; Standard III.A.1.b, III.A.1.c; and Standard IV.A.1, IV.A.2.b, IV.B.1.b)
3. 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.D)
4. 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)

Additional Recommendations by Standard:

5. 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, I.B)
6. The college should periodically review its staffing practices, hours of operation, 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)
7. The college should address the inadequacy of its library collections. (Standard II.C.1)
8. 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)
9. The college should complete and maintain scheduled employee evaluations. (Standard III.A.1.b)

10. 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)
11. The college should assign a high priority to attaining long-term financial stability. (Standard III.D)
12. The college should develop and execute enrollment management strategies to achieve stable enrollment and growth. (Standard III.D)
13. 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)

Responses to the Previous Team's Recommendations

The college has made progress addressing the twelve recommendations made as a result of the comprehensive accreditation visit conducted in March 2000. The level of progress varies for each recommendation, with much of what has been accomplished occurring within the last year. Be that as it may, the team believes West Los Angeles College is improved compared to six years ago. 2005-2006 is a seminal year for affecting change at West Los Angeles College.

As noted in the Focused Midterm Report submitted by the evaluation team which visited the college in November 2002, appropriate progress was made to respond to the two key recommendations which called for a completed master plan that integrated all aspects of planning and the creation of a functioning participatory governance structure. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, accepted the Focused Midterm Report at its meeting in January 2003. The college was commended for its response to planning and for strengthening its structure for participatory governance.

Nonetheless, the midterm evaluation report submitted by the evaluation team also encouraged ongoing use and development of the college's recently developed planning and governance processes. It appears the progress reported in November 2002 diminished between November 2002 and August 2005, though it is encouraging that there is recent evidence that aspects of planning and governance are again being continuously strengthened.

West Los Angeles College has started to address the previous team's twelve recommendations and should continue to steadily advance the progress made to date. The previous team's twelve recommendations and the progress made towards those recommendations follows:

Recommendation 1: The college should complete the master planning process assuring that program review, educational master planning, financial planning, and facilities planning are integrated.

The college has completed, with the assistance of consultants, the educational master plan. There is little evidence that the educational master plan has been used to guide the college's direction in areas other than facility planning. This recommendation has not been fully implemented and remains a work in progress.

Recommendation 2: The college should create a functioning structure for participatory governance.

The college has renewed its commitment to effective governance and inclusion of all college constituencies by forming the College Council. Members of the constituent groups are working collectively to understand issues and make recommendations based on shared interests. This recommendation was effectively implemented.

Recommendation 3: The college should integrate research and evaluation of data into the various planning processes, and include a greater focus on outcomes, particularly with respect to persistence, transfer, occupational placement, and other measures.

The college has recently re-invigorated institutional research and, along with district reports, provides information on institutional outcomes, including course retention and success, persistence and other measures. It is not clear that this information has been integrated into planning processes, although it is "received" and "reviewed" by committees. The implementation of this recommendation remains a work in progress.

Recommendation 4: The college should develop and evaluate strategies to ensure the communication, use, and integration of existing and planned research and evaluation throughout the college community. This will further college efforts to develop a process where decisions are based on a culture of evidence.

The college has begun refining the program review process, including the identification of key performance indicators and standard reports, with resource requests tied to performance indicators. All programs, including student services and administrative services, complete a brief annual program review and a comprehensive program review is scheduled every six years. The college has created a program review committee and a subcommittee that reviews and validates the comprehensive program reviews. Those reports are then received by the faculty senate. The receipt of reports seems to be the extent of the use and integration of research. There is little evidence that program review has contributed to establishing a culture of assessment or that evaluative outcomes are used for planning. The recommendation has not been fully implemented.

Recommendation 5: It is recommended that the college develop and implement a plan for effective integration and coordination of basic skills offerings in mathematics, English, and learning skills to meet the needs of under prepared students, improve retention, and allow students to progress through the curriculum, and achieve educational goals.”

Since the last report the basic skills program is far less fragmented and there is a college wide focus on improving basic skills in math and English. Using Title V funding, discipline faculty from English and mathematics are including a computer aided instruction (CAI) basic skills component along side the basic math and English courses, as well as a personal development course that teaches good study skills. The CAI component, though required, was not universally enforced in the English classes although there is now greater compliance. Instructors and students value this approach to basic skills although the data on student achievement is mixed. Basic skills course completion rates have increased slightly from 61 percent in fall 2001 to 64 percent in fall 2004. The pairing of personal development courses with math has also yielded mixed results. Compliance with this recommendation is still a work in progress.

Recommendation 6: The college should improve the coordination of counseling services to better serve students in a timely and effective manner.

The 1994 team recommended “that the college immediately implement a process to alleviate both the problematic reporting structure, as well as communication barriers that exist among counselors and between counselors and other college segments.” The current student services functional chart indicates that categorical programs for special populations of students are reporting to different administrator and thereby continue to fragment into silos the dissemination of services.

The research to identify specific counseling needs has not been completed. Some counselors are required to split their time between programs to meet student needs. Part time faculty counselors have been hired to replace two full time counselors who are assigned to other college functions. Due to budget cuts, specialized counseling for students with disabilities is supported only by general counselors. Student access to counseling is being facilitated by three initiatives: 1) Counselors are serving more students through the teaching of personal development classes that enroll students in linked math and English classes and are funded through a federal grant initiative. 2) The fall 2002 installation of computer assisted scheduling and reporting. 3) The development of electronic reporting of student educational plans. This recommendation has not been fully met.

Recommendation 7: In the absence of a student union or cafeteria, the college should provide an appropriate space for students to interact and enjoy a sense of community.

The college has not adequately responded to the recommendation. However, a preliminary solution was implemented by designating space for the Associated Students

Organization. In the long term, the college's plan for the construction of the student services building will fully address this recommendation. Key services will be housed in the new facility, which is designed to provide students with the convenience of a one-stop center for their administrative transactions. The new building, intended for construction in 2007, will bring together the key student services and programs under one roof. The new facility will address the continuing concern for needed food services, meeting rooms, and social areas that enhance student interaction, and thereby create an improved campus atmosphere.

Recommendation 8: The college should take the steps necessary to ensure the currency of the library collection and other learning resources.

This recommendation had not been met. The institution admits that there is and has been a lack of funding, which is the main obstacle to providing an adequate and up-to-date library collection. A collection of books in electronic format has been added to the library's collection in an effort to maintain currency and diversity of holdings. Electronic periodical and reference databases have also been added to alleviate the problem. Librarians follow newly-devised strategies to select materials, including considering student requests, librarian observations, and faculty suggestions for purchases; these are then collected, prioritized, and purchased as funding becomes available. A rotating schedule allows librarians to scan each area of the collection for gaps to fill, and discipline faculty are consulted to ensure that the entire library collection is reviewed. Reference databases have been added through restricted state funding for training and technology and federal funding for special programs such as vocational education.

The acquisitions librarian has maximized the purchasing power of limited funding by delaying acquisition of new key reference books until deep discounts are offered when new editions are published. Although this does not fully solve the problem of access to current information, it does provide an avenue to slightly more current information than what would have been available without the purchase of somewhat dated materials.

Recommendation 9: Regular evaluation of all staff should be monitored and documented.

In spite of some progress, the college has not adequately responded to the previous team's recommendation. The self-study indicates that each vice president's division now has systems to track whether employees are being evaluated, but that the evaluation tracking systems have determined that some permanent employees are not being regularly evaluated. This was affirmed in interviews with employees during the visit.

Recommendation 10: An appropriate level of custodial services and physical plant maintenance should be identified and addressed.

The college has not adequately responded to the prior teams' recommendation. The current self-study indicates that some effort has been made to improve custodial services and plant maintenance by securing funding for one additional custodial position. Findings indicate the position is funded with parking revenues. Furthermore, two

custodians, as provided by their union contract, have requested and will be granted transfers. Although the transfers will provide West Los Angeles College with budget relief, it heightens the need for custodial support for the college. The college continues to struggle to provide appropriate levels of services for plant maintenance.

Recommendation 11: The governing board should undertake an evaluation of its practices and policies.

The district governing board conducted a self-evaluation in September 2005 at a retreat that is planned to be an annual event. The results of this self-evaluation (IV.B-3) indicate a high overall degree of effectiveness and productivity. On a 4.0 scale (1.0 lowest), the Board ranked itself 3.5 overall in 22 areas including administration, finance, community relations, diversity and bond policies.

Recommendation 12: The college should improve faculty participation on college committees and other forms of wider service to the institution.

This situation has not remedied itself. The results of the 2005 self-study college questionnaire (IV.A-5) indicate that more than 43 percent of the full time faculty attended only one to three meetings in the past academic year. In meetings with various groups on campus, it was often stated that many departments are rarely represented on campus committees. For example, it was stated that the Curriculum Committee meetings are usually not represented by departments unless they are attempting to get committee approval for new classes.

Eligibility Requirements For Accreditation Certification of Continued Compliance

1. Authority

West Los Angeles College (West) is a public two-year community college, established in 1969 and operating under the authority of the State of California, the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, and the Board of Trustees of the Los Angeles Community College District. The college is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

2. Mission

The West mission statement was last amended in October 1997, and the statement was approved by the district governing board in March 2000. The mission statement was last reviewed by the college community in spring 2005. The mission statement is published and supported by the college community.

3. Governing Board

The governing board of the Los Angeles Community College District consists of seven members elected by voters to four year terms. A student trustee is selected annually by the Associated Student Organizations of the nine colleges that comprise the multi-college Los Angeles Community College District.

The governing board is an independent, policy making body, in accordance with the California Education Code. The board is responsible for the quality and integrity of the institutions that comprise the nine college district. The governing board has a Conflict of Interest Code and recently adopted a Statement of Ethical Values and Code of Ethical Conduct.

4. Chief Executive Officer

The chief executive officer of West Los Angeles College is an interim president who commenced duties and responsibilities in August 2005. The interim president is expected to leave this position at the conclusion of the fiscal year on June 30, 2006. The governing board appointed president is expected to assume duties and responsibilities in July 2006.

The chief executive officer for the Los Angeles Community College District is the chancellor. The current chancellor assumed duties and responsibilities in July 1, 2005.

5. Administrative Capacity

West employs qualified personnel with appropriate experience to support the college mission and assure the quality and integrity of programs and services. The sufficiency of staff to conduct the operations associated with West Los Angeles College is questionable in every classification of employee. Several administrative positions are vacant, many academic disciplines are without full time faculty, and the classified staff is scant. Many employees noted the shortage of personnel. A staffing needs assessment and organizational study is recommended to effectively allocate human resources.

6. Operational Status

West has been in continuous operation since 1969. The college enrolls nearly 8,300 students in day, evening, and weekend classes in varying lengths to accommodate student needs.

7. Degrees

The current college catalog lists 41 associate degrees, 14 certificates of completions, and 26 skill certificates. According to the annual 2004-2005 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the college awarded 342 associate degrees and 292 certificates.

8. Educational Programs

West offers a wide variety of educational programs, academic and vocational, for both credit and non-credit. The college's programs and services adhere to levels of quality and rigor appropriate to the degrees and certificates offered.

9. Academic Credit

West awards academic credit in a manner that is consistent with the Carnegie formula.

10. Student Learning and Achievement

West has identified nine institutional student learning outcomes and has developed a model that provides instructors with a guideline to follow that will assist in establishing expected student learning outcomes at the program and course levels. All courses are expected to incorporate at least two of the expected nine institutional outcomes.

Basic skills course completion rates for the period 2001-2004 indicate approximately 64% of students successfully complete with a grade of A, B, C, or pass. The student retention rate is approximately 83 percent, with a course success rate of about 64 percent. Student persistence rates from fall to spring term show that for the period fall 2001 to fall 2005, between 55 percent and 68 percent of students re-enroll.

11. General Education

The general education requirements for the associate degree include demonstrated proficiency in reading, writing, computational skills, oral communication, and technological awareness. The associate degree requires a minimum of 60 units. West offers two general education plans: Plan A for majors, which requires less than 36 units, must complete a minimum of 30 units of general education, and Plan B for majors, which requires 36 or more units, must complete a minimum of 18 general education units. Students must earn a grade of "C" or better in all work attempted.

12. Academic Freedom

West maintains an atmosphere where intellectual freedom and academic independence prevail. Faculty and students are free to examine and test knowledge appropriate to disciplines. Governing board policy exists that recognizes "that academic freedom is essential to excellence in education."

13. Faculty

West's full time faculty numbered 110 at the time of the visit. Additionally, nearly 300 part time faculty provide key instructional, library and counseling support. Faculty meet the teaching and minimum qualifications for the discipline they teach and the area they serve. Faculty have primary responsibility for curriculum and other academic and professional matters.

14. Student Services

Student services include a full range of comprehensive programs to support student learning.

15. Admissions

The admission policy of the college is consistent with state law as reflected in the governing board policy.

16. Information and Learning Resources

West provides access to information and learning resources located in the Library and Learning Resource Center. An automated library system offers an electronic book collection, and research and periodical data bases. Library hours and resources are limited and dated, but internet enabled computer stations offer access to an on-line catalog of print books, e-books, and videos.

17. Financial Resources

The college is challenged by fiscal constraints that are associated with a decline in student enrollment. The college's general fund allocation is derived from a formula driven primarily by enrollment measured in full time equivalent students (FTES). Fewer students generate less revenue to support an institutional budget that has little room for expenses other than fixed costs associated with employee compensation and campus infrastructure.

18. Financial Accountability

A review of the audited financial statements revealed that the district complied with accepted accounting principles, state compliance requirements, and federal program requirements. No material weakness was identified involving internal controls. Long-term debt, capital leases, and other liabilities are kept current, and there is no significant audit finding.

19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation

The college's master plan was created in 2001-03 and includes educational, facilities and Information Technology plans. There is evidence that planning does occur for all aspects of college operations, but it does not appear that planning is integrated or that the master plan guides annual planning, except in the area of facilities. While work remains to refine, integrate, and assess planning, the college has laid the foundation for the development of information based decision making and a reiterated cycle of planning.

20. Public Information

The college catalog, schedule of classes, and the web site each contain information about the college, its faculty, programs, services, and requirements. Included in the Schedule of Classes are the college's values and mission statement, institutional student learning outcomes, admission requirements, student fees, and matriculation process, including registration

