



ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR
COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

CORE INQUIRIES

Mt. San Antonio College
1100 N. Grand Avenue
Walnut, CA 91789

The Core Inquiries are based upon the findings of the peer review team that conducted Team ISER Review on October 18, 2023.

Matthew Wetstein
Team Chair

Contents

Peer Review Team Roster..... 3
Summary of Team ISER Review..... 4
Core Inquiries..... 5

Mt. San Antonio College

Peer Review Team Roster

Team ISER Review

October 18, 2023

Dr. Matthew Wetstein, Team Chair Cabrillo College President	Dr. Pedro Avila, Vice Chair Gavilan College President
ACADEMIC MEMBERS	
Dr. Linda Carvalho Cooley Reedley College Communication Professor	Christy Karau Sierra College Professor of Management
Greg McCormac Folsom Lake College Dean of Instruction	
ADMINISTRATIVE MEMBERS	
Dr. Mark Fields College of Siskiyous Vice President of Academic Affairs	Dr. Paul Murphy Allan Hancock College Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness
Claudette Dain Citrus College Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services	Ulises Velasco Mendocino College Vice President of Student Services
ACCJC STAFF LIAISON	
Dr. Gohar Momjian ACCJC Vice President	

Summary of Team ISER Review

INSTITUTION: Mt. San Antonio College

DATE OF TEAM ISER REVIEW: October 18, 2023

TEAM CHAIR: Matt Wetstein

A nine-member accreditation peer review team conducted a Team ISER Review of Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC) on October 18, 2023. The Team ISER Review is a one-day, off-site analysis of an institution's self-evaluation report. The peer review team received the college's institutional self-evaluation report (ISER) and related evidence several weeks prior to the Team ISER Review. Team members found the ISER to be a comprehensive, well written, document detailing the processes used by the College to address Eligibility Requirements, Commission Standards, and Commission Policies. The team confirmed that the ISER was developed through broad participation by the entire College community including faculty, staff, students, and administration. The team found that the College provided a thoughtful ISER containing several self-identified action plans for institutional improvement. The College also prepared a Quality Focus Essay.

In preparation for the Team ISER Review, the team chair attended a team chair training workshop on August 1, 2023, and held a pre-review meeting with the college CEO and Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) on August 28, 2023. The entire peer review team received team training provided by staff from ACCJC on August 30, 2023. Prior to the Team ISER Review, team members completed their team assignments, identified areas for further clarification, and provided a list of requests for additional evidence to be considered during Team ISER Review.

During the Team ISER Review, team members spent the morning discussing their initial observations and their preliminary review of the written materials and evidence provided by the College for the purpose of determining whether the College continues to meet Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and US ED regulations. The team also reviewed additional evidence submitted by the College. In the afternoon, the team further synthesized their findings to validate the excellent work of the college and identified standards the college meets, as well as developed Core Inquiries to be pursued during the Focused Site Visit, which will occur during the week of February 26, 2024.

Core Inquiries are a means for communicating potential areas of institutional noncompliance, improvement, or exemplary practice that arise during the Team ISER Review. They describe the areas of emphasis for the Focused Site Visit that the team will explore to further their analysis to determine whether standards are met and accordingly identify potential commendations or recommendations. The college should use the Core Inquiries and time leading up to the focused site visit as an opportunity to gather more evidence, collate information, and to strengthen or develop processes in the continuous improvement cycle. In the course of the Focused Site Visit, the ACCJC staff liaison will review new or emerging issues which might arise out of the discussions on Core Inquiries.

Core Inquiries

Based on the team's analysis during the Team ISER Review, the team identified the following core inquiries that relate to potential areas of clarification, improvement, or commendation.

Core Inquiry 1: Human Resources Evaluation Processes

The team's review of evaluation processes for all personnel suggests that the college has appropriate procedures in place for regular and timely evaluations but was concerned that the ISER did not identify the percentage of evaluations that were up-to-date and filed in a timely manner.

Standards or Policies: Standard III.A.5

Description:

The team reviewed the evidence in the ISER and associated policies and bargaining agreements related to personnel evaluation processes. During its ISER review, the team reviewed an updated schedule of evaluation of College personnel and observed that as many as 72% and 45% of classified evaluations were behind schedule (depending on the bargaining unit). Additionally, 44% of full-time faculty evaluations were behind schedule. The data indicate that formal, timely evaluations may have fallen behind during the COVID-19 pandemic and the post-pandemic period.

The team would like to learn more about the college's efforts to get back on track for evaluation processes being conducted in a regular and timely manner.

Topics of discussion during interviews:

The team will be interested in talking to units at the College that have responsibility for keeping managers on track for evaluation processes (Human Resources leaders and staff). The topics of discussion will include: what mechanisms are used by the College to keep managers up to date on evaluation processes? Is there a spreadsheet for tracking evaluations? Who contacts managers about evaluation timelines? How does the CEO or VP of HR ensure that evaluations are prioritized when they are behind schedule?

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:

Updated evidence reflecting the College's progress on completed evaluations closer to the focused site visit.

Request for Observations/Interviews:

Vice President of Human Resources, HR staff, and other administrators responsible for completing evaluations.

Core Inquiry 2:

The team would like to further understand the process for evaluating the college’s governance structure to assure integrity and effectiveness and how the process is used for improvement.

Standards or Policies: Standard I.B.7, IV.A.7

Description:

The team noted the ISER indicated a committee self-evaluation process is used to evaluate the College's governance structure, but the evidence provided was a review of purpose statements and committee structure. The team seeks to further understand how the College evaluates its governance processes to assure effectiveness in supporting academic quality and accomplishment of its mission, and how the evaluation process has been used to make changes/improvements to the governance process. The team noted new, additional evidence provided for Standard III.D.3 indicated a review of the PIE Resource Request process. However, the team seeks a better understanding of the overall governance evaluation process.

The team noted the College has identified an improvement plan to improve the systematic assessment and evaluation of its governance processes, noting the Faculty Senate has started a Task Force to review AP 3255 (Participation in Local Decision Making). However, it was not clear to the team, from the ISER, where the college is in the process of improving the description of governance roles. New additional evidence reviewed by the team suggests there is a President’s Advisory Council workgroup to review AP 3255 as of the summer of 2023, and that the workgroup will develop a new Governance Handbook by summer 2024.

Topics of discussion during interviews:

The team would like to understand, through inquiry and evaluation, how the college evaluates the effectiveness of its governance structure. The team is interested in learning how the review and revision of AP 3255 is progressing. How is the college making changes in its review of governance structures and processes?

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:

How does the college evaluate the effectiveness of its governance structure? What is the status of the work the PAC workgroup is doing and what changes are identified for improvement related to the procedures identified in AP 3255? Are there minutes from PAC meetings or the Work Group that can document progress on this effort?

Request for Observations/Interviews:

The team will be interested in interviewing key governance committee leaders and college leaders: Institutional Effectiveness Committee members, PAC Committee members, the Cabinet, Faculty Senate leaders.

Core Inquiry 3: The team would like clarification on the timely and regular review of Board Policies and Procedures.

Standards or Policies: Standard IVC.7, particularly the section that states: “The board regularly assesses its policies and bylaws for their effectiveness in fulfilling the college/district/system mission and revises them as necessary.”

Description:

The College self-identified an improvement plan to strengthen “the comprehensive review and revision process of Board Policies and Administrative Procedures.” Additional evidence was provided that depicts a recent evaluation of Board Policies, particularly a tracking spreadsheet and process with dates that allowed the Team to assess timeliness of BP and AP review. At the time of the ISER review, 15 of 36 Board policies in the 2000 series (pertaining to the Board of Trustees) were last reviewed or revised in 2016 or earlier.

Topics of discussion during interviews:

Has the College been able to utilize the tracker to bring outdated BPs and APs up to date? Has the College found this process effective? Has the college made progress on updating Board Policies relating to the Board of Trustees (the 2000 series)?

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:

An update to the document currently titled “IV.C.7 New Evidence Copy of Project (CN)-2.21.22.pdf.” Evidence from board meeting minutes documenting approval/review of BP’s.

Request for Observations/Interviews:

The Team seeks clarification from the President’s Advisory Council or workgroup tasked with this BP and AP Maintenance plan on institutional progress and a status update.

Core Inquiry 4: The team would like to further understand how the College ensures regular and substantive interaction between students and instructors in distance education courses.

Standards or Policies: Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education

Description:

The team reviewed a random sample of distance education sections from the spring term of 2023 and found a notable number of sections did not appear to have regular and substantive interaction between students and instructors. In response to requests for additional evidence, the college provided a handbook for distance education that is pending approval. Faculty are trained with skills and pedagogy for online teaching (SPOT) certification process. In addition, AP 4105 describes requirements for online course curriculum approval, faculty teaching certification requirements, privacy, regular and substantive interaction, accessibility, equity, and evaluation of faculty members. The faculty bargaining agreement (Article 13 A4a) outlines the evaluation process for distance education courses.

Topics for Discussion:

The team is interested in knowing where the college is in the stages of implementing the processes detailed in the DE handbook. What impact has this process (if any) had on improving regular and substantive interaction? How does the college monitor regular and substantive interaction is taking place in DE course sections? How does the college support faculty who need to improve their regular and substantive interaction with students?

Evidence:

If available, the team would benefit from data for distance education courses that show the percentage of DE courses evaluated and timelines for such reviews. If available, can the team see an example of the peer review form for DE teaching (the H.4. C. form) and/or learn how often they are completed? Another sample of random Distance Education classes from Fall 2023 may provide evidence of regular and substantive interaction in DE courses.

Request for Observations/Interviews:

Interviews with faculty involved in distance learning; Distance Learning Committee members; Instructional Deans and other supervisors conducting evaluations of faculty.

Core Inquiry 5: The Team was pleased to read about the Gray/Red Shirt Academic Support Program (GRASP) and Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) programs, which are aimed at strengthening student leadership, retention and involvement in pursuit of student success. The team would be greatly interested in reviewing additional success information pertaining to the effectiveness of these programs.

Standards or Policies: Standard II.C.4.

Description: In its narrative pertaining to student co-curricular and athletics programs, the College highlighted the GRASP and LEAD programs. The goals of these programs seem to significantly strengthen the College's commitment to the educational experience of its students. While some information was included, the Team received minimal information about the effectiveness of both programs. The Team is greatly interested in receiving success data pertaining to these programs. Additionally, an expansion of the narrative would be beneficial, including the College's assessment of the programs' impact on the student body. Such information would help the team better understand their importance and impact.

Topics of discussion during interviews:

Has the College identified measurable successes among its participants in the GRASP and LEAP Programs? Are the programs having a measurable impact on student retention and completion? Have they aided retention efforts? How do participants compare to non-participants?

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:

A brief analysis pertaining to the effectiveness of the GRASP and LEAP programs would be greatly appreciated. The analysis should aim to answer the above questions to aid the team in better appreciating the work the College is doing to support students.

Request for Observations/Interviews:

Engaging the Athletic Director, Director of Student Life, VPSS and VPAA to better understand the programs.