

## **Evaluation Report**

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

A Confidential Report Prepared for  
The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited  
Mt. San Antonio College from March 6 through March 9, 2017.

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Chair

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March 6–9, 2017**

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## Summary of Evaluation Report

<b>Institution:</b>	Mt. San Antonio College
<b>Date of Visit:</b>	March 6–9, 2017
<b>Team Chair:</b>	Sunita V. Cooke, Ph.D. Superintendent/President, MiraCosta College

A team of 11 educational professionals made up the accreditation visiting team for Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC) on March 6–9, 2017. The purpose of the evaluation team visit was to determine whether the College continues to meet accreditation standards, eligibility requirements, commission policies, and United States Department of Education (USDE) regulations. The team evaluated how well the College is achieving its stated purposes, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement and submitting recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges regarding the accredited status of the College. In preparation for the visit, the team chair attended team chair training on December 2, 2016, in Sacramento. The team chair and assistant conducted a pre-visit to the campus on January 18, 2017, and met with the president, vice president of instruction/accreditation liaison officer, and administrative assistants supporting the upcoming comprehensive visit. Nine team members received team training provided by ACCJC staff on January 19, 2017.

The evaluation team received the College's Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) and related evidence well in advance of the site visit. Team members found it to be a comprehensive document that detailed processes used by the College, eligibility requirements, commission standards and policies, and USDE regulations. The team confirmed that the ISER was compiled through broad participation by the entire College community, including faculty, staff, students, and administration. The team found that the College provided a very thoughtful ISER and has identified planning items for improvement. The College has identified three areas for continued improvement in quality focus essays. These improvement efforts include integrating key performance indicators (KPI) and institutional effectiveness measures into the Planning for Institutional Effectiveness (PIE) processes; implementing guided pathways; and integrating student success, student equity, and basic skills plans.

Upon the team's arrival Monday morning, March 6, 2017, a tour was provided of the single-college district in Walnut, CA. Mt. SAC has no other sites where 50 percent or more of programs are offered. The team visited with members of the campus accreditation steering committee, at which time discussion took place about upcoming meetings and processes. During the visit, the team conducted approximately 60 formal meetings, interviews, and observations involving College employees, students, and board members. There was ample time for less informal meetings and discussions with the College community. Two open forums allowed the team to interact with approximately 134 members of the College

community (faculty, staff, administrators, and students). The team reviewed numerous materials supporting the ISER electronically, which included documents and evidence supporting the Standards, Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and USDE regulations. Evidence reviewed by the team included, but was not limited to, documents such as the ISER addendum, institutional plans, program review procedures and reports, student learning outcomes evidence, distance education classes, course syllabi, College policies and procedures, enrollment information, committee minutes and material, and College governance. The team also viewed evidence and documentation through the College's portal, and electronic copies stored on a flash drive.

The team greatly appreciated the enthusiasm and support from the College employees throughout the visit. The team appreciated the assistance of key staff members who assisted with requests for individual meetings and other logistical needs throughout the evaluation visit. Campus staff members promptly met every request of the team. The team found a number of innovative and effective practices and programs, and issued a number of commendations to the College. The team found the College satisfies Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and USDE regulations, and issued some recommendations to increase effectiveness.

## **Major Findings and Recommendations of the 2017 External Evaluation Team**

### **Team Commendations**

During the accreditation visit to Mt. SAC, the team recognized several aspects of the College worthy of commendation:

1. The team commends the College for data-informed programming responsive to the needs of students such as library hours, the proximity model for tutoring, the bridge programs, and the diversity of support services for targeted populations, including Veterans, Arise and Aspire.
2. The team commends the College for lowering its federal financial aid cohort default rates to ten percent by voluntarily instituting a default-prevention program, which includes financial literacy workshops, loan counseling, and the designation of a staff member whose sole responsibility is loan default prevention.
3. The team commends the College for effectively integrating a large noncredit program in the College's overall student success and governance structures.
4. The team commends the College for taking steps towards a more inclusive culture, which is supported by the development and implementation of the PIE process.
5. The team commends the College for successfully completing the rigorous testing to achieve fiscal independence status from the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE).
6. The team commends the College for the bold leadership in implementing guided pathways for the benefit of students.

### **Team Recommendations**

As a result of the external evaluation, the team makes the following recommendations:

1. In order to improve and fulfill the intent of the Standard, the team recommends that students receive syllabi in all class sections, which include learning outcomes for the course rather than a link to a website that contains the SLO statements. (II.A.3)
2. In order to improve, the team recommends that the College develop institutional procedures for development, implementation, and evaluation of department-wide examinations to ensure processes are in place to reduce test bias and enhance reliability. These procedures should include participation of the Institutional Research Department. (II.A.8)
3. In order to improve its governance processes and structures, the team recommends that the College evaluate the overall governance structure on a regular and continuous basis and use the results as the basis for improvement. (IV.A.7)

## **Eligibility Requirements**

### **1. Authority**

The team confirmed that Mt. SAC is authorized to operate as a postsecondary, degree-granting institution based on continuous accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The ACCJC is the regional accrediting body recognized by the USDE and granted authority through the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

The College meets the ER.

### **2. Operational Status**

The team confirmed that the College is operational and provides educational services to 29,232 unduplicated student enrollments within degree-applicable credit courses for fall 2015. The College has seen an increase in credit full-time enrollment between 2011/12 to 2015/16. Approximately 74.8 percent of the students are pursuing educational goals that relate to an associate degree and/or transfer.

The College meets the ER.

### **3. Degrees**

The team confirmed the vast majority of the College courses (78 percent) lead to an associate degree or transfer. The College offers a variety of programs and 89 of these lead to associate and transfer degrees.

The College meets the ER.

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

The evaluation team confirmed that the Board of Trustees (BOT) employs a president as the chief executive officer (CEO) of Mt. SAC. The CEO serves as the secretary to the board and the BOT vests requisite authority in the president to administer board policies.

The College meets the ER.

### **5. Financial Accountability**

The team confirmed that the College engages a qualified audit firm to conduct audits of all financial records. The College has had unmodified audits for the past six years, and all results are presented to the BOT and made available to the public.

The College meets the ER.

## Compliance with Federal Regulations and Commission Policies

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

#### Evaluation Items:

X	The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third-party comment in advance of a comprehensive evaluation visit.
X	The institution cooperates with the evaluation team in any necessary follow-up related to the third-party comment.
X	The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission <i>Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions</i> as to third-party comment.

[Regulation citation: 602.23(b).]

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

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

#### Narrative:

Information regarding the College mission, programs, services, locations, and learning outcomes are posted in various locations around campus, in catalog and class schedules, and on the College website. Accreditation information is also included on the website. Flyers for programs with class and certificate information and contact details are also made available online and at the College. Two public forums were held on the Mt. SAC campus during the evaluation team visit. These forums were advertised to the public by email and in hard copy, and also through public board meetings. Approximately 134 people attended the two, open forums and shared information about the College.

The College has fulfilled third-party notifications. The College has posted the report and informed the public of the team visit and open forums through email and public board meetings. The ACCJC has not received any third-party comments.

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

### **Evaluation Items:**

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

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(i); 602.17(f); 602.19 (a-e).]

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

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

### **Narrative:**

Mt. SAC has defined elements of student achievement performance across the College and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. Successful course completion, degree completion, certificate completion (credit, noncredit, career development/college preparation [CDCP]), transfer, career and technical (CTE) measures, and fall-to-fall persistence are the elements of student achievement identified by the College.



These elements of student achievement performance for measurement are appropriate to the College mission.

Additionally, the College has defined elements of student achievement performance within each instructional program, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each of these elements. In programs and fields where licensure is required, the licensure examination pass rates for program completers are included. The College tracks program completion and is still working on more comprehensively monitoring job placement.

The institution-set standards (ISS) for programs across the College are relevant to guide self-evaluation and institutional improvement. The defined elements and expected performance levels are appropriate within higher education. The results of the assessment of data relevant to the ISS are reported regularly across the campus; it is clear that the definition of elements and results are used in program-level and institution-wide planning to evaluate how well the institution fulfills its mission, to determine needed changes, to allocate resources, and to make improvements.

The College analyzes its performance as to the ISS and student achievement, and there have been no instances identified where its performance is not at the expected level.

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

#### **Evaluation Items:**

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

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

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

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

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

BP4025, Philosophy and Criteria for Associate Degree and General Education, generally states the College's philosophy about depth and general education breadth. The College catalog specifies that for an associate degree, a minimum of 60 degree-appropriate units are required with at least 24 units of general education. For an associate of science degree, students must successfully complete all required courses in an approved occupational major and for an associate in arts degree students must complete a pattern of 18 or more units from the courses identified within specific areas of emphasis.

AP 4026, Philosophy and Criteria for International Education, states that international education should encourage programs that support learning about other cultures, global issues, and the exchange of Californians and international students and scholars.

AP 5012 states that International students must complete 12 units of coursework per semester. Currently two study-abroad options are available to students for 12 weeks and 12 units.

AP 4024 defines a unit of credit as 18 lecture contact hours, plus a minimum of 36 additional hours of related independent student work, for a total of 54 hours or 54 laboratory or activity contact hours.

The 2016/17 Mt. SAC catalog summarizes that the standard "unit" represents one hour in class recitation and two hours of outside preparation per week or its equivalent for one semester. By this definition, "unit" is synonymous with "semester lecture hour." In laboratory work and certain activity courses such as kinesiology, choir, crafting, etc., a greater number of in-class hours per week is required for each unit of credit. During intersessions, one unit of credit represents three hours of lecture per week.

The credit hour assignments and degree-program lengths are within the range of good practice in higher education.

The assignment of credit hours and degree-program lengths is verified by the instruction office and the deans and is reliable and accurate across the classroom-based courses, lab courses, distance education classes, and for courses that involve clinical practices such as the nursing program, verified by random checking of the credit course class schedule, and talking to the deans and the vice president of instruction.

Tuition is consistent across degree programs at \$46 per unit for California residents and \$241 per unit for nonresidents.

Any clock-hour conversions to credit hours adhere to the Department of Education's conversion formula. The College's FAA-approved aircraft maintenance program is the sole

program using clock hours. Interviews with College personnel and a survey of the class schedule verified the practice.

The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission “Policy on Institutional Degree and Credit.”

**Transfer Policies**

**Evaluation Items:**

<b>X</b>	Transfer policies are appropriately disclosed to students and to the public.
<b>X</b>	Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to accept credits for transfer.
<b>X</b>	The institution complies with the Commission <i>Policy on Transfer of Credit</i> .

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(viii); 602.17(a)(3); 602.24(e); 668.43(a)(ii).]

**Conclusion Check–Off (mark one):**

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

**Narrative:**

The spring 2017 schedule of classes (p. 16) and catalog (p. 17) offers new students with previous college experiences an opportunity to petition for prerequisite review and approval. The schedule also gives students information on application, new student orientation, placement testing, and educational planning.

The 2016/17 College catalog (p. 44) informs students of the residency requirements for conferral of a degree from Mt. SAC. These include a 12-unit residency requirement in the last semester or a 45-unit residency requirement if the last semester is not at Mt. SAC.

The College website informs students to submit all transcripts from any institutions where coursework may be applied for conferral of a degree and that they must be on file before submission of the petition for graduation.

The 2016/17 College catalog (pp. 23–29) informs students of the ability to use Advanced Placement, Credit by Examination Program, Military Training, and International Baccalaureate credits toward general education credit and/or CSU admission units.

A search for “foreign transcript evaluation” revealed a document on the College website that defines foreign transcript evaluation and summarizes information from the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services.

## **Distance Education and Correspondence Education**

### **Evaluation Items:**

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

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

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

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

### **Narrative:**

The technological needs associated with distance education are delineated and incorporated into technology planning. The Information Technology Department (IT) proactively oversees student verification and single sign-on capabilities.

Exam proctoring for distance education students is also available online and at the College. College budgetary commitments are consistent and indicative of the College's support of its distance education technology infrastructure.

The College addresses distance education planning and procedures in its Online Education Plan, as evidenced by the 2013 Distance Learning Master Plan developed by the Distance Learning Committee (DLC). This group oversees the integrity of distance education offerings and clearly specifies the policies and procedures applicable to distance education courses. Interviews with a sampling of distance faculty and a review of distance education courses confirm the adherence to stated policies.

### **Student Complaints**

#### **Evaluation Items:**

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

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(ix); 668.43.]

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

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

#### **Narrative:**

The College website contains a page entitled Complaints and Grievances that provides an explanation of the various types of complaints and how one goes about filing a complaint. It also provides applicable policies and procedures, and much other useful information. Student complaints are managed in an electronic system called OnBase, which contains the previous

six years (since the last comprehensive visit) of files. The files demonstrate accurate implementation of the complaint policies and procedures.

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

### **Evaluation Items:**

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

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

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

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

### **Narrative:**

The College provides accurate information on its website and catalog about its locations, programs, and policies. Information about accreditation is also found in appropriate locations on the website and catalog. The College has fulfilled third-party notifications. The BOT held public meetings on the ISER. The College has posted the report and informed the public of the team visit and the open forums where comments were encouraged. The College advertised the open forums through emails, hard copies, and announcements at public board meetings.

The ACCJC has not received any third-party comments.

## **Title IV Compliance**

### **Evaluation Items:**

<b>X</b>	The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program, including findings from any audits and program or other review activities by the USDE.
<b>X</b>	The institution has addressed any issues raised by the USDE as to financial responsibility requirements, program record keeping, etc. If issues were not timely addressed, the institution demonstrates it has the fiscal and administrative capacity to timely address issues in the future and to retain compliance with Title IV



	program requirements.
<b>X</b>	The institution's student loan default rates are within the acceptable range defined by the USDE. Remedial efforts have been undertaken when default rates near or meet a level outside the acceptable range.
<b>X</b>	Contractual relationships of the institution to offer or receive educational, library, and support services meet the Accreditation Standards and have been approved by the Commission through substantive change if required.
<b>X</b>	The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission <i>Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations</i> and the <i>Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV</i> .

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

**Conclusion Check-Off:**

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

**Narrative:**

Mt. SAC has maintained unmodified audits for the past six years, demonstrating the fiscal and administrative capacity to address issues, and has held student loan default rates under the USDE threshold. Contractual relationships comply with standards and requirements noted above.

## **Standard I**

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

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

##### **General Observations**

The mission statement describes the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, the types of degrees and credentials offered, and its commitment to student learning and achievement. The mission is central to the work of the College and ensures that all planning processes at the College are used to achieve the goals of the mission statement and strategic directions. Student learning and achievement are central to the mission, vision, and core values of the College.

##### **Findings and Evidence**

The mission statement supports all students in achieving their educational goals, is inclusionary, and provides specific details to the College's purposes. The College develops and implements programs, degrees/credentials, and services that impact student learning and achievement. All planning processes at the College are aimed toward achieving the mission and strategic directions. Student learning and achievement are central to the mission, vision, and core values of the College. (I.A.1)

Through the program review process, called the Planning for Institutional Effectiveness (PIE) process, the College uses data from many levels of the institution to monitor progress on student learning outcomes, program-level outcomes, and institutional-level outcomes. Gaps identified through PIE are prioritized and resources are allocated in line with the mission and strategic goals. (I.A.2, I.A.3)

The current mission statement was most recently approved by the BOT in February 2016. The mission statement is published on the Mt. SAC website, in the College catalog, and various publications. The mission statement is also posted in various locations on the College campus. The College performs an annual review of the mission statement and any changes are approved by the BOT. (I.A.4)

##### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The College meets Standard I.A.

The Mt. SAC mission statement defines the broad educational purposes, intended student population, and commitment to student learning. Programs and services for students are reflected in the mission, and the current statement, which is widely published, and was approved by the BOT in February 2016.

The mission guides institutional planning and decision making and is central to program review and resource allocation.

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

### **General Observations:**

The College demonstrates a commitment to dialogue on the quality of student learning outcomes, student equity, and institutional effectiveness. The PIE processes provide a collective understanding of the College's structure of participatory governance and goal-based, data-informed dialogue processes that rely on the value of data, research, and the use of evidence to determine the quality of student learning and achievement.

### **Findings and Evidence:**

The College's governance structure follows an intricate, tiered system with focused goals, purpose, functions, and reporting protocols. The President's Advisory Council (PAC), an overarching governance committee, provides guidance to second-tier governance, operational, and Academic Senate committees to ensure long-term stability, direction and focus, success of the institution, and improvement to the College's PIE processes. Committees vary based on purpose and the type of recommendations they provide that may impact institutional policies, procedures, processes, local projects and operations, and academic and professional matters.

The composition of committees is broad-based with clear functions that provide meaningful data to strengthen the College's dialogue with much consideration on academic quality, federal and state regulations and requirements, institutional policies, research, equity, institutional effectiveness, and the assessment of student learning and achievement. Committees follow reporting protocols that strengthen the dialogue at various levels and allows the College to monitor the levels of dialogue through its PIE processes. The team found evidence in many places where dialogue is captured and used to inform and improve PIE processes. Evidence includes committee minutes, annual reports, data-distribution facts, and goals and accomplishment reports that are accessible on the College's website. The dialogue on student learning outcomes assessment serves as the basis to improve the College's PIE processes towards achieving its educational goals as stated in its mission. (I.B.1)

The College has identified Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for credit and noncredit courses, certificate and degree programs, and learning support services. Course SLOs are aligned to Program Level Outcomes (PLOs) and further aligned to Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). The College identified procedures to assure that SLOs designed by faculty are aligned, meaningful, feasible, and measurable; a rubric is used to determine the success criteria of the course outcomes. The team found through interviews with Academic Senate committee(s) and evidence provided that some course syllabi did not include full SLO

statements, and in most of these cases, a weblink is provided on course syllabi for students to access course SLOs on the College's website.

The team, through interviews with Academic Senate members, found that the College emphasizes the importance of assessment and the use of assessment data to inform planning and program effectiveness. Academic Senate committees provide clear processes and procedures for the review of SLOs, courses, programs, certificates, and degrees. An example would include the outcomes plan approved by the Academic Senate, which requires faculty to utilize assessment data to guide curriculum design and planning, pedagogy, and decision making at the department/unit and institutional levels. The Outcomes Committee provides SLO updates to program faculty, accessible on the College's website, and provides data on the committee's goals and accomplishments. The team confirmed through interviews with the Outcomes Committee that 99.5 percent of courses with SLOs have been assessed. The team also found that from 2015 to 2016, there has been a 2.9 percent increase on learning-support activities mapped to the College's ILOs.

The assessment of SLOs is supported by Board Policy (BP) and Administrative Procedure (AP) 4020. Student learning outcomes are aligned to the mission of the College and are assessed periodically and evaluated annually following a four-year course review cycle. PLOs are published in the College's catalog and made available on its website. SLO assessment data are utilized at all levels of the institution to improve educational goals, planning, and allocation of resources. (1.B.2, ER 11)

The College has defined institution set standards (ISS) appropriate to its mission. ISS were established through a collaborative process facilitated by Academic Senate Resolution 2013–07 of Institutional Standards for Student Completion, which resulted to the establishment of the Institutional Standards for Student Completion Task Force, composed of managers and faculty. Using the Accreditation Standards requirements as a guide for setting ISS, the College has defined the following ISS of student achievement that include:

- Successful course completion rate: 67.89 percent (grade A, B, C, P)
- Student persistence:
  - Credit persistence: 56.85 percent (fall-to-fall)
  - Noncredit persistence: 53.73 percent (fall-to-spring)
- Student degree completion: 1,761.3 (annual)
- Student transfer to four-year colleges/universities: 1,637 (annual, UC and CSU)
- Student certificate completion: 911.3 (annual)
- CDCP certificates: 1,285.3 (noncredit)

In addition, the College's ISS for successful completion of a license or certificate ranges from 75 percent to 93 percent based on individual program data. (I.B.3)

The College's ISS are disaggregated according to student successful course completion, persistence rates, number of degrees awarded, number of transfers to four-year colleges/universities, and number of certificates awarded. The College also provides data on credit course completion rates by means of delivery mode measuring the success in hybrid,

online, and traditional courses. All courses, whether traditional or distance education (DE), follow the College's course offering requirements and procedures to assure access to institutional resources.

Policy requirements for DE were initiated by the Academic Senate and the Office of Instruction to meet Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations requirements for online learning regarding the review and evaluation of existing distance learning courses, and to propose policy for those currently teaching and those who may wish to teach online or televise courses in the future. Policy sections encompass the creation of new courses and faculty certification. (I.B.3, I.B.6)

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) assures that PIE and planning processes are cyclical and systematic to determine the quality of the College's educational programs and services. An institutional PIE summary is compiled annually by the IEC, which provides an overall analysis of the College's planning and assessment of its educational goals. The institutional PIE analysis encompasses data from all levels that include planning context and data trends, alignment and progress on College goals, student learning outcomes and achievement, team goals, and requested resources. Additionally, the IEC provides annual recommendations to improve the PIE processes. The team found strong evidence in the College's student equity initiatives where student achievement, SLO, and program review data are analyzed and utilized for planning and the allocation of resources to mitigate performance gaps. (I.B.6, I.B.7, ER 19)

The College ensures that policies and procedures are regularly evaluated with each accreditation cycle. Changes in BPs and APs can also occur when needed operationally and when the Community College League of California (CCLC) sends an update. AP 2410 describes the process for revision of the College's BPs and APs and the constituencies involved in the review of policies. The College is effective in its planning process and uses data collected from the PIE process to foster improvement. The evidence supports a process of review for integrated planning, evaluation of student success measures, and inclusions of resource allocations based on planning practices and assessment data. (I.B.7)

There is a variety of evidence in the College's ISER and website that demonstrates how the College communicates the results of assessment and evaluation. Board reports are made available on the College's website. Board reports share current trends and report on campus initiatives and progress. Other information can be found in committee minutes, annual reports, data distribution facts, outcome assessment, and goals and accomplishment PIE reports that are also accessible on the College's website. Updates on the College's goals are also provided by the PAC in a goals and progress report, which is available on the committee's webpage. It is evident that the College evaluates the results of assessment and evaluation to understand its strengths and weaknesses as noted in its Quality Focus Essay (QFE) action plans. (I.B.8)

The College's PIE structure informs planning, assessment, and program review to determine its educational goals and resource needs. The evidence clearly reveals a college culture of dialogue across campus revolving on educational goals, planning, and assessment of student

learning. These plans are connected to resource allocation and assessed for impact that meets the expectation of “closing the loop.” The refinement of the PIE process is annually evaluated and supported by the IEC. The committee provides input and guidance to all PIE processes and is one group that directly supports the success of this process. The Committee is now seeking to create plans for an institutional PIE. (I.B.9, ER 19)

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The College meets Standard I.B.

The institution uses analysis of data (both quantitative and qualitative) and continuously evaluates, plans, and implements PIE processes to improve its educational goals, programs, services, policies, and mission. There is evidence of broad-based participation and dialogue concerning strategic planning, program review, and institutional assessment strategies designed to meet College goals.

The College has current institutional plans and consistently measures success toward those plans. There is direct evidence that College goals are developed with the knowledge and understanding of the College community. The cycle of evaluation incorporates integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation. It was clear from the IEC that both qualitative and quantitative data are collected to measure the effectiveness of its processes.

There is evidence that qualitative and quantitative data are collected to support the achievement of goals for DE courses, and students attending DE courses receive the same student-services support as traditional classes. Allocation of funds to DE classes and programs is based on the PIE processes.

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

#### **General Observations**

Mt. SAC is committed to integrity at all levels, including its relationships with external agencies. The College reviews and updates policies and publications, and ensures accuracy of information available to constituents in print and electronic format. The College catalog includes all required elements, including policies and statements regarding ethical and honest behavior. The catalog and the website also make available information regarding the cost of college, relevant information on assessments of student learning and achievement, and accreditation status. Appropriate descriptions of degrees and certificates, including purpose and course requirements and program outcomes are also included. The faculty contract and student handbooks include a code of ethics and the institution’s academic freedom policy distinguishes between personal conviction and professionally accepted views.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

The College uses multiple methods to communicate information to constituents. Information related to programs and services and student achievement data (including ISS for degrees and certificates, persistence rates, transfer rates, and outcomes data) are provided via the website, emails, text messaging, social media, smart-device apps, press releases, and informal interactions through employee participation in local and statewide organizations. The mission is easily accessible on the website and in the catalog and is accurate. The website also includes extensive information regarding accreditation and accurate information about accreditation status and all its accreditors.

The College has processes in place for review and accuracy of facts, requirements, policies, and procedures. The College reviews policies and procedures through campus committees, individual managers, and vice presidents. CTE program student success data are reviewed by advisory councils and CTE faculty and deans. People who attend OmniUpdate training for updating the website are assigned to all areas of the College. The use of templates and review by area administrators ensure accuracy of information on the website. Information disseminated via text messaging also uses a template and prearranged messages are cleared by the appropriate area lead prior to being sent to ensure appropriateness and accuracy. (I.C.1, I.C.2, ER 20)

The College identifies BPs and APs in need of update and review. Appropriate committees review these policies and procedures and make recommendations for change.

The College provides both print and online versions of the catalog. The accuracy of catalog content is reviewed by department chairs and program coordinators, deans, and the vice presidents for each area. The Office of Instruction works with the Marketing and Communication Office to ensure the accuracy of information and the inclusion of all necessary requirements. A catalog addendum is published for curriculum revisions or updates needed between annual publications. Additional links to BPs and APs are included in the online catalog. (I.C.2, ER 20)

The public is aware of distance education (DE) courses through the website and a list of online offerings is available by using the search menu for “schedule section.” The catalog describes the learning process and accessibility of DE courses with similar information presented in the schedule of classes. APs are applied to both regular and online students and both groups have access to all the resources the College provides. (I.C.2)

The College presents documented assessments of student learning and student achievement. Mt. SAC has a comprehensive student outcomes plan in which courses are written, assessed, and reviewed for course improvement. The College also assesses student learning by evaluating Program Level Outcomes (PLOs), which are derived from course outcomes within each program. Results from course outcomes are used to determine if PLOs are met via a mapping process. General education (GE) outcomes have recently been modified to become ILOs, which are mapped to program outcomes. TracDat reports summarizing outcomes assessed are available for course, program and institutional outcomes. These reports are available on the website. Additionally, a sampling of syllabi revealed that most syllabi contain a link to the outcomes page, while some syllabi contain course SLOs.

Institutional Research collects and tracks data related to course completion, student placement upon entering the College, participation in SSSP Core services, and success rates by gender and race/ethnicity, as well as success in hybrid, online, and traditional classes, fall-to-spring persistence rates, and completion rates of noncredit certificates. The information in the annual report provides current and accurate student achievement and student success data and is posted on the website. In addition, the College's Fact Book includes the ISS and measures deviations from each goal. Degrees earned and transfer rates are presented in the College's Fact Book.

The Student Success Scorecard is available on the website under President and Cabinet notes; this document makes available to the public information regarding student achievement. (I.C.3, ER 19)

The College assures that information about its programs is clear and accurate through a review process that includes individuals responsible for each area, deans, and the vice presidents. The College describes the purpose, content, and course requirements for its certificates and degrees. The team reviewed a sample of degrees and certificates, which clearly list student learning outcomes for each course and outcomes can also be accessed from several locations, including the outcomes website, academic programs, and the catalog. Program outcomes for each degree or certificate and institutional learning outcomes are available on the website and in the catalog. DE students have access to information about their courses and programs in the same manner as traditional students. (I.C.4)

The review of BPs and APs occurs with each accreditation cycle, when needed operationally, and when the CCLC sends an update. This review takes place within the shared governance model of the College. The process is led by PAC. Proposed changes are vetted through governance committees and labor groups, if necessary, for discussion and recommendation. The academic and student services recommendations are viewed by the Academic Mutual Agreement Council (AMAC), which includes members of the Academic Senate, and vice presidents. The PAC makes final policy recommendations to the BOT. Publications are reviewed by offices responsible for the content. The Office of Instruction leads the review of the catalog and Research and Institutional Effectiveness and Marketing and Communication regularly reviews online publications for accuracy. (I.C.5)

The School of Continuing Education policies, procedures, and publications are annually reviewed prior to the beginning of a new academic year. Individual instructional/program areas review their respective materials for any necessary changes and to ensure accuracy of the information presented. Faculty and student handbooks are reviewed and revised by the School of Continuing Education Advisory Team and Division managers during the same annual time period. The information is disseminated via the School's website and hard-copy handouts that are shared throughout the community.

An estimate of the total cost of attending college, including tuition, fees, and other expenses, is available on the webpage through the Mt. SAC cost calculator. A list of specific fees is available on the website under Admissions. Costs are also outlined in the schedule of classes,



the catalog, and student schedules. Fee-based program costs for the Community Education Program are listed on their website and in a brochure. There is also a rental book program and scholarships available to help with expenses. (I.C.6)

The College publishes board policies on academic freedom and responsibility and includes a related statement in the faculty contract. The academic freedom policy is in the print catalog (p. 19) and the board's policy on academic freedom (BP 4030) is also referenced on this page. Both policies are searchable from the online catalog on the website. BP 4030 generally explains the institution's commitment to academic freedom. The policy encourages free and healthy discussions for citizens. Article 18.N of the faculty contract exhibits commitment to protecting faculty rights to exercise academic freedom in their instruction within the parameters of the law. (I.C.7, ER 13)

The College has established and published policies and procedures that promote honesty, responsibility, and academic integrity, which includes student behavior, dishonesty, and the consequences for dishonesty. The student academic honesty policy is included in the College Catalog (p. 398). Students are notified that they may receive a failing grade for academic dishonesty and may be reported to the Student Life Office. Students are also informed of the policy and consequences for violation in the Student Handbook. The institution also maintains BP 4290 and AP 4290 regarding academic honesty, which evidences a commitment to honesty from all members of the academic community. The faculty contract reinforces ethical behaviors by faculty and there is a published Faculty Code of Ethics, adopted 2014. BP/AP 2715–Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice promotes responsibility and integrity of BOT members. (I.C.8)

The College has a policy on academic freedom that distinguishes between personal conviction and professionally accepted views in a discipline. AP 4030 on academic freedom specifically protects the rights of faculty as long as the faculty member separates “personal opinions” from what is “contemporarily regarded as factual.” The AP further states that a professor cannot promote a religious belief. Training on ethics was made available to faculty during a flex day activity on February 19, 2016. Faculty members also indicate that the tenure process at Mt. SAC is rigorous and that faculty who procure tenure have a demonstrable record of ethical behavior. The academic freedom policy is reinforced in the faculty contract (Article 18.N.), and students complete a faculty evaluation survey, which includes a question regarding respect for students and ethical and fair treatment of students. (I.C.9)

The College does not seek to instill specific beliefs or world views. (I.C.10)

BPs and APs related to grievances, student rights, and specific codes of conduct are required for faculty, staff, and administrators. The student code of conduct appears in the Handbook on page 57. Additionally, BP 5500–Standards of Conduct, BP 3900–Freedom of Expression, and BP 3720–Computer Use, as well as AP 7715–Faculty Code of Ethics, further outline and explain expectations of students and staff, and these are all accessible on the website. Counselors actively communicate the code of conduct to students and it is also discussed at

orientation. Several faculty members indicated they also provide this code of conduct in their course syllabus. (I.C.10)

The institution does not offer curricula in foreign locations. (I.C.11)

The College fulfills requirements for disclosure of accreditation status and follows Commission policies and guidelines for institutional reporting. The College communicates its accreditation status openly to the public on the website and includes ample information on the accreditation process. Substantial effort to comply with all standards, regulations, policies, and guidelines is evidenced by the ISER, as well as by the continual accreditation status of Mt. SAC, the included ACCJC letter, and the most recent midterm report. Further, the large list of programs that are accredited by other bodies evidence a commitment to the accreditation process at large. The College demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationship with external agencies and complies with federal and state mandates. Evidence links to all accrediting agencies are included in the report; however, it is difficult to assess consistency in representation due to the sheer number of agencies involved. (I.C.12, I.C.13, ER 21)

The College has no investors and does not respond to a parent organization. (I.C.14)

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The College meets Standard I.C and ER 13, 19, 20, and 21.

Information about the mission, degree and certificate programs, student learning, accreditation, cost of attending, and College policies and procedures is made available by the institution for all constituents. The College has code-of-conduct expectations and an academic freedom statement, which is published and is part of a student evaluation of faculty process. Systems are in place to allow regular evaluation and update of policies, procedures, and publications.

## **Standard II**

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

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

##### **General Observations**

Mt. SAC is a thriving institution with diverse instructional programs, both credit and noncredit, and multiple support systems for different student populations. Mt. SAC offers instructional programs aligned with its mission that are of high quality and are at the appropriate rigor and length ranging from welding to horticulture to transfer programs. All instructional programs are developed and approved through collegial consultation and are assessed regularly in connection with the College's PIE process. This process provides the opportunity for all instructional programs to be reviewed for appropriateness to higher education. There are assessment and evaluation processes in place to verify student learning and achievement, as well as currency of programs. For career and technical education (CTE) programs, advisory committees provide input into content and required industry skills. All programs have learning outcomes that are assessed regularly and that align with ILOs. Overall, the College would benefit from better communication of SLOs to students and more systematic review of learning outcomes for courses and programs.

##### **Findings and Evidence**

At Mt. SAC, credit and noncredit programs are developed consistent with the College's mission. The vice president of instruction and other instructional administrators determine whether a program is needed and whether the College has the resources to support it. The Educational Design Council (EDC) and Curriculum and Instruction Council (C&I) also play a role in approval of programs. Proposals for new programs are typically initiated by a department chair who works with the articulation officer to verify appropriateness and transferability. The College developed a checklist for new programs several years ago, which is available to and used by departments seeking to develop new programs. This checklist addresses the availability of resources to support the program, among other considerations. According to the vice president of instruction, in the future the IEC may play a role in determining whether to move forward with new programs. CTE program development relies on the expertise of industry advisory committees to align curriculum with industry needs. All programs must have program-level outcomes (PLOs) and courses within each program map their SLOs to the program outcomes. The team learned that more than 99 percent of courses are current with SLO assessment, which must take place on a four-year cycle. A review of posted PLO assessments showed that the majority are current in their assessment cycle. (ER 9 and ER 11) (II.A.1)

Faculty, including adjunct faculty, ensure that the content and methods of instruction meet generally accepted academic and professional standards and expectations. Curriculum is reviewed by both the EDC and the C&I after discussion within departments and divisions; distance education courses receive further review by the DLC. The institution faculty have

agreed contractually “to develop and utilize effective pedagogical techniques in order to enhance the communication of ideas and promote optimal student learning, critical thinking, and performance skills” and “to teach subject matter...in compliance with the current course outline of record.” (Article 18.B. of the faculty contract) To ensure consistent instructional quality, the institution has developed systems and procedures for faculty evaluation, as well as course and program development and evaluation. The institution has developed and offers robust professional development for faculty related to student learning and achievement. A new faculty orientation was developed recently, which provides an opportunity for new, full-time faculty to attend regularly scheduled activities for a year. One of the topics this year is equity. Under the auspices of the Outcomes Committee, faculty develop and review learning outcomes in order to make improvements. (II.A.2)

Mt. SAC has established and maintains systems and processes to identify and assess learning outcomes for courses and programs. In courses, SLOs are derived from measurable objectives (MOs) or may be identical to some MOs. This information is published in the TracDat system, which requires login protocols. A random selection of 70 courses was performed and learning outcomes were found for all 70. However, the course outlines do not include SLOs when they are approved and there does not seem to be consistent inclusion of SLOs in all course syllabi. The Academic Senate requires either SLO statements or a link to SLOs on the website in all syllabi. When some team members attempted to access SLOs using the link on the College webpage, it was not consistently functional. Currently, division offices check for SLOs or the link and require that syllabi be amended or produce an appendix if they do not comply. A check of approximately 50 syllabi supplied by the College showed that many contain only the link, rather than SLO statements. Some syllabi had MOs and SLOs, and a few had neither MOs nor SLOs. The Humanities and Social Sciences division provided sample email messages sent to faculty members if a review of the syllabus finds missing or inaccurate information.

Faculty assess SLOs on a four-year cycle determined by each department. The faculty then meet to determine changes based on assessment results. Courses that do not assess SLOs are reportedly deactivated, although College personnel could not provide examples. Courses and programs not reviewed for four years through the curriculum process are deactivated, usually voluntarily, according to AP 4020; however, the EDC monitors and communicates with academic deans and department chairs when courses are approaching this limit to avoid involuntary deactivation. In the current faculty contract, adjunct faculty are compensated for participation in SLO assessment work. PLOs are assessed using SLO results. Department chairs report that their programs are at the beginning of the processes for evaluation of PLO data and they are initially drawing SLO data to the PLOs. The summary report produced by the vice president of instruction on PIE includes examples of using assessment results. (II.A.3)

The institution offers pre-collegiate-level curriculum up to three levels below transfer and distinguishes that curriculum from college-level curriculum on the course outlines of record and in the online catalog descriptions. The institution provides graphical maps for students to visualize the relationships (pathways) of the pre-collegiate to college-level courses. Support for students in pre-collegiate-level courses consists of various forms of tutoring and

supplemental instruction. The bridge program, which is a joint project between Instruction and Student Services, pairs English or math pre-collegiate courses with counseling courses in the summer to help entering students advance to collegiate-level work more quickly. The Library Learning Resources (LLR) Division regularly evaluates their learning support programs to ensure adequate and appropriate learning support. In addition, movement from pre-collegiate to college-level courses is facilitated by learning communities, the Pathways to Transfer Program, and the School of Continuing Education. The School of Continuing Education also provides noncredit courses to assist credit students who lack requisite college-level skills. (II.A.4)

The institution has established and maintains systems and procedures for the regular review of degrees and programs to ensure appropriate practices common to American higher education. Specifically, these reflect appropriate practices required for the California community college system. BP 4020 and BP 4260 outline the standards for curriculum development and sequencing, including prerequisites. AP 4020 does not require programs to develop course sequencing patterns before program approval. Some programs publish their course sequence patterns but this is not consistent across campus. Discussions with deans and department chairs indicate this issue will be resolved as the College develops guided pathways. The recently revised AP 4020 specifies that the Academic Senate “assigns the task for course and program review to the EDC,” which then forwards recommendations to the C&I. The College ensures that degrees require a minimum of 60 units. The institution does not offer a bachelor’s degree but has partnered with Southern Illinois University and Mt. Saint Mary’s University so these institutions can offer bachelor’s degrees on the Mt. SAC campus. (ER 12) (II.A.5)

The institution has established procedures for the ongoing evaluation of enrollment patterns to use in developing the College’s class schedule. Both faculty and deans have access to Argos reports, which provides historical data; the vice president of instruction and other administrators also review placement results to inform English course scheduling. Guided pathways work has also provided the opportunity for faculty to better delineate which courses in a program are essential and this determination drives scheduling. In addition, student services reviews parts of the schedule to ensure the most critical course needs are met. Fewer than five percent of all classes are online, and the team was informed that online offerings and services will be increased if there is student need and institutional support to ensure success. The institution also has established procedures in place to allow department chairs and deans to adjust class schedules during enrollment periods to respond to changes in the enrollment patterns. (II.A.6)

The institution provides face-to-face and online workshops and materials in support of equity in success for all students of the College. Some examples are flex day sessions on culturally responsive practices and improving the campus climate for LGBTQ students. The new faculty orientation has a strong equity focus. Mt. SAC has hosted an annual developmental education conference for 14 years, which brings together Instruction and Student Services staff. The College has established regular assessment and evaluation of instructional programs and learning support services to monitor changing needs of its students. The College has established a Student Equity Committee with broad representation to plan and

oversee the institution's support of the Student Equity Plan. One emphasis in instruction has been "universal design" in order to accommodate the needs of all students, not just one target group. The Student Equity Plan aligns with strategic plan goals and includes a variety of cohort learning groups and "bridge" programs developed for lower-achieving groups of students. Overall, the Student Equity Plan is supporting 56 separate activities and each one is designed to address identified equity gaps. Distance learning students also receive targeted support services, such as Cranium Café for online counseling; however, the College support for distance learning is minimal in terms of staffing and the Distance Learning Master Plan has not been updated since 2013. (II.A.7)

Mt. SAC currently has 15 programs that include department-wide examinations. According to the College, SLOs, PLOs, and often certification standards are used to validate these exams. The evidence included direct assessment of prior learning but does not adequately demonstrate how each program validates the examinations, if and where assessment of prior learning is evaluated, and what processes are in place to reduce test bias, other than faculty review of test results. The School of Continuing Education similarly has faculty meet and review results to determine bias. College personnel confirmed that faculty review questions to ensure they address necessary skills and also review disaggregated test results to look for disproportionate impact; however, research staff are not involved in this analysis nor in examining the college-wide reading requirement for possible disproportionate impact. Research has been most involved with ESL testing. (II.A.8)

The College has established policies and procedures and planning and oversight committee structures to ensure that units of credit awarded are consistent with institutional policies, as well as state and federal regulations. The Outcomes Committee oversees criteria for outcomes development and assessment and monitors the assessment of learning outcomes. The EDC has responsibility for ensuring courses and programs comply with Title 5 and state unit calculations. Mt. SAC defines units of credits in AP 4024. The institution offers one program with courses based on clock hours (aircraft maintenance technology) and the course outlines document the number of clock hours for each course. (II.A.9)

Mt. SAC publishes clearly stated transfer-of-credit policies through the College's online catalog, including clearly stated procedures to facilitate student matriculation. The institution has established BPs and APs to validate equivalencies through review of course descriptions and published learning outcomes. The institution maintains articulation agreements with the California State University system, the University of California system, and the University of Southern California appropriate to its mission. Final confirmation of articulation agreements is done by EDC and C&I after review by the articulation officer. Mt. SAC offers 16 associate degrees for transfer (ADTs) with six more in development. Mt. SAC maintains an internal database of articulated courses for use by transcript evaluators. The College has clearly published policy statements and helpful instructions for students to apply for transfer of credit from other institutions of higher education, as well as non-educational organizations such as the US military. (II.A.10)

The College has designed and published SLO statements for all classes offered by the College, most consistently on the website, and these course-level SLOs map to PLOs and

ILOs. This work has been supported by the Mt. SAC Academic Senate and College leadership. The institution appears to be moving toward a stable culture of evidence in course design and planning. The ILOs are consistent with communication competency, information competency, quantitative competency, analytic inquiry skills, and ethical reasoning. Mt. SAC has been deliberate in engaging diverse perspectives in the development of the ILOs. A review of webpages and the catalog for confirmed all programs have identified program-level outcomes. (II.A.11)

Mt. SAC has established the EDC with the authority to review and make recommendations on GE courses based on the GE philosophy published in its catalog. The institution has established the C&I with authority to review and recommend GE certification and requirements. The procedures for the EDC and C&I rely on faculty expertise in establishing GE courses. ILO #4 addresses student preparation to participate in civil society. ILO #1 (Communication) and #3 (Information Literacy) address skills for lifelong learning. The GE requirements of the institution include arts and humanities, sciences, mathematics, and social sciences coursework. The ILOs and the GE requirements work together to guide faculty and staff in support of student learning, which include student preparation for and acceptance of responsible participation in civil society, skills for lifelong learning and application of learning, a broad comprehension of the development of knowledge, practice, and interpretive approaches in the arts and humanities, sciences, mathematics, and social sciences. (II.A.12)

Mt. SAC complies with the requirement that all degrees include focus in an area of study or core. A review of the 89 associate degrees demonstrated the programs include either a focused study in at least one area of inquiry (e.g., AA-T Mathematics) or in an established interdisciplinary core (e.g., AA Liberal Arts and Sciences, Humanities Emphasis). The College has an established process for development and approval of courses and programs, which relies primarily on the expertise of faculty using SLOs and competencies. Both the EDC and C&I review all courses and programs before forwarding them to the BOT for final approval. The College's website provides links to PLOs for each degree. (II.A.13)

Mt. SAC relies upon external advisories and licensing agencies to ensure the quality of their career technical certificates and degrees. When a program leads to outside licensure examination, the College monitors pass rates to determine that students demonstrate competencies. For CTE programs that do not directly result in outside licensure, advisory committees assist in determining competencies that meet employment standards. CTE deans reported that significant improvement in advisory committee membership has led to demonstrable changes in programs, such as correctional science and family and consumer science. Health programs rely on licensure pass rates and data provided by appropriate boards to determine if students are demonstrating competencies. The team noted that the licensure pass rate goals reported to ACCJC in the annual report seemed low and the vice president of instruction explained that the College took a "conservative" approach, not knowing what penalty might arise from failure to meet the goals. With more clarity, the College may choose to make the goals more aspirational. (II.A.14)

When program requirements are changed or a program is discontinued, Mt. SAC has a provision for catalog rights and faculty can approve substitute courses. In some cases, low-

enrolled courses are supported for up to two years to ensure program completion for students. AP 4021 outlines the process for review of at-risk programs, with discontinuance as one outcome. Recently, the paramedic program went through the process and was revitalized. The procedures have been reviewed in light of the documentation provided by the institution related to this recent at-risk program for paramedics. Enrollment management administrators confirmed that low-enrolled classes are retained long enough to allow students to complete programs of study. (II.A.15)

The College has established processes for development and evaluation of all instructional programs, which include regular review through the College's PIE process. The institution has designed and published an annual planning calendar that establishes due dates for each step in the review process with specific courses and programs scheduled for content review and program effectiveness on a rotating basis. AP 4105 includes DE in this process and was revised in September 2016 to strengthen regular, effective contact. The team confirmed College staff and faculty understand the PIE process, participate in it, and find that it gives them a voice in the governance and resource allocation process. (II.A.16)

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The College meets Standard II.A.

Mt. SAC has adequate processes in place to ensure high-quality courses and degrees. It recently revised its curriculum-approval process to be more streamlined and continues to evaluate CTE programs in the context of licensure requirements and industry needs. It would be beneficial to have a more robust process in place to evaluate new programs before committing resources. All current degrees have required elements, such as GE courses, and the College is moving forward with guided pathways in partnership with student services to provide students a clearer and faster route to educational goals. The College is also infusing an equity focus into its professional development to improve student success.

*In order to improve and fulfill the intent of the Standard, the team recommends that students receive syllabi, in all class sections, that include learning outcomes for the course, rather than a link to a website that contains the SLO statements. (II.A.3)*

*In order to improve, the team recommends that the College develop institutional procedures for development, implementation, and evaluation of department-wide examinations to ensure processes are in place to reduce test bias and enhance reliability. These procedures should include participation of the institutional research department. (II.A.8)*

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

#### **General Observations**

Mt. SAC supports the learning and success of an increasingly diverse student population through student-centered programs and services. The College invests extensive resources and



efforts in student-oriented library and learning support services, such as tutoring for target populations like math students or student-athletes, with options to support both on-campus and online students. The Instruction and Student Services departments coordinate to meet student needs through innovative and effective programs, such as the Summer Bridge Program. The College relies on appropriate expertise to select and maintain educational equipment and materials and regularly evaluates the effectiveness of the library and support services. Overall, the College assesses the needs of students on an ongoing basis and provides the support they need to be successful.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Mt. SAC supports student learning and success with library and learning resources, personnel, and services. These resources and services are linked to student needs and provide curricular support. The College maintains a library on campus with the library catalog available online. It also has “pop-up” libraries at various places on campus to provide opportunities for students to ask questions of librarians. This innovation gives the library greater visibility and gives students greater access to library services. The library publishes and maintains hours of operation weekday mornings, afternoons, and evenings, plus weekend operation. The library maintains a collection of over 95,000 items, including books and periodicals, as well as media and vocational materials. According to gate counters, the library is heavily used (481,000 annual visits), and patterns of attendance are linked to the College’s academic calendar. Library personnel monitor use patterns in addition to regular assessments and surveys of student needs and have responded to the results of these assessments to improve student access. The team noted that the capacity of the library may not accommodate a full student need during the day, as some students were observed sitting on the floor. Sixty-eight computers are available for student use in the library, study rooms, and printing services. The library building also houses the Faculty Center for Learning Technology, which provides workshops and assistance with the institutional transition to Canvas, classroom technology, distance education, and pedagogical support. Professional and Organizational Development (POD) opportunities are scheduled through a monthly calendar available online.

The Learning Resource Center is one of 16 labs on campus that provide research, tutorial, and learning support/tutoring, as well as computer and printing opportunities for students. These tutoring services are spread out among the physical campus, which is quite large (425 acres). Centers include the Writing Center, Language Learning Center (LLC), the WIN Program for student-athletes, Math Activities Resource Center (MARC), and Transfer Math Activities Resource Center (T-MARC). The College has made an effort to provide tutoring through a proximity model. For example, MARC and T-MARC are on the ground floor of the math building. Other resources for students include the Language Learning Center and one-on-one tutoring for all subjects provided by the EOPS/CARE/CalWORKS Tutoring Center. Additionally, a new support program, Tech Ed Resource Center (TERC), opened in the spring of 2016 with a mission to prepare career technical education (CTE) students to succeed academically by offering activities to address their needs.

While these different resource and tutoring centers meet the diverse needs of students, the team found that there was little coordination among them; each program reports to a different supervisor and there is no single voice or administrator to represent tutoring on campus. Some programs, like WIN, have lost space for their program and report that they do not have an avenue to request physical resources. Others, like the Writing Center, are heavily dependent on grant funding, which may be limiting. College employees expressed the desire to go beyond the existing Tutoring workgroup to add a common manager or joint committee to help the group articulate needs and clarify operational expenses.

The College provides multiple modes for ongoing instruction in information competency skills. Information competency is provided through workshops, online and face-to-face credit courses, and online and face-to-face reference desk interactions. The library is currently developing online workshops to be offered through Moodlerooms, although this may change with the institution's transition to Canvas as their learning management system.

The College has hired three new, full-time librarians since 2012. One of the positions is an online learning librarian to support library initiatives through distance learning. Another librarian was hired to support all areas of the library and focus on technology, equity, and outreach. (II.B.1)

The College relies on the expertise of faculty, including librarians, when selecting resources, equipment, and materials to support student success and the achievement of the College mission, as evidenced in the College's "Collection Development Policy and Guidelines" handbook, published in 2012. The Library has representation on the EDC as part of the course and approval process. There are currently seven individuals serving as liaison librarians to the academic, career technical, continuing education, and student services areas. The library also provides for discipline faculty input through a form available on the library's webpage ("Purchase or Subscription Request Form").

The library offers over 112 databases that represent a plethora of subjects. When the library does not have materials needed by a student, the College has established lending opportunities with Cal Poly Pomona University Library and any of the 18 participating libraries in the Inland Empire Academic Libraries Cooperative. (II.B.2)

Mt. SAC is making data-informed decisions to better serve students in the library by piloting different programs and using the results from their assessments to make decisions to improve student learning and achievement. The library's PIE for 2014/15 and the VP Summary: Instruction (PIE) for 2013/14 demonstrate that the library and learning support services do evaluate their programs and services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. The materials include evidence of gathering data, discussing the data, and developing action plans for further improvement.

The library provides numerous avenues for input from students. One such example is the use of large newsprint sheets posted to solicit student comments. A student commented that she was glad to have a warm place to study during the winter intersession. Another student commented that he would not have passed his class without the opportunity to study in the

library on Sundays. The LLR dean uses a “student/public comment card” system to provide students a direct information link to the dean. Positive comments are shared with the librarians and staff at meetings, while complaints or concerns are investigated and addressed. (II.B.3)

The Learning Lab in the Learning Assistance Center registers each student’s first visit to the lab. Each time the student visits the lab, a record is captured containing the student’s ID, the subject area in which the student is seeking help, and how much time the student spends in the lab. This data can then be used to compare usage rates with student learning and student achievement. The tracking of library usage is not highly visible indicating that the library is open to every member of the public even without a student ID. (II.B.3)

The LLR division has established links with the Instruction and Student Services departments given the types of assistance and services provided to students. Liaison librarians maintain strong relations with their assigned disciplines, which provide information and support from the disciplines back to library PIE. Librarians serve on numerous committees and councils. The LLR division conducts a division retreat once a year in which division faculty and staff can review assessment data. (II.B.3)

The institution maintains multiple, formal agreements with third-party vendors and/or educational institutions to provide resources and services for library users. These vendors include Yankee Book Peddler, which expedites book selection and processing; the Community College Library Consortium, which offers discounted databases; and mutual lending agreements with Cal Poly Pomona University Library and the Inland Empire Academic Libraries Cooperative. These formal agreements are renewed periodically, providing an opportunity for the institution to regularly evaluate these services. (ER 17) (II.B.4)

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The College meets Standard II.B and ER 17.

The College has dedicated substantial resources to meeting students’ library and learning support needs, including both face-to-face and distance learning populations. The College has made a concerted effort to meet the support needs of target populations, such as CTE students and student-athletes. While the library is open seven days a week, it appears to be at capacity for student use. Tutoring services would benefit from comprehensive oversight and planning efforts.

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

#### **General Observations**

Mt. SAC provides comprehensive student support services and regularly evaluates their quality to demonstrate that these services are effective and appropriate to the College

mission. Student support services are provided across the College campus, from 7:30 a.m. through evening hours, which range from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. The institution assures equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students regardless of service location or delivery method. The College has established a comprehensive, integrated approach to guiding students toward reaching transfer goals and is in the midst of implementing guided pathways to facilitate student completion and attainment of career goals. As another example, “auto award” is a process through the Admissions and Records Office whereby students who have met the qualifications for a degree or certificate matching their educational goals are automatically awarded the degree and/or certificate. Multiple opportunities exist for students to become involved in leadership and learning opportunities through the Office of Student Life. In addition, Mt. SAC has exemplary athletic and co-curricular programs to meet student needs. Overall, the College provides extensive student support services for diverse student groups and assesses their effectiveness regularly to inform changes for improvement.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The College has established processes to effectively assess learning support outcomes for students to provide appropriate support services and programs to advance student learning and enhance accomplishment of the mission of the institution. Student services professionals meet regularly to assess progress towards attaining SLOs and AUOs for services provided to students. An example of an improvement resulting from SLO assessment is the provision of financial literacy information to students as an integral part of the packaging of their financial aid award. The institution’s PIE process, combined with data results from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), and the College’s annual graduation survey, are data that are used to measure quality and continuously improve student support programs and services. Student surveys are commonly used to gather input regarding the effectiveness of services and are incorporated into student services SLOs and the AUOs process. The 2016 CCSSE national cohort reported (often/very often) higher student engagement in working with classmates outside of class to prepare for class assignments (34.3 percent compared to 25.4 percent). All student services and instruction departments complete annual PIE reports that detail accomplishments, goals, outcomes, trends, challenges, and future plans. Noncredit student support efforts are similarly documented through their division PIE summary. The School of Continuing Education Division has also submitted an ASC-WASC mid-cycle report and ASC-WASC Action Plan. (II.C.1)

Assessment data of learning support outcomes, primarily based on the review of annual PIE data, including the assessment and reporting of learning and service delivery outcomes to students, are continuously used to improve student support programs and services. Learning support outcomes are also identified for areas such as financial aid and scholarship requirements, career search, student leadership training, and health services. Mt. SAC was one of two community colleges that participated in the national pilot project “*Aid Like a Paycheck*.” Students had their financial aid disbursed at regular intervals, similar to a receiving a paycheck. The pilot’s findings showed that students felt that being in the program helped them to spend their money wisely, decrease work hours, and focus on their studies. Interviews with financial aid staff confirmed this finding. In the School of Continuing

Education, the utilization of input from advisory committees, combined with data from departmental unit plans through the PIE process, has proven to be critically important to the implementation and delivery of core student services to noncredit students.

Counselors collaborate with students to identify barriers and strategies to ensure these obstacles do not affect retention. Through the annual PIE process, all counseling and advising services are evaluated. The College regularly tracks the provision of counseling and advising services to students. As a result, the in-person orientation was redesigned to improve student retention of information and to increase student engagement as they entered college for the first time. Information on the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was included in the redesign. (II.C.2)

Mt. SAC has multiple examples of programs that seek to ensure equitable access and success for students. The College has developed extensive efforts through a highly successful, six-week, intensive summer experience–Summer Bridge Program. Students enrolled in the bridge program, the majority of whom are Latino, experienced first-time pass rates of required, sequential basic skills classes in English and math of 91.5 percent and 81.0 percent (summer 2015), respectively. Additionally, these students achieve higher course success and retention rates when compared to non-bridge students. The student services staff and instructional faculty collaborate to support student success in the Summer Bridge Program by working closely with students in a learning community environment.

The Counseling Department amended its procedures to allow students to develop their own education plans and to submit them online for review and approval, which has enabled the College to meet compliance with state regulations and increase the ability to service the needs of students. Students have access to and are encouraged to utilize their *my mtsac* portal to check financial aid status, registration dates, holds on their records, and other pertinent information from student services. (II.C.3)

Many opportunities exist for students to be involved in co-curricular and athletics programs. The intercollegiate athletic program has received state and national recognition and has established rules and regulations to allow 100 percent compliance with the regulations of the California Community Colleges Athletics Association (CCCAA). The College's Fiscal Services Department oversees the finances for all athletics and competitive co-curricular programs. (II.C.4)

Counseling and advising services are well developed and established across the College for both noncredit and credit students. Student services and instruction staff work collaboratively to provide integrated services, such as learning communities and academic support programs that include tutoring, supplemental instruction, peer mentoring, and counseling. Students receive comprehensive orientation sessions, assessment and placement assistance, educational planning, counseling support and intervention, and tutoring assistance both during the day and evening hours. The School of Continuing Education provides extensive support services to students enrolled in noncredit courses. Embedded counseling, soft-skills, tutoring, assessment, and access to specialized courses are provided to English as a second

language, adult basic education, and short-term vocational students needing to complete high school graduation requirements, improve basic skills, or gain vocational skills. (II.C.5)

As mentioned above, the College is at the forefront of the guided pathways approach, which is designed to clarify pathways for students to complete degrees, certificates, and ultimately career goals. To increase transfer, the College has added 16 ADTs to the curriculum. An electronic education plan, the Mountie Academic Plan (MAP), has been successfully instituted to allow students to be able to complete an abbreviated and a comprehensive education plan with a counselor in a one-on-one session or group/classroom setting. Streamlining the process for students to apply for certificates and degrees, including an automatic award feature, has also helped to increase the number of completions. (II.C.6)

The Admissions and Records Department conducts regular reviews of admissions-related policies and procedures to ensure currency and compliance with state and federal laws. BPs and APs address eligibility, enrollment, transfer of credits/acceptance, and articulation. AP 5011 identify the College's requirements and procedures related to the enrollment of special admission and under-age students. International student admission policies and procedures are detailed in board policy, as well as in the College catalog, and in the student handbook. The Registration Work Group, Student Preparation and Success Council, and Enrollment Management Task Force meetings focus on improving enrollment processes and analyze trends in enrollment from term to term. Bias analyses are conducted as a part of the validation process for locally managed placement instruments. These data are submitted to the Chancellor's Office for approval on a six-year rotational cycle. In addition, the director of assessment works with the individual instructional departments to review the appropriateness of cut scores for placement. (II.C.7)

Student records are maintained electronically with certain hard-copy documents imaged and stored in the document imaging system. College procedures specifying the secure backup of all files are closely followed. Prior, hard-copy records are stored in secure storage. Student records, transcript papers, and faculty records are kept in a secure location in the admissions and records office or at an offsite, secure-records optical company. Student health services records and records of the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) office are locked in metal file cabinets, which are secure in each respective office. BP/AP 5040 specify the College's compliance regarding FERPA and HIPAA, the release of student records, and provide for compliance with applicable federal and state laws related to the Student Rights and Privacy Act. AP 3300 outlines procedures for requesting to inspect or copy public records. (II.C.8)

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The College meets Standard II.C and ER 16.

Mt. SAC provides student support services for both noncredit and credit students, including financial aid information, counseling, and electronic educational planning. The divisions of student services and instruction work frequently collaborate on innovations, such as the bridge program. All student services are evaluated regularly and changes are made to

improve. Admissions procedures and placements tests are adequately reviewed, and student information is appropriately secured.

## **Standard III Resources**

### **Standard IIIA: Human Resources**

#### **General Observations**

Mt. SAC employs qualified personnel in sufficient numbers to adequately support the student learning programs and services of the College. The team verified that employees are evaluated in a timely manner and personnel files are stored in a secured room. The College has clear and well-established human resources policies and procedures. There is evidence that the College applies the policies and procedures in a consistent and equitable manner. Human resources planning is fully integrated into the College's program review and budget development cycles.

The College supports professional development for all its employees by sponsoring a wide range of programs for both full- and part-time employees. The Professional and Organizational Development Office coordinates and integrates all staff development processes and trainings. The College has a strong commitment to professional development for all employees.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

The College assures the integrity of its programs and services by hiring qualified faculty, staff, and administrators. Mt. SAC has policies and procedures for the hiring of employees in all categories. The team reviewed job descriptions and position announcements and determined that the criteria, qualifications, and procedures are clearly stated and address the needs of the institution. Job announcements and minimum qualifications for faculty and administrators are drafted in accordance with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office minimum qualifications and equivalencies. The College developed its job descriptions and minimum qualifications for the non-faculty positions with the assistance of Koff and Associates, a consulting firm. The Human Resources Department (HR) continuously performs job analyses for accurate job descriptions, qualifications, and criteria for hiring. The home page of the on-line application system includes a link to the College mission and goals. (III.A.1)

The hiring process for academic positions is faculty driven. Beginning in PIE, the faculty review and recommend positions to be hired and serve as subject matter and content experts on all hiring committees. Administrators monitor compliance to the College's policies and procedures. Qualifications listed on the job postings for faculty align with ACCJC requirements and include appropriate degrees, professional experience, discipline expertise, level of assignment, teaching skills, scholarly activities, sensitivity to and understanding of diversity, potential to contribute to the mission of the institution, development and review of curriculum, and assessment of learning.



The interview for faculty includes a teaching demonstration. Each selection committee also includes an Equal Employment Opportunity representative. (III.A.2)

The College assures that classified staff and administrators possess the qualifications necessary to sustain institutional effectiveness and academic quality through accurate and current job descriptions, and a rigorous selection process. It is incumbent on HR to review and update job descriptions. The hiring qualifications, criteria, duties, and responsibilities listed in the job description are used to assess the applicant in the screening and interview process. (III.A.3)

Required degrees held by faculty, administrators, and other employees are from institutions accredited in the United States by recognized accrediting agencies. The College requires that evaluations and certification of non-American degrees be secured from recognized evaluation services. The College does not sponsor nonresident visa employees. (III.A.4)

The College has developed an electronic system to assist with the timely submission of employee evaluations. Performance evaluation procedures, cycles, and forms are reviewed and developed in collaboration with the various employee groups and in compliance with the Education Code and BPs. Written criteria for performance evaluations are contained in the collective bargaining agreements or the administrative employees' evaluation procedures. Additional written criteria are listed on the evaluation form. The performance evaluation forms are designed to assess effectiveness and encourage improvement. The Professional Development Council (PDC) has sponsored workshops to assist managers in developing meaningful performance improvement plans. (III.A.5)

Outcomes assessment is imbedded in the evaluation process for faculty, department chairs, administrators, and other personnel responsible for student learning. In 2016, the College completed an outcomes mapping template that links the SLOs, AUOs, and PLOs to the ILOs. This template is an effective tool for utilizing outcomes to improve teaching and learning. (III.A.6)

The College has a sufficient number of qualified faculty to assure the quality of its educational programs and services and achieve its mission. The College has a well-developed process for determining which faculty positions will be hired for the upcoming year. The process starts at the department level in PIE. Through the governance process, the requested faculty positions are ranked and sent to AMAC in which a ranked list of positions, including student services positions, is finalized and forwarded to the president. The president determines the type and number of positions. Mt. SAC is committed to meeting or exceeding the full-time obligation number (FON) set by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. The College has committed to hire ten faculty above the FON. (III.A.7)

The adjunct faculty at Mt. SAC are integrated into the College's processes. There are dedicated adjunct faculty positions on collective bargaining teams, faculty governance committees, and College-wide task forces. Adjunct faculty participate as advisors for student clubs. The College recognizes adjunct faculty as part of the annual faculty appreciation week, including awards for outstanding adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty are welcomed to participate

in commencement ceremonies. Division deans and department chairs meet with new adjunct faculty to provide discipline and department information. The faculty association hosts an orientation for adjunct faculty prior to the start of semester. The College offers many professional development opportunities for adjunct faculty. (III.A.8)

Mt. SAC maintains a sufficient number of classified staff with appropriate qualifications to support the effective educational, technological, physical, and administrative operations of the College. The need for a new or replacement position is determined through the PIE process. Every position must have a new or updated job description to ensure the job qualifications meet the current needs of the College's programs, services, and operations. The requested position is reviewed and approved by the budget committee and president's cabinet before processing by HR. (III.A.9, ER 8)

Mt. SAC maintains a sufficient number of administrators with the appropriate preparation and expertise to provide continuity and effective administrative leadership and service that support the College's mission. The need for a new or replacement administrative position is determined by the president's cabinet. The job description is updated to ensure the job qualifications match the duties and responsibilities for the position. The president has been at Mt. SAC for approximately six years. (III.A.10, ER 8)

Mt. SAC has clear and well-established BPs and APs that address the HR functions of the College. Additional personnel practices are located in the collective bargaining agreements. All documents are found on the College's website. The College has recently revised its EEO Plan, which reflects the College's commitment to diversity and has policies and procedures in place to prevent unlawful discrimination in the employment process. The EEO Plan is reviewed every three years by the EEO Advisory Committee to assess the College's progress toward its diversity goals and the College's mission. The Campus Equity and Diversity Committee (CEDC) provides training to the College on EEO hiring regulations. The vice president of HR is charged with the equitable and consistent application of all HR and EEO policies and procedures. The current vice president of HR began in September 2016 and is the third full-time vice president since 2010. (III.A.11, III.A.12)

BP 3050 contains the code of professional ethics for all personnel and the consequences of violation. There are various other codes that address ethical conduct specifically for students, faculty, board members, or administrators. (III.A.13)

Personnel files are maintained in a centralized and secured location. Access to personnel files is restricted to authorized individuals. Each employee may inspect his/her employee records. (III.A.15)

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The College meets Standard III.A.

## **Standard IIIB: Physical Resources**

### **General Observation**

Mt. SAC is among the largest single-campus districts in the California community college system and is located about twenty-five miles east of Los Angeles in the city of Walnut. The College was established in 1946 at the site of a former military hospital and encompasses 425 acres. The primary campus occupies a sloping plane from its northern edge to its southern edge. The eastern boundary includes a hilly agriculture zone, which is used for animal grazing and borders California State Polytechnic University at Pomona. There is one major offsite location: Brackett Field in La Verne for the College's aircraft maintenance program.

The main campus is bisected by Temple Avenue, which runs on an east-west axis. The Facilities Master Plan identifies seven different land-use zones at the main campus site: primary education, wild life sanctuary, athletics, solar, agriculture, retail, and land management. Throughout its seventy-year history, Mt. SAC has utilized state capital funding and two facilities bonds, Measure R in 2001 and Measure RR in 2008, to plan, develop, and modernize its vast physical resources to be able to serve its diverse students.

An escorted tour of the campus revealed a mix of older renovated buildings, new buildings, repurposed buildings, and buildings under construction. The College is currently developing a new Educational and Facilities Master Plan. Future plans include a parking structure, athletic complex, and 2.2-megawatt solar farm. Overall, the campus is very clean and well maintained. The grounds, custodial, and facilities maintenance crews express great pride for the College and in their work.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Mt. SAC assures safe physical resources by employing licensed professional architects and construction managers to design and build all facilities. The Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) meets monthly to review facilities designs and plans to assure that safety continues to be a priority for all College buildings. The facilities operations team works closely with the design teams to ensure new and modernized facilities are maintained safely and efficiently. (III.B.1)

All facilities are built for building- and safety-code compliance. Division of the State Architect (DSA) inspectors are utilized to monitor construction of new and renovated buildings. The College hires additional safety consultants for its construction projects. (III.B.1)

Any unsafe conditions can be reported through School Dude, a computerized facilities maintenance management program. All departments and offices have access to the program. Public safety officers routinely monitor the safety conditions throughout the campus and at offsite locations and report and respond to conditions as necessary. There is a Health and Safety Committee that ensures any concerns about safe working conditions are addressed in a timely matter. Departments and offices at off site locations have access to the School Dude

reporting program. Offsite locations are regularly inspected for safety and health concerns. (III.B.1)

The College opened a new Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in 2014. Staff has been trained in the State Emergency Management System (SEMS). In 2015, the College added the position of an environmental safety and emergency services manager to provide emergency response expertise and training for the campus. (III.B1)

The risk management and facilities planning departments share joint responsibility for the storage, handling, and removal of hazardous materials. The College contracts with a qualified third party to remove hazardous waste and materials. (III.B.1)

Mt. SAC completed an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transition plan in 2012. Since that time, the College has completed a number of ADA improvement projects with each new building project or renovation. The College also has monies set aside in the annual general fund for barrier-removal projects to improve accessibility. (III.B.1)

Mt. SAC assures sufficient physical resources at all locations through its comprehensive master planning processes. The 2012 Facilities Master Plan (FMP) was developed from the data in the Education Master Plan (EMP). The FMP was created to facilitate the EMP. The College also established a Campus Master Plan Coordinating Team (CMPCT) to review and recommend funding for facilities projects, which are prioritized by the FAC. The CMPCT submits the recommended list of projects to the BOT for final approval. (III.B.1)

Since the passage of two locally funded bond measures, Measure R in 2001 for \$221 million and Measure RR in 2008 for \$353 million, Mt. SAC has constructed 20 new, permanent buildings and has renovated another 17 buildings. The College has added one-half-million gross square footage in its facilities and significantly improved its classroom, laboratory, and library capacity load ratios. Additionally, in 2015, the College developed a room-utilization matrix, which further improved its space utilization.

The College Design and Construction Team (CDCT), which includes three licensed architects, a licensed mechanical engineer, a project accounting manager, and College administrators, oversees the project planning, design, and construction for many facilities projects. Only the largest construction projects are managed by a construction management firm. The Facilities Planning and Management Department has led the College to transition from a traditional program and construction management model for community college bond construction programs. The new model, with in-house managers and consultants, assures better quality, efficiency, use of funds, and alignment with the College's mission and strategic planning objectives. (III.B.2)

The College has successfully implemented a computerized management program for preventive maintenance, vehicle maintenance, and equipment replacement. The College has increased funding for preventive maintenance over the years. The Facilities Planning and Maintenance Department has completed building and infrastructure assessments to assist in long-term planning for facilities and capital equipment. Mt. SAC has just initiated the

process for a new comprehensive education and facilities master plan. The process is scheduled for completion in 2018. (III.B.3)

The College includes a new space inventory with each annual update of the five-year capital outlay plan. The College continues to improve its space utilization by planning and designing space-efficient buildings and through a targeted effort to identify and improve utilization of inefficient space. The College evaluates its facilities every three years as part of the Foundation for Community Colleges Condition Assessment and uses the assessment to estimate costs for repair, modernization or replacement. The College also completed an assessment of its equipment to plan for preventive maintenance and/or replacement. Planning also considered the staffing required for maintenance and operation of the equipment over a thirty-year period. (III.B.3)

The College develops its long-range capital plans according to its mission, vision, goals, and academic programs. In consideration of expected life cycles and total cost of ownership, the College installed LED lighting throughout the campus, a two-million-gallon thermal energy storage facility, and intends to build a solar generating farm with a 2.2-megawatt capacity. (III.B.4)

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The College meets Standard III.B.

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

#### **General Observations**

Technology services, professional support, facilities, hardware, and software are appropriate and adequate to support the institution's management and operational functions, academic programs, teaching and learning, and support services. The institution has presented evidence demonstrating their processes for broad communication and input from stakeholders regarding appropriate and adequate support. The 2015 TechQual Survey results demonstrated assessment of need, and the Information Technology Plan 2016 demonstrates responses to identified needs.

A review of the self-evaluation narrative and provided evidence indicates that the institution works to assure reliable access, safety, and security. The narrative indicates that the institution has placed computer technology in a number of locations throughout the district to support noncredit computer classes for older adults.

The College has agreements in place with Iron Mountain to store digital data and paper files in the event of a disaster. The College's Check Point activity report, Information Security Advisory Committee minutes, and the identification of the locations of the Education for Older Adults (EOA) Program confirms that computers have been placed to support EOA computer classes. Institutional technology technicians visit each location once per week to

monitor and repair/update technology as needed. From the self-evaluation narrative and evidence provided, supplemented with review of current website information, it is clear the institution provides appropriate support for the use of technology and technology systems.

The institutional policies and procedures related to the appropriate use of technology for the institution are easily available to faculty, staff, administrators, students, and campus visitors through the College's website. The policies and procedures reviewed are appropriate guides for the use of technology in the teaching and learning process, as well as management operations.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The Technology Master Plan (TMP), last updated in 2016, is aligned with planning for the institution and is integrated into the EMP and the FMP. Information technology is viewed as an integral function of the College. The review of the membership roster of the Distance Learning Committee confirms that the Information Technology Department (IT) is represented as a part of the team. Representatives from faculty, staff, administrators, and students also serve on the committee. Representation from IT and broad-based representation from among various constituent groups is evidenced on the PAC. The minimum audio and visual standards summary identifies the comprehensive nature of support for teaching and learning from IT. (III.C.1)

The TMP includes guidelines for the College's response to the increased use of mobile devices on campus and the effects on the College's infrastructure. Provisions are noted for the manner in which IT will work to support the use of new technology in the classroom and on campus. The College maintains a computer replacement process that attempts to replace computers for faculty and staff approximately every three to five years. The process for computer replacement typically is initiated by a faculty and staff member who submits a help ticket. IT sends a technician to investigate the problem, and it is typically the technician who recommends computer replacement. Funds for computer replacements are budgeted annually and augmented from the state instructional block grant. The College provided a copy of the computer replacements for 2015/16 academic year. (III.C.2)

The technology and distance learning master plan and the POD webpage evidence distance and face-to-face and online support/training for technology uses. This is also evidenced on the Faculty Center for Learning Technology webpage. IT has maintained a training specialist for many years whose responsibilities include development and delivery of technology training for faculty and staff members. Information from the survey on student perceptions of distance learning (DL) helps inform planning and improvement of online classes by providing student feedback and perceptions of online classes at the College. (III.C.1 and III.C.4)

IT has technicians embedded in academic and student service areas around campus to improve efficiency of response time and support. Over the last decade, IT has worked to standardize training and communication among these technicians. These embedded technicians provide reliable access, safety, and security. The College has taken sufficient

measures to insure the recovery of data in the event of a disaster or cyber breach. The College employs a cyber security officer responsible for monitoring and reporting on security issues and appropriate response to security threats. There is sufficient insurance for any cyber breach, which would require credit monitoring and notifications to students and/or employees. (III.C.3)

The Distance Education (DE) Program at the College consists of the following personnel: two DE coordinators who share a 1.0 FTE position (one is 60 percent and the other is 40 percent), a full-time instructional designer, full-time IT technician in the Faculty Center for Learning Technology, and a dean over the library and DE. As reported in interviews with DE personnel, three percent of the College's courses are online. For a school this size, this is smaller than typically observed, especially considering the space constraints for parking.

Interviews with staff revealed that the distance learning master plan was developed in 2013 and work has begun on refreshing the plan. All faculty who desire to teach online undergo SPOT (Skills and Pedagogy for Online Teaching) training, which involves online pedagogy, information on open education resources (OER), and building community. The DE coordinators confirm participants have completed the training. In preparation for the accreditation visit, the BOT passed a change to the faculty contract, which allowed 25 DE courses to be randomly selected to check for instructor and student contact. Based on the results, the DL coordinators found that 40 percent of the courses did not contain enough faculty-initiated contact, and faculty were educated about ways to encourage more faculty/student regular and effective contact.

One highlight of the DE Program is the creation of a module filled with information on student support services and tutorials on "how to's" for Canvas. This module is housed in Canvas Commons where each faculty member can pull it into their shell. The DE staff have made it an impressive option for faculty to get support materials to enhance student success in their online classes.

The College is one of the OEI pilot colleges and, as such, has the opportunity to use online tutoring, online proctoring, and online academic advising. The College is in the process of implementing these services so that students get equal services online that they do in person. (III.C.4)

BP 3250 and AP 3250 identify the PAC as the institutional planning body for the College. This committee includes representatives from management, faculty, staff, and Associated Students. Twice each year, PAC convenes as an expanded body to assess the effectiveness of integrated planning and the effective integration of ongoing planning processes. The recommendations from PAC are central to integrated planning to support teaching and learning. The chief technology officer serves as a member of the expanded PAC. This involvement in institutional planning ensures technology support for students with disabilities (BP 5140), individuals with disabilities (BP 3440), and accessibility of audiovisual media captioning (AP 3450) are maintained at the College. Additional BPs and/or APs are in place to address library and other instructional support services, CTE, computer use, and distance learning. (III.C.5)

## **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The College meets Standard III.C.

## **Standard IIID: Financial Resources**

### **General Observations**

Mt. SAC's financial resources are sufficient to support and sustain student learning programs and services and to improve effectiveness. The College has demonstrated financial stability through years of budget reductions and reduced state funding, as evidenced by its healthy general fund reserves. From 2011 to 2015, the average year-end general fund reserve was over 20 per cent. Budget development is an integral part of College-wide planning and the program-review process. External auditors have given the College unmodified opinions of its financial statements for the past six years. The Fiscal Services Department successfully completed the rigorous application process and testing for the fiscally independent designation from the LACOE. The team finds that financial information is widely disseminated and accessible through a variety of sources and means. The College has established irrevocable trusts to offset its liabilities for Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) and the STRS/PERS pension costs.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The College has effectively managed its budget regardless of apportionment deficits, enrollment fluctuations, and ongoing expenditure increases. The general fund's ending balances and per cent of expenditures were \$30.2 million, 20.6 percent for 2014; \$34.5 million, 22.8 percent for 2015; and \$40.9 million, 21.3 percent for 2016. The projected general fund ending balance for 2017 is \$38.2 million, 20.2 percent. These percentages are all well above the BP 6250 requirement of maintaining a ten percent ending balance. (III.D.1)

The College's budget allocation model includes a review of all status quo budgets and a new resources allocation process. The annual budget allocation process is explicit, well documented, and fully integrated with the PIE process, which is informed by the College mission, strategic goals, and operational improvement needs. BP 6200 states the necessary criteria to be included in the budget development process. The annual budget is based on realistic assumptions of state revenues and FTES projections, which are disseminated throughout the campus community. Budget requests are prioritized by the vice presidents and reviewed by the budget committee and PAC before the budget recommendations are sent to the president. The president makes the final funding decisions. (III.D.1, III.D.2, III.D.3, III.D.4, ER 18)

The team finds that Mt. SAC manages its financial resources with integrity to ensure financial solvency and reviews the College mission and strategic goals and integrates them into the annual budget allocation process. (III.D.1, III.D.2, III.D.3, III.D.4)



The College policies and procedures for budget preparation, fiscal management, contracts, capital construction, investments, and audits are well conceived and ensure sound financial practices and financial stability. The BPs and APs are reviewed on a regular basis, as needed operationally, or when the CCLC sends an update. Financial information, including the annual budget development calendar, quarterly and annual financial reports, the external audit of financial statements, the tentative and adopted budgets, and governance budget meeting minutes are widely disseminated throughout the College in a timely manner. (III.D.2)

Since 2011, there has not been any internal control deficiencies identified by the external auditors. Additionally, the College has had intense review and oversight of its internal control procedures by the LACOE. To achieve fiscal independence status, the Fiscal Service Department was challenged to regularly assess its business processes and to improve the processes. The team finds that the College continues to assess its financial management practices and uses the results to improve its internal controls. (III.D.5. III.D.8)

The funds for the annual budget are allocated to realistically support student learning programs and services in achieving the College mission and goals. The annual budget is an accurate reflection of the College's expenditures and is reviewed by the College constituent groups. (III.D.6)

Mt. SAC has received an unmodified opinion on its annual audit of financial statements for the past six years. In 2016, the external auditors found a significant deficiency in federal compliance to the return to Title IV regulations. The College did not return an overpayment of \$46 of financial aid monies within 45 days of a student withdrawing from classes. To mitigate this from happening again, the College implemented a new exception-reporting process and added a final review for the return of financial aid monies. The College received an unmodified opinion in federal compliance; however, the College is no longer a low-risk auditee for federal programs. Also in 2016, the College reported an overstatement of 84 FTES and received a qualified opinion on state program compliance. The error was due to a problem with the attendance accounting program in the computer system. The College reconfigured the computer system to correctly identify the type of course and to correctly calculate the FTES in accordance with the state attendance accounting manual. The team finds that the College's response to external audit findings is comprehensive, timely, and communicated properly. (III.D.7)

Special funds, federal and state, are reviewed by the funding agency or the designated fiscal agent and have found that the College expends funds in a manner consistent with the intent and requirements of the funding source. The Proposition 39 performance audits for the College's bond funds have received unmodified opinions. The College has a full and active bond oversight committee that meets regularly. (III.D.8)

The College has sufficient cash flow and reserves to maintain financial stability and to meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences. BP 6540 requires the College to secure insurance for property, liability, and workers' compensation. Property and general liability

insurance is provided through Alliance of Schools for Co-Op Insurance (ASCIP). Workers' compensation insurance is provided through the College's membership in Southern California Colleges Joint Powers Association (SCCJPA) and the Protected Insurance Program for Schools (PIPS). The director of safety and risk management is responsible for the administration of the College's insurance programs. (III.D.9)

The College practices effective oversight of finances, financial aid, grants, externally funded programs, auxiliary organizations, and investments. BP 6320 establishes requirements for investments, BP 6300 establishes the internal controls for fiscal management, and BP 6340 establishes the requirements for procuring contracts. As evidenced by the annual external audit, the College is in compliance and has adequate internal controls for federal Title IV funds, all grants, externally funded programs, and state categorically funded programs. The Mt. SAC Foundation undergoes an annual audit of its financial statements, which has resulted in an unmodified opinion. (III.D.10)

The College has established an irrevocable trust to address its OPEB liabilities and contracts for an actuarial study every two years. The most recent actuarial study determined the plan was 62 percent funded. During the annual budget development process, the College determines the contribution amount to the irrevocable trust. In fiscal years 2012/13 and 2013/14, the College deferred payments to the trust due to economic crisis. In 2014/15, the College contributed \$2.5 million to the irrevocable trust. The College has established an irrevocable trust for its CalPERS/STRS pension liabilities with an initial contribution of \$4million towards the \$125.3 million liability. Mt. SAC clearly identifies, plans, and allocates funds for its long-term liabilities during the annual budget development process. (III.D.11, III.D.12)

Mt. SAC has a locally incurred loan from the City of Walnut for the construction of their performing arts center. The annual repayment for the loan consists of one dollar for every ticket sold for all performances. The total payment for 2014/15 was \$25,312. The total bond debt for Measures R and RR is \$396.7 million, and all bonds issued are secured by local "ad valorem" property taxes. The bond debt does not have an adverse impact on the College general fund. The College has a rating of AA from Standard and Poor's Financial Services and a rating of Aa2 from Moody's Investors Service. (III.D.13)

The team reviewed the evidence and interviewed personnel from the College, auxiliary services, and the Mt. SAC Foundation, and concludes that the College financial resources, including short-term and long-term debt, auxiliary activities, fundraising efforts, and grants are used with integrity and in a manner consistent with the intended purpose. The College is currently managing over \$17 million in grants. The College has committed to hire another grants officer. (III.D.14)

The cohort default rate for the past three available years has been 15.5 percent for 2012, 12 percent for 2013, and 10 percent for 2014, which are well within the federal guideline of 30 percent. Although not required to do so, the College has instituted a default-prevention program that includes financial literacy workshops and loan counseling, and the College has designated a financial aid specialist whose sole responsibility is default prevention. These

measures have resulted in a declining and extremely low cohort default rate. The College has policies and procedures in place to monitor compliance to federal regulations. The financial aid staff are sufficiently trained and receive updates through local and regional training events and conferences. (III.D.15)

BP 6340 and the accompanying APs define the procedures for contracts, contract signing authority, and conflict of interest. Contracts are reviewed to ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and codes. Contract documents and forms are reviewed and updated by the College's legal counsel. All contractual agreements with external entities are consistent with the College mission and goals, and contain provisions to maintain the integrity of the College and the quality of its programs, services, and operations. (III.D.16)

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The College meets Standard III.D and eligibility requirement 18.

## **Standard IV Leadership and Governance**

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

#### **General Observations**

The Mt. SAC is a single-college district that has a seven-member BOT. In 2011, the board initiated redistricting to allow for a more diverse representation of board membership that reflected more closely the diverse student population. The redistricting increased the board membership from five members elected at large to seven members elected by geographic district. The College has a robust governance structure and communication strategies in place. Additionally, it is clear that employees appreciate strong professional development opportunities and that innovation is supported and rewarded.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

Institutional leadership creates and encourages innovation and Mt. SAC sustains this through a robust recognition program. The College is one of the first in the state to begin work towards guided pathways as modeled by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). The selection into the grant project by AACC is notable and represents the commitment at the highest levels of the institution.

The president further advances innovation through both formal and informal mechanisms. Informally, the president holds monthly office hours where all employees are encouraged to drop in for one-on-one conversations. This has led to several innovations on their campus, including Summer Science Exploration Experiences and sustainability efforts. Critically, these innovations are ultimately recognized through a robust recognition program. The recognition programs come not only from the President's Office but also the academic and classified senates. The foresight and leadership involved in such strong recognition models underscores the commitment to institutional development.

The College maintains a commitment to funding innovations and initiatives through professional development programs for all employees. The Associated Students are also provided a budget for their efforts. Finally, as these innovations work towards planning and implementation, the College uses a participatory governance model set forth in BP 3255. (Standard IV.A.1)

The local decision-making processes are detailed in BP 3255 and further in AP 3255. These policy and procedure documents ensure the faculty, administrators, staff, and students are included, as appropriate, in local decision making. PAC is the primary planning body for the College. The consideration of governance, operational, and negotiated items are first considered by this body and then appropriately routed to the correct committee or task force. All constituencies are represented on PAC and there is commitment to ensure

recommendations are thoroughly vetted. The manner in which policy and procedure are enacted is detailed in AP 2410. (Standard IV.A.2)

The governance committees have representative structures that include administrators and faculty. These are defined in BP/AP 3255 and in the function and composition of their committees. Academic and professional matters, which are either relied primarily or mutually agreed with the Academic Senate, are defined in BP/AP 3255 and AP 2410. The committees annually address their purpose, function, and membership to ensure participation from all constituent groups. These committees include the IEC, which includes representatives from all constituent groups and works to review and define the program review process, known as PIE. Similarly, the Budget Committee includes all constituent groups and works according to AP 6200. (Standard IV.A.3)

Mt. SAC relies primarily on the Academic Senate on decisions and policy regarding curriculum, educational program development, and student preparation and success, which is recognized in BP 3255. For curriculum matters in particular, the recommendation process uses two Academic Senate committees—Educational Design Committee (EDC) and Curriculum and Instruction Council (C&I). Both committees are composed of a majority of faculty members and each committee also includes key academic administrators. C&I reports curriculum decisions and makes policy recommendations to the Academic Senate, which are then sent directly to the BOT. The approval process is detailed recently revised BP/AP 4020.

The Student Preparation and Support Council (SP&S) includes the involvement of both faculty and administrators. The Academic Mutual Agreement Council (AMAC) and the Academic Senate consider the recommendations from this council and its subordinate committees. The recent SSSP Plan, as an example, worked through this process based on initial development by counseling faculty and administrators. (Standard IV.A.4)

The policy on local decision making, BP 3255, ensures that participatory governance groups appropriately consider relevant issues. Planning occurs annually and is sufficiently flexible to ensure timely issues, such as the relatively quick turnaround of the Student Equity Plan. The evidence of timely action is captured through the annual program review process in PIE. (Standard IV.A.5)

Mt. SAC employs a diversified approach to communication of the process and results of local decision-making policies. BP/AP 3255 provide for the inclusion of constituent groups in decision making. The governance committees publish their function and membership on the College website. Actions and the results of the work throughout the governance structure are shared via board briefs, cabinet action notes, meeting minutes, verbal and written reports, and campus-wide emails. (Standard IV.A.6)

Committees perform a self-evaluation on an annual basis, which includes committee goal setting, updates to purpose and function, and progress on goals. These are captured, in part, through the institutional PIE and include reporting to the PAC. There does not appear to be an ongoing and regular process of evaluation of the effectiveness of the governance process as a whole. Policies and procedures are consistently reviewed over time in PAC and can be

prompted by updates through the subscribed service with the CCLC. As previously described, a diversified communication approach details these activities to the College community. (Standard IV.A.7)

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The College meets Standard IV.A.

The College has an inclusive and broadly participative governance structure. The College has a strong recognition program, which can provide for sustained innovation and excellence.

*In order to improve its governance processes and structures, the team recommends that the College evaluate the overall governance structure on a regular and continuous basis and use this as the basis for improvement. (IV.A.7)*

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

#### **General Observations**

The president is accountable for the leadership of the institution. The College employs a sound governance model in which roles and responsibilities of constituent groups are defined in BPs and APs. College administrators, faculty, classified staff, and students are involved in institutional planning and decisions through their participation on governance and operation committees. Institutional planning is linked to resource allocation through the PIE process. The College's Strategic Plan is integrated in PIE and data from this process informs budget allocation decisions for the College. Governance and operation committees work in collaboration to bring forward recommendations involving short-term and long-term planning. The process involves campus-wide input and is one in which individuals understand their roles and responsibilities on various committees. Minutes from these committees are routinely shared with internal and external stakeholders to ensure transparency and trust in the governance process.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

The College president communicates the institution's goals and values through the implementation of the College's Education and Facilities Master plans. This engagement ensures the strategic and outcome objectives and KPIs of each master plan are consistent with the College's Strategic Plan. This is vetted in various shared governance committees and reported to the broader community through minutes, meeting notes, and other outcome statements.

Similarly, the president is responsible for assessing the effectiveness of the College's academic and student services master planning processes. The PIE process for Instruction and Student Services, Human Resources and Administrative Services are included in an analysis and summary of program review for the planning, assessment, and resource

allocation needs in key areas. The process generated thematic focus statements and goals to advance academic excellence and student achievement, support student access and success, secure human, technological, and financial resources to enhance learning and student achievement, and foster an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration. (IV.B.1)

There is evidence of the president's understanding of the importance of data-informed decision making and the ongoing communication and support of a culture of evidence at the College. The Office of Research and Institutional Effectiveness (RIE) supports the ongoing use of research and data to inform planning decisions. The president receives regular reports from RIE in providing leadership for the Education and Facilities Master plans to reinforce the emphasis on student learning and student success. Dialog among academic and student services constituents focuses on increasing program effectiveness for student success. PIE research data supports requests for resource allocation and the planning and assessment of programs designed to build and strengthen student learning. (IV.B.3)

The president/CEO oversees the College's administrative structure and ensures that hiring, evaluation, and the makeup of the College's administrative team is consistent with the institution's size and purpose. Similarly, the president determines how many faculty positions will be hired based on the prioritization request received from the AMAC. (IV.B.2)

The vice president of instruction serves as the College's accreditation liaison officer (ALO) and is delegated this responsibility for leadership of the accreditation process by the CEO. The president receives regular monthly updates from the Accreditation Steering Committee and ensures the BOT is informed on accreditation in three separate board study sessions. It is evident that the president and the BOT are involved in the accreditation process for the College. The president initiated a gap analysis to see where the College needed to improve to meet the standards and then attended the standard team meetings to be sure all members were participating. Additionally, the president read and edited all the reports prior to submitting and ensured that the board was kept informed of the process along the way. (IV.B.4)

Additionally, the president assures compliance with all statutes, regulations, and policies and assures that educational practices are in keeping with the College mission and also ensures sound financial planning and budgeting. This was verified by interviews with key staff and also by review of the College's plans and budget documents. (IV.B.5)

The BOT and the president are involved in numerous community organizations and regularly have contact with mayors, school superintendents, school board members, city council members, and other stakeholders in the community. The president is also involved in several statewide efforts, regional workforce efforts, and the Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership, which is an economic development agency. (IV.B.6)

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The College meets Standard IV.B.

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

### **General Observations**

The president is accountable for the leadership of the institution. The College employs a sound governance model in which roles and responsibilities of constituent groups are defined in board policy and administrative procedure. College administrators, faculty, classified staff, and students are involved in institutional planning and decisions through their participation on governance and operation committees. Institutional planning is linked to resource allocation through the PIE process. The College's Strategic Plan is integrated in PIE and data from this process informs budget allocation decisions for the College. Governance and operation committees work in collaboration to bring forward recommendations involving short-term and long-term planning. The process involves campus-wide input and is one in which individuals understand their roles and responsibilities on various committees. Minutes from these committees are routinely shared with internal and external stakeholders to ensure transparency and trust in the governance process.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The College has a seven-member governing board elected to four-year, overlapping terms to ensure continuity among the board members. The BOT has adopted BPs and APs that delineate the responsibilities, accountability, and duties of board members. The BPs and APs are available for review on the College's website. BP 2715 and BP 2330 state that the board acts as a legal entity and not as individual members. (IV.C.2)

The College mission, as stated in BP 1200, is "to support all students in achieving their educational goals in an environment of academic excellence." The College mission is threaded in adopted BPs and is aligned to the College's programs and services. (IV.C.5).

The BOT receives annual reports on student outcomes and achievement and reviews and approves the College's goals for Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI) indicators. The integrated planning and budgeting process allows the BOT to maintain ultimate responsibility for ensuring resource allocation to promote and sustain student learning, equity, and achievement by exercising authority to approve the College's budget. (IV.C.1)

Under BP 2430, the BOT delegates authority to the College president to administer the policies of the board. The BOT is responsible for the selection and evaluation of the College president/CEO, and these processes are identified in BP 2431–CEO Selection and AP 2435–Evaluation of College President/CEO. Managers, faculty, classified staff, and the community are given the opportunity to provide feedback to the board on the president's self-evaluation. (IV.C.3)

BP 2200 defines duties and responsibilities of the BOT (Standard IV.b.1.d). The board is responsible to ensure the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs



and services at the College, and maintains responsibility for the financial integrity and stability of the institution.

Once a decision has been reached by the BOT, all members work as one unit in support of the decision(s). BP/AP 2715 articulate the code of ethics and conflict of interest for members. The AP provides for addressing violations of ethical behavior on the part of board members and ensures that members of the board do not have employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. (IV.C.2)

The BOT has policies that specify its size, duties, structures, and operating procedures and these are evidenced in the report. (IV.C.6) The board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and regularly assesses these policies (IV.C.7), as mentioned previously in I.A. The board regularly reviews the Student Success Scorecard and outcomes data and approves the ISS, which serves as evidence that the institution meets the standards. (Standard IV.C.8) The board effectively staggers its terms of service to ensure continuity. (Standard IV.C.9)

The board participates in an annual self-evaluation process and results are available to the public. Goals for the following year are also included in this report. Evidence that the board adheres to the conflict of interest policy is noted in the minutes of May 14, 2014, in which a resolution was passed requiring a board member to resign immediately from another board she was currently serving on to avoid such conflict. The board is also regularly updated about accreditation and members of the board engage in ongoing training. New board members are oriented by the president starting with initial orientation meetings when they are board candidates and later after election to the board. Newly elected board members attend the CCLC annual new trustees' conference for training and development. Additionally, board members attend national conferences sponsored by the Association of Community College Trustees. Board development includes updating members on Accreditation Standards and expectations.

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The College meets Standard IV.C.

## **Quality Focus Essay Feedback**

The Mt. SAC quality focus essay appears to be well developed and organized and provides a framework for identifying areas for improving institutional effectiveness through three distinct efforts, which are summarized below.

The three efforts are related to the accreditation standards, institutional effectiveness, and enhanced student learning and achievement. These are areas identified by the College where focus will lead to greater effectiveness and are in keeping the College's focus on excellence. In an effort to support the College's commitment to achieving the goals of these efforts, the team offers the following observations and feedback for consideration.

The first effort represents a focus on integrating KPIs, ISS, and IEPI measures into all levels of the PIE process. This effort builds on the comprehensive nature of PIE at the College. The efforts to integrate these metrics into the PIE process more fully will assist the College in identifying outcomes gaps that might lead to prioritization of resource needs. While many KPIs appear to be at the operational level for units or departments, the incorporation of ISS and IEPI standards add a College-wide dimension. The team invites the College to define a set of terms to support broad understanding of assessment, KPI measurement, and ISS evaluation. Additionally, the College should consider including leading, as well as lagging, measures into this work so the College might identify earlier opportunities where interventions or adjustments might enhance outcomes.

The second effort involves integration of SSSP, Student Equity, and Basic Skills Initiative plans. This is important work being done at the state level and also at individual colleges so as to avoid having the budgetary silos created by the structure and allocation of these funds, which can result in disconnected efforts. Representatives from the Mt. SAC Research and Institutional Effectiveness Department and the School of Continuing Education have been involved in the statewide conversations about integrating these plans and it is clear that early thinking about alignment is underway. The team asks the College to consider defining and measuring leading indicators from intake through completion that might allow the College to proactively make necessary adjustments in the integration and implementation work. Additionally, the integration of the plans may also indicate some modifications of process and structure for consideration by the College.

The third effort is in implementation of guided pathways offering an overall structure to align efforts to increase student success. Mt. SAC was selected to be part of the AACC Guided Pathway Initiative and has participated in learning institutes engaging a number of participants. The College has undertaken the academic mapping aspects of guided pathways and has set up a timeframe for contextualization of developmental education coursework. The team invites the College to ensure that in addition to contextualized developmental education, the College deliberately consider other efforts, such as acceleration and special supports designed to assist students and that are identified through the intake process. As the work of guided pathways scales up, detailed timelines of parallel efforts involved in the implementation will need to be incorporated into the QFE timeline presented.

The team appreciated the discussion and planning displayed in the three areas of focus for the QFE. The sum total of these successful efforts will lead to better and more comprehensive integration of plans, metrics, and student success efforts across the College.