

EVALUATION REPORT

San Diego Mesa College
San Diego, California

A confidential report prepared for
The Accrediting Commission for California and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team
that visited San Diego Mesa College from October 11-14, 2010

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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

INSTITUTION: San Diego Mesa College

DATE OF VISIT: October 11 – 14, 2010

TEAM CHAIR: Brice W. Harris
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The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) assigned an eleven-member evaluation team to visit San Diego Mesa College on October 12 – 14, 2010 for the purpose of reviewing the college's performance on the Standards of Accreditation. The team spent numerous hours prior to the visit reviewing documents provided by the college and three days on site examining additional evidence and meeting with college and district office staff, visiting classes and talking with students. The team appreciated the completeness, quality and candor of the college self study. The college and district were well prepared for the visit and provided the team with tremendous support during their stay. We found staff uniformly welcoming and quite willing to discuss both the strengths and challenges of the college.

The college's last comprehensive accreditation visit was in 2004 at which time accreditation was reaffirmed. Shortly before that visit the then President, Constance Carroll, was selected to serve as District Chancellor a position she holds currently. The college's subsequent President, Dr. Rita Cepeda recently left Mesa after the current Self-Study was completed to take a Chancellor position in another California community college district. Dr. Barbara Kavalier, Mesa Vice President of Student Services, served as acting president until August of this year when Elizabeth Armstrong was selected to serve as Interim President for the 2010-11 academic year. The district is currently conducting a national search for the next president of the college.

The team found a number of positive practices listed in the commendations below:

- The college is commended for the student services leadership in the development of a program that provides opportunities for expanding student participation in college governance and club activities.
- The library is to be commended for the breadth of resources and services available to remote users.
- The college is to be commended for taking the lead in fostering a campus environment that welcomes and respects diverse life experiences and identifies and eliminates barriers to achieving a diverse workforce, and also the Mesa College's Diversity Committee's website: <http://www.sdmesa.edu/diversity/>

- The college and district are to be commended on the recently completed buildings on campus and the outstanding utilization of the resources provided by the community through Propositions S and N.
- The college is commended for re-energizing student involvement through the hiring of a new individual as Dean of Student Activities, support by administration, and collaboration with faculty and staff. The college is also commended for its approach to dealing with budgetary constraints in Student Services while providing services in an innovative and effective way.
- The Board of Trustees is commended for its transparent and thorough annual self-evaluation process which ensures that all parties who frequently interact with the Board have the opportunity provide input. This process ensures effective operations and continuous quality improvement.
- The Board of Trustees, the district and college leadership are to be commended for their prudent oversight of fiscal resources. Their long range planning relative to fiduciary management has allowed the college to maintain a high level of programs and services during this fiscally troubling time.

The team found that the college had responded to the recommendations of the 2004 visiting team and made significant progress in many areas. However the previous team recommendations regarding planning, program evaluation and integration of those systems to inform resource allocation still needs refinement. The team made the following recommendations to the college:

Recommendation 1:

In order to achieve a sustainable program review, planning and student learning outcomes process, the college should develop and implement an integrated process that links all components within program review and ensures that an integrated planning process directs resource allocation.

The team further recommends that the college:

- develop measurable goals and objectives in order to integrate data on student achievement into the planning and resource allocation process;
- develop an ongoing and systematic cycle that links program review, planning, resource allocation and re-evaluation based upon the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data;
- demonstrate that the allocation of resources considers the needs and priorities of the college based upon its mission and goals;
- demonstrate that resource allocation leads to the improvement of institutional effectiveness, and
- communicate the results to appropriate constituencies once those results have been measured and analyzed.

(Standard I.B., I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, III.B.2.a, III.B.2.b)

Recommendation 2:

In order to fully meet the standards, the team recommends that the college accelerate the development and assessment of course level Student Learning Outcomes, and in order to meet the 2012 deadline, the team recommends that the college assess and align Student Learning Outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels, and use the results to make improvements (II.A.1.c; II.A.2.b; II.A.2.e-f; II.A.2.h-i).

Recommendation 3:

The team recommends that the college improve communication concerning the process used for technology planning to all campus stakeholders, develop a method to engage non-users in technology and also secure stable funding sources for technology resources (III.C.1.a & d).

Recommendation 4:

The team recommends that the college develop an adequate system for program review of Administrative Services which integrates planning and resource allocations and assures the linkage between program review and resource allocation (III.D.1.a).

District Recommendation 1:

The team recommends that the district's Board of Trustees develop a policy to address the selection and evaluation of the college presidents (IV.B.1.j).

ACCREDITATION EVALUATION REPORT FOR SAN DIEGO MESA COLLEGE

Introduction

Opening in the fall of 1964, San Diego Mesa College is an independently accredited college within the San Diego Community College District. Located in the eastern portion of the city of San Diego, the college currently enrolls more than 24,000 students each semester and offers more than 170 associate degree and certificate programs. Although the college has no significant off-site locations there are a rapidly growing number of students taking online courses.

Mesa College is among the largest of California's community colleges. The college has a diverse student body reflective of the population of their service area. More than 60% of the students are non-white, 53% percent are female, and nearly one quarter are first generation college students. The college staff numbers more than 1,300 and is also very diverse with nearly half of the employees from ethnically diverse groups and 54% female.

The following report reflects the observations, conclusions and recommendations from the team as a whole.

Commendations for Mesa College and the San Diego Community College District

The team found a great deal of very impressive activities being undertaken at the college, and specifically identified the following commendations:

- The college is commended for the student services leadership in the development of a program that provides opportunities for expanding student participation in college governance and club activities.
- The library is to be commended for the breadth of resources and services available to remote users.
- The college is to be commended for taking the lead in fostering a campus environment that welcomes and respects diverse life experiences and identifies and eliminates barriers to achieve a diverse workforce, and also the Mesa College's Diversity Committee's website: <http://www.sdmesa.edu/diversity/>
- The college and district are to be commended on the recently completed buildings on campus and the outstanding utilization of the resources provided by the community through Propositions S and N.

- The college is commended for re-energizing student involvement through the hiring of a Dean of Student Activities, support by administration, and collaboration with faculty and staff. The college is also commended for its approach to dealing with budgetary constraints in Student Services while providing services in an innovative and effective way.
- The Board of Trustees is commended for its transparent and thorough annual self-evaluation process which ensures that all parties who frequently interact with the Board have the opportunity provide input. This process ensures effective operations and continuous quality improvement.
- The Board of Trustees, the district and college leadership should be commended for their prudent oversight of fiscal resources. Their long range planning relative to fiduciary management has allowed the college to maintain a high level of programs and services during this fiscally troubling time.

Major Recommendation for Mesa College

The team found that the college had responded to the recommendations of the 2004 visiting team and made significant progress in many areas. However the previous team recommendations regarding planning, program evaluation and integration of those systems to inform resource allocation still needs refinement. As a result the team made the following major recommendation in its 2010 report.

Recommendation 1:

In order to achieve a sustainable program review, planning and student learning outcomes process, the college should develop and implement an integrated process that links all components within program review and ensures that an integrated planning process directs resource allocation.

The team further recommends that the college:

- develop measurable goals and objectives in order to integrate data on student achievement into the planning and resource allocation process;
- develop an ongoing and systematic cycle that links program review, planning, resource allocation and re-evaluation based upon the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data;
- demonstrate that the allocation of resources considers the needs and priorities of the college based upon its mission and goals;
- demonstrate that resource allocation leads to the improvement of institutional effectiveness, and
- communicate the results to appropriate constituencies once those results have been measured and analyzed.

(Standards I.B., I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, III.B.2.a, III.B.2.b)

Responses to Recommendations of the Previous Evaluation Team

The team carefully reviewed the college's progress on addressing the recommendations from the 2004 Evaluation Team and found that the college had made progress on all the previous recommendations. However some of the previous recommendations still need work and those issues have been incorporated into the recommendations of this 2010 review.

Recommendation 1.1

The college should implement a more fully integrated process for planning and resource allocation, grounded in data from program reviews (which should include data on student learning outcomes) and student learning outcomes assessment. This process and its outcomes should be widely communicated. The college should evaluate the process regularly to assess its impact on institutional effectiveness (I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.2.f).

The College developed an "Annual Integrated Planning Matrix" to guide planning and resource allocations.

Program review findings were recognized as integral to resource allocation in the instructional and student services areas. However, the visiting team found inadequate evidence of linkage of resource needs integrated in program review to resource allocation decisions.

More significantly the visiting team found inadequate program review in the Administrative Services Division. The College indicates that they would be compliant in 2011-12. The College based its decision to complete the program review in 2011-12 based on a letter from Barbara Beno of the ACCJC.

In her memorandum (dated September 9, 2008) to Chancellors, College Presidents, Chief Instructional Officers, and Accreditation Liaison Officers, Barbara Beno, President of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges stated:

"The Commission has announced the regard to performance discussed in the rubric.

- Institutions and teams should be aware that the Commission expects that institutions be at the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement level in Program Review of academic programs (including educational services). Many institutions have not developed sustained processes for evaluating administrative services, but all should be above the Awareness level in these efforts."*

It is apparently the last sentence of this memorandum that Mesa based its decision not to enter into complete program review for Administrative Services until academic year 2011-12.

On June 25, 2009, Barbara Beno issued an additional memorandum regarding the updated timelines for evaluating institutional effectiveness. This memorandum is slightly different from the previous one in that the paragraph does not contain the last line.

“The Commission has announced the regard to performance discussed in the rubric.

- *Institutions and teams should be aware that the Commission expects that institutions be at the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement level in Program Review of instructional and non-instructional programs and services.”*

The College has not fully addressed this recommendation and standards I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, and I.A.2 as recommended by the 2004 visiting team.

Recommendation 1.2

The college should strengthen its dialogue about student learning by articulating specific goals with respect to the educational effectiveness of the college, and stating the goals (and supporting objectives) in measurable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be determined, widely discussed and planning for improvement can take place (I.B.1, I.B.2).

The college has made significant progress on this recommendation and has succeeded in stating the goals in measurable terms and widely discussed them for planning. Although the college has met the spirit of this recommendation there is still work to be done which is detailed by the team in the new recommendation 1 in the report that follows.

Recommendation 1.3

The college should develop and implement a plan to meet current and future needs for institutional research that is accurate, timely and actionable. Toward this end, the college should carefully consider how institutional research is positioned in the college so that it may support the entire institution from a fair, unbiased and informed stance, thereby strengthening various planning and institutional improvement efforts (I.B).

(See recommendations 1.4 and 1.5 below.)

Recommendation 1.4 (Identified as a District Recommendation)

In order to build upon their efforts to strengthen institutional effectiveness and to foster a “culture of evidence” throughout the district, the district office and the colleges should cooperate in the development of an enhanced research function with both strong district and strong college components (I.B.3, I.B.6, IV.B.2.b).

(See recommendation 1.5 below.)

Recommendation 1.5 (Identified as a District Recommendation)

In order to coordinate and assist the master planning efforts already established at the colleges, the district should continue to work to formulate an overall strategic plan that will provide a vision for the future development of the district, based upon extensive dialogue

among faculty and staff, students, college and district leaders, board members, and the community (I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.2.f, IV.B.1, IV.B.3).

Recommendations 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5 have been fully addressed by the college. There is evidence of substantial efforts to address the needs of institutional research, including the hiring of a campus based researcher, and production of research publications. The District also finalized its Strategic Plan in 2009. The college has fully responded to recommendations 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5.

Recommendation 3.1

The college should complete the work on student learning outcomes which it has begun so effectively in the areas of instruction and student services and ensure that work on student learning outcomes is undertaken in all of the areas of the college in which the standards call for it (III.A.1.c, III.B.2.b).

Recommendation 3.1 (complete work on SLOs) includes Standards III.A.1.c and III.B.2.b. Student Learning Outcomes and Administrative Unit Outcomes (both abbreviated SLOs) are being developed, and in 2009, 46 percent of the 70 administrative, student services, and instructional units had identified SLOs and discussed an assessment plan. The next step, creating plans for improving programs, facilities, instruction, or service has been completed by 28 percent of the units, and 42 percent have not started. Thus there is not yet sufficient assessment data on outcomes to fully incorporate into the planning process.

Thus the response to the specific wording of Recommendation 3.1 regarding SLOs being undertaken in all of the areas of the college has been met. Since this recommendation was made in 2004, rubrics have been made for planning and SLOs and benchmarks identified. With regard to these rubrics, the college has not completed its work on SLOs in that integrating them fully into the planning and resource allocation cycle and into faculty evaluations has not yet occurred.

Recommendation 3.2 (District and College Recommendation)

The district, in cooperation with the colleges, should explore new efforts and initiatives to identify and address the barriers that limit the diversity of their workforce and to ensure that faculty and staff reflect the rich diversity of their student body (III.A.4.b).

This recommendation was considered to be for the District. To respond in a coordinated, orderly fashion, the District Governance Council (DGC) requested that each college and continuing education discuss it in participatory governance at their sites with responsibility shared by the Presidents and Site Compliance Officers (SCOs). The President and the SCO were to report back to Chancellor's Cabinet. A final plan was to be reviewed by the Cabinet, in consultation with the SCOs, but each campus was to create its own response.

In the fall 2004, Mesa College adopted a new process for establishing priorities for faculty hiring. It required the requesting departments to address ten principles with the first one being diversity. Job announcements were modified with a statement: "The successful candidate will demonstrate experience and/or knowledge in working with students of diversity in socioeconomic, cultural, and

ethnic background including those with different levels of academic preparation and varying physical and learning abilities.”

The Academic Senate formed an ad hoc, participatory governance committee to evaluate the implementation of District policy on the faculty hiring process. A position paper was written and approved by the Academic Senate in May 2006. This paper was approved by the President’s Cabinet.

The Mesa President convened a task force in the spring of 2006 to review and make recommendations about how to address concerns in the areas of: student discipline, faculty safety, planning for emergencies and civility. The task force determined that the primary concern for both students and employees was civility in and out of the classroom. This concern encompassed issues of diversity of ethnicity, culture and language. From the task force, a Civility Committee was created and it developed and presented a civility statement to the Cabinet.

In 2008-2009, the Trustee Advisory Council proposed and the Board adopted revisions to the policy 7100 (Commitment to Diversity) to include cultural competency as an important component of being qualified for employment with the District. The proposed changes were approved by the District Governance Council and the revised Commitment to Diversity policy was formally on April 16, 2009 (DRE3.2-1).

Based on the Mid-term Report, current self study report, and review of documentation provided the College has fully responded to this recommendation.

Recommendation 4.1

The college should identify and implement measures to increase the level of student involvement in participatory governance so that they are able to work together with the other constituents within the college (IV.A.3).

Standard IV.A.3 states “Through established governance structures, processes and practices the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff and students work together for the good of the institution. These processes facilitate discussion of ideas and effective communication among the institution’s constituencies.” The college has provided evidence that they have made progress in meeting this standard through the many initiatives undertaken to involve students including the hiring of a Dean of Student Affairs. The college has fully responded to this recommendation.

Recommendation 4.2 (Identified as a District Recommendation)

The district should build upon its efforts to clearly delineate the functions of the district and the colleges and to communicate more effectively with faculty and staff throughout the district, paying additional attention to coordinating and integrating services and activities within the district office and regularly evaluating the effectiveness of the delineation and the quality of services provided to the college (IV.B.3.a, IV.B.3.b, IV.B.3.g).

The district has made significant progress in putting systems in place to improve the coordination and communication of district processes that facilitate college practices. A district wide strategic planning committee and district budget committee have been formed along with a handbook that delineates functions and reporting structure for the district. The District initiated a pilot process to evaluate the effectiveness of its administration and governance structures, with an assessment evaluated in fall 2010. While there appears that additional work will be done to clarify roles and responsibilities to make the practices systemic; it is clear that the district has begun the process and meets the standard. The college has fully responded to this recommendation.

Eligibility Requirements

The team found San Diego Mesa College to be in compliance with all eligibility requirements established by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association for Schools and Colleges.

1. Authority: San Diego Mesa College is one of the colleges in the San Diego Community College District located in California. The college is authorized to grant credit and award degrees by the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges; the California State Chancellor's Office under the authority of the Board of Governors for California Community Colleges, and the Board of Trustees of the San Diego Community College District.

2. Mission: The ACCJC visiting team confirmed that San Diego Mesa College has recently completed a review of its mission which was approved by the Board of Trustees on December 10, 2009. The team found the mission to be appropriate to a degree-granting institution and the constituency served by the college. The team also found that the statement is communicated to the public in print and on the college website.

3. Governing Board: Mesa College is governed by the Board of Trustees of the San Diego Community College District, a five member body elected for four-year terms in staggered elections every two years. The Board is elected to represent specific areas of the college district. The team confirmed that the Board is the policy-making body of the district and that they are responsible for ensuring that the college's mission is being carried out and that the financial resources of the college are used to provide a sound educational program.

4. Chief Executive Officer: Mesa College has a full-time chief executive officer appointed by the Board of Trustees, interim President Elizabeth Armstrong. The college plans to fill the position of permanent president within the current academic year. The San Diego Community College District Chief Executive Officer is Chancellor Constance Carroll, neither the college president nor district chancellor serve as Chair of the Board of Trustees.

5. Administrative Capacity: The team found that Mesa College is adequately staffed with personnel appropriately prepared and experienced to provide the college with the administrative services necessary to support its mission and purpose.

6. Operational Status: The team found Mesa College to be fully operational with students actively pursuing its degree programs.

7. Degrees: The team found that the majority of Mesa College offerings lead to degrees and certificates and the vast majority of students are enrolled in those offerings.

8. Educational Programs: The team found that Mesa College's principal degree programs are consistent with its mission and are based on recognized higher education fields of study. The college's degrees are of sufficient content and length and are conducted at levels of quality and

rigor appropriate to those degree fields. The degrees require a minimum of 60 academic units and a majority of them culminate in identified student outcomes.

9. Academic Credit: The team found that Mesa College appropriately awards academic credit based on criteria found in Title 5 of California law.

10. Student Learning Achievement: The team found that the college annually updates its catalog that defines the requirements for each program. Mesa College has a system of regular assessment of those courses and has demonstrated that program level outcomes are achieved by students.

11. General Education: The team found that the degrees offered at the college all include a substantial component of general education sufficient to allow students to develop a breadth of knowledge and intellectual inquiry. Those general education requirements include the development of competence in writing and computational skills as well as an introduction to other major areas of knowledge.

12. Academic Freedom: The San Diego Board of Trustees revised and approved Policy 4030 in April of 2009 which defines academic freedom for faculty, staff and students. Additionally the District's faculty collective bargaining agreement contains specific language describing faculty ethical behavior and academic freedom which is also approved by the Board of Trustees. The team found that the college supports and defines academic freedom.

13. Faculty: The team found that Mesa College has a core of full-time faculty that are of sufficient size and adequately trained to support the institution's educational programs. Within both district policy and faculty collective bargaining contracts there are clear statements of faculty responsibilities that include development and review of curriculum as well as the assessment of learning.

14. Student Services: The team found that Mesa College employs a robust amount of student services that support student learning and development consistent with the institutional mission.

15. Admissions: The team found that Mesa College has admissions policies that are consistent with its mission and that specify the qualifications of students appropriate for its programs. Those policies are printed in the college catalog and available on the website.

16. Information and Learning Resources: The team found that Mesa College has information and learning resources available to students that are sufficient to support its mission and instructional programs. Those resources are varied and include traditional publications, online sources, tutorial services and dedicated campus computer labs.

17. Financial Resources: Mesa College and the San Diego Community College District have adequate funding and financial resources to assure fiscal stability and provide for institutional effectiveness. Even though the current economic downturn has placed financial stress on the college, there was and is adequate financial planning to weather the crisis and protect the core academic programs.

18. Financial Accountability: The team found that the college and the district undergo and make available annual external financial audits. The audits are conducted by an independent auditor and the audits for the previous fiscal year were unqualified.

19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation: Mesa College and the San Diego Community College District annually undertake a process of planning and evaluation which includes research on student learning and student success. The team found evidence of ongoing program evaluation and planning.

20. Public Information: Mesa College annually produces a college catalog which the team found to be current and accurate. That catalog includes the required general information as specified in the ACCJC Eligibility Requirements, and is available to the public in print and online.

21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission: The team found that the college adheres to the eligibility requirements and accreditation standards and policies of the Commission. Mesa College complies with Commission requests, directives, decisions and policies and is complete, accurate and honest in their communication. The college describes itself consistently with various other accrediting bodies.

STANDARD I

Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

A. Mission

General Observations:

The San Diego Mesa College mission defines the institution's broad educational purposes, intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning. The mission identifies success as the primary outcome for students. The mission recognizes that its intended student population comes from surrounding communities and encourages a focus on diversity (I.A.1). Further, the college specifies four core goals that serve to support and focus the college's efforts, programs, intended population, and intended outcomes for students. In addition, the college describes its vision and lists the values that support the mission.

The mission statement is approved by the governing board and is well documented and widely published, in the college catalogue, on college planning documents, including the Educational Master Plan, and on the college website (I.A.2).

The institution reviews its mission statement on a regular, two-year cycle. The process is initiated by the Academic Affairs Committee, a sub-committee of the Academic Senate, which is made up of representatives from all the constituent groups of the college. The mission is reviewed by other appropriate governance bodies before final review by the President's Cabinet and adoption by the Board of Trustees (I.A.3).

The college's mission and goals guide its institutional planning and decision making. The mission is at the forefront of all planning documents, and referenced in the program review processes of the college (I.A.4).

Findings and Evidence:

Substantial evidence is presented in support of this standard. The mission statement is widely published, and contains essential elements. Minutes are presented reflecting its review and revision, most recently in 2007-08, and the involvement of the shared governance groups in this process, and eventual approval by the governing board. There is evidence that the mission is at the forefront of planning efforts, integrated into the Educational Master Plan 2007-2011, and the program review documents and processes.

Conclusions:

The college meets this standard.

Recommendations:

None

B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

General Observations:

San Diego Mesa College (SDMC) has made gains in establishing a culture of evidence that will allow for the ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning necessary to refine its key processes and improve student learning. There is evidence that the college demonstrates its effectiveness, and organizes its processes to allocate resources to support student learning. However, SDMC has also experienced challenges to maintain these processes due to turnover in key positions, specifically the college President and Vice President of Instruction (VPI).

The previous accreditation visit at Mesa resulted in five recommendations specifically related to Standard I.B. Recommendation 1.1 directed the college to implement a fully integrated process for planning and resource allocation, grounded in data from program reviews, including data from student learning outcomes and their assessment. Recommendation 1.2 directed the college to strengthen its dialogue about student learning through the establishment of specific, measurable goals related to educational effectiveness of the college, to promote dialogue and planning for continuous quality improvement. Recommendation 1.3 and 1.4 (District Recommendation) directed the college and the district to implement a plan to meet the needs of institutional research at the college, and strengthen institutional effectiveness by fostering a culture of evidence through the development of an enhanced research function with both strong district and college components. Finally, Recommendation 1.5 (District Recommendation) directed the district to formulate an overall strategic plan to provide for future development of the district.

SDMC has made significant efforts since the previous self-study to address the recommendations and continue to promote institutional effectiveness. There have been varying levels of success in these efforts, which will be addressed below.

Findings and Evidence

SDMC has made efforts to implement Student Learning Outcomes as part of a collegial, self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes. Evidence was presented that an SLO subcommittee was established by the Research Committee, with release time given to a faculty coordinator to lead the process. This position continued through the fall of 2009, when it was defunded, and the SLO subcommittee subsequently disbanded. Through conversation with the previous SLO coordinator, Research Committee Co-Chair, and VPI, the reason for this reduction was due to the difficult budget situation faced by the state and the college. This was then a partial cause of the disbanding of the SLO subcommittee; due to lack of interest with no release time offered for the coordinator position (I.B.1).

Despite this challenge, the Research Committee refocused efforts by working with a group of interested faculty who formed an SLO Task Force to encourage dialogue and implementation of student learning outcomes and their assessment. This group's efforts include promoting the implementation of Task Stream software, which was purchased specifically to manage the SLO assessment process. Though these efforts are underway, there still exists substantial variability in

the level at which the SLO assessment process has been implemented at the college. Specifically, SLOs and their assessment are not adequately included in the Program Review process for instructional programs. This weakens claims in the Self Study Report of the continuous improvement of student learning, as it is not adequately linked in the primary planning process, (i.e., Program Review) of the college (I.B.1, I.B.3).

In 2007, a comprehensive Educational Master Plan (EMP) was completed, outlining the goals and objectives of the college and its divisions and schools through 2011, and designed to improve its effectiveness consistent with its stated purposes. At the time the plan was developed, there is evidence to support that the institutional members understood these goals and objectives, including the diverse make up of the EMP committee, and the use of shared governance bodies in both the development and adoption of the plan. Conversations with administrative and faculty leadership confirm these statements, and the EMP itself delineates the committee membership. There was a notable absence of measurable objectives included in this plan, which limits the ability of the college to assess the degree to which they are achieved (I.B.2).

Further, there was no evidence that the EMP had been revisited since its creation, with no formalized assessment of progress toward achieving its stated goals in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation. This fact was confirmed through several conversations with key faculty, staff, and administrators. There was agreement that following completion of the EMP and the subsequent departure of the VPI, followed by the President, progress on implementation of the EMP halted (I.B.3). Subsequently, the EMP was abandoned without substantive evidence as to what process or evidence was used to reach this decision or which shared governance bodies were involved in the decision making process.

A planning matrix has been developed to outline the timelines followed by the various planning and resource allocation processes at the college. There is evidence of a broad-based planning process that offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies. Evidence presented includes a committee structure that supports planning, including the Program Review Committee, Academic Affairs Committee, the newly formed Planning Committee, and the President's Cabinet (I.B.4). However, the integration of these processes, specifically with Program Review, is lacking. The previous Recommendation 1.1, which directed the college to implement a more fully integrated process for planning and resource allocation grounded in data from program reviews and including student learning outcomes and assessment, has been neither fully implemented nor evaluated to assess its effectiveness, according to the level of sustainable continuous quality improvement outlined in the ACCJC Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness (I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.6).

There is evidence that the college uses documented assessment results to communicate matters of quality assurance to appropriate constituencies. The research office regularly publishes the Mesa College Fact Book, Student Equity Report, and other reports that document the performance of the college on several metrics. However, the integration of this data in Program Review, the EMP, and other planning documents is lacking. Additionally the analysis of the information and use for continuous improvement is not well documented (I.B.3, I.B.5, I.B.6).

Conclusions:

The college partially meets this standard.

Recommendation 1:

In order to achieve a sustainable program review, planning and student learning outcomes process, the college should develop and implement an integrated process that links all components within program review and ensures that an integrated planning process directs resource allocation.

The team recommends that the college:

- develop *measurable* goals and objectives in order to integrate data on student achievement into the planning and resource allocation process;
- develop an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, planning, resource allocation and *re-evaluation* based upon the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data;
- demonstrate that the allocation of resources considers the global needs and priorities of the college based upon its mission and goals;
- demonstrate that resource allocation leads to the improvement of institutional effectiveness;
- communicate results to appropriate constituencies once qualitative and quantitative assessment results have been measured and analyzed.

(Standards I.B., I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, III.B.2.a, III.B.2.b)

STANDARD II

Student Learning Programs and Service

A. Instructional Programs

General Observations:

The college offers a variety of courses and programs aligned with its mission and provided in a variety of formats that lead to degrees, certificates, employment, and transfer. The programs are reviewed through an integrated program review process. Student Learning Outcomes have been developed at the program and institutional levels, and assessed on a limited basis.

Findings and Evidence:

The college demonstrates that all instructional programs align with the mission of the college and uphold its integrity through a series of college and district curriculum review processes. The college also conducts regular assessment of its instructional programs through a five-year program review process. In addition, the college research department recently conducted an analysis comparing the success of students enrolled in distance education classes versus students enrolled in on campus classes (IIA.1). The analysis of environmental scans, occupational outlook information, high school to community college pipeline reports, placement exam data, and program review documentation are used to identify students' needs. In addition, the student learning outcome survey is used to determine the college's progress in the development and assessment of student learning outcomes in programs and service areas (IIA.1.a). The college curriculum committee reviews and approves the delivery systems and modes of instruction proposed for the curriculum. Criteria used in this review includes: highly qualified instructors, acceptance of course for credit at transfer institutions, fulfillment of requirements for vocational students, success rate of students in course, and assessment of faculty and students (IIA.1.b). The college has developed student learning outcomes at the program, general education, and institutional levels. The college has initiated the development of Student Learning Outcomes at the course level. There is minimal evidence of assessment and use of the assessment outcomes for improvement. The college partially meets this standard (IIA.1.c).

The college assures the high quality of all its courses and programs through: rigorous college and district curriculum review processes; a five-year program review cycle; a six-year (three-year vocational) curriculum review cycle; student success at four-year institutions; and the students' ability to pass statewide and/or national vocational exams (IIA.2). The Curriculum Review Committee, a subcommittee of the Academic Senate, is responsible for evaluating and reviewing courses and programs. Faculty members have primary roles in strengthening and developing instructional programs and courses including the development and assessment of student learning outcomes (IIA.2.a). The college relies on faculty expertise and advisory committees when appropriate to identify competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates, and degrees. Evidence indicates that the research committee, in conjunction with departmental faculty, has primary responsibility for the development of student learning

outcomes. Additional responsibilities are also shared by the curriculum, program review, and professional and staff development committees. The college is in the early stages of development and assessment of instructional student learning outcomes. Outcomes have been developed and published at the program and institutional levels; however, there is limited evidence of student learning outcomes being developed or assessed at the course level. As a result, the college has not institutionalized the use of student learning outcome assessment data as measures of student achievement (IIA.2.b).

The college adheres to district policy in accordance with Title 5 regulations implemented through curriculum and program review processes. These processes set criteria for deciding the breadth, depth, rigor, sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning for its courses and programs (IIA.2.c). Instructional delivery modes include online, lecture, labs, hands-on, and learning communities. Appropriate delivery modes are determined by: the subject, course level, the professional judgment of faculty, the success of students in other courses and the completion of transfer and/or career goals (IIA.2.d). Programs are reviewed and evaluated through an established five-year cycle. Courses are reviewed through a six-year cycle or a three-year cycle for career-technical courses. In 2008, the college recognized that approximately half of the 1107 courses had not been reviewed within the designated curriculum cycle and took steps to mediate the situation. Currently, approximately fifty-six courses remain out of cycle and are scheduled for review this academic year. The chair of the curriculum committee and the Vice President of Instruction has both asserted a commitment to ongoing monitoring of this cycle.

Course review is independent of program review, but it is documented in the program review. Plans are underway for the utilization of student learning outcome data in program and course evaluations. However, due to the limited development and assessment of student learning outcomes at the course level, there is little evidence linking student learning assessment to program and course evaluation. The college partially meets standards (IIA.2.e and IIA.2.f). The college uses state approved assessment instruments to place students in English, reading, math, and English as a second language courses. The college uses multiple measures to minimize test bias and validate test effectiveness in measuring student learning (IIA.2.g). The college does not award credit based on the achievement of student learning outcomes. The college aligns its practice of awarding credit with those of other systems of public higher education in California. The college uses the course objectives as evidence that the student has gained the knowledge associated with the coursework. The college partially meets this standard (IIA.2.h). The college has developed and published student learning outcomes for degrees and certificates. However, there is no evidence that awards are based on student learning outcomes since widespread assessment of program outcomes has not occurred. The college partially meets this standard (IIA.2.i).

An understanding of the basic content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge regarding General Education requirements have been defined. The rationale for general education is outlined in the college catalog. The district curriculum and instructional council determines the appropriateness of each course in fulfilling the general Education requirements. The district council also coordinated the district wide development of general education student learning outcomes (IIA.3 and II.A.3.a and IIA.3.b and II.A.3.c).

The curriculum committee review process ensures that all degree programs focus on an area of inquiry or have an interdisciplinary core (II.A.4).

Degree and certificate programs are developed using standards that ensure the scope and content of courses will provide students with the framework and knowledge necessary to effectively prepare them for career placement, external licensure, and certification. Accrediting and certification agencies, advisory committees, discipline faculty members, and the curriculum committee provide oversight and guidance to ensure quality (II.A.5).

The college assures that students and prospective students receive clear and accurate information regarding its courses, programs, and transfer policies. The catalog subcommittee was established to ensure accuracy of the college catalog. The catalog is updated annually. District policy requires that students receive a course syllabus at the first class meeting. However, since the college has limited development of Student Learning Outcomes at the course level, there is limited evidence of SLOs integrated into the course syllabi. The college partially meets these standards (II.A.6). The District office evaluates course credit from institutions that are regionally accredited only. The transfer center and counseling department provides information on transfer of credit to other institutions. Articulation agreements are established with public and private regionally accredited institutions. When programs are changed or eliminated, students are provided with information by the department and counseling services (II.A.6.a and II.A.6.b and II.A.6.c).

The college publishes its Academic Honesty and Freedom policy in the catalog and on its website. The college communicates its expectation that faculty will distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views in a discipline. Faculty evaluations are used in determining its effectiveness in meeting this expectation. The college has communicated specific codes of conduct for staff, faculty, administrators, and students in handbooks and the catalog (II.A.7 and II.A.7.a and II.A.7.b and II.A.7.c).

Conclusions:

The college and district have an integrated system of curriculum development and review. The curriculum is on a six-year review cycle and recently the college has made significant efforts to insure that the curriculum is reviewed in a timely manner within this cycle. The college offers a wide variety of courses and programs in different formats and schedules to meet the varying needs of the students and the community. Both students and teachers in the classrooms appear to be actively engaged in the teaching-learning process. Instructional program reviews are integrated into a comprehensive college program review process. Student Learning Outcomes have been developed at the program and institutional levels; however, very few SLOs have been developed at the course level. As a result, Student Learning Outcomes are not integrated broadly into course syllabi, and the evidence related to student learning cannot be broadly assessed and documented at the course, program, and institutional levels. The college partially meets this standard.

Recommendations 2:

In order to fully meet the standards, the team recommends that the college accelerate the development and assessment of course level Student Learning Outcomes, and in order to meet the 2012 deadline, the team recommends that the college assess and align Student Learning Outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels, and use the results to make improvements (II.A.1.c; II.A.2.b; II.A.2.e-f; II.A.2.h-i).

B. Student Support Services

General Observations:

The Student Services division has developed a climate of change and innovation. Under the Vice President of Student Services, processes have been developed to better serve an increasingly diverse student population. Data driven innovations have occurred through participatory conversations. Those innovations include on line matriculation services with counselor availability; development of web based “one-stop shop” in collaboration with the basic skills initiative; and personnel and financial reorganization to best serve students in a time of reduced categorical budgets.

Findings and Evidence:

Student support services have developed Student Learning Outcomes and assessment plans to assure the quality of student support services for both online and onsite students. Support services have been implemented for distance education students through designated online counseling services and the development of a student services website (II.B.1).

The college publishes a catalog annually containing information relevant to its constituencies with precise, current, and accurate information. The catalog is available both in hard copy and via the college website. Some information in admissions and matriculation is available in multiple languages. Student grievance and complaint procedures are outlined in the college catalog. The student grievance files were reviewed and they are in order (II.B.2).

In order to assess student support needs, the college uses a variety of tools including: information on admissions applications, campus research surveys, and needs identified by counselors during student counseling sessions (II.B.3). The college assures equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students regardless of service location or delivery system. Students can access a variety of student services, including counseling, orientation, and matriculation, through the college website. The college meets this standard (II.B.3.a). The college hired a new dean of student affairs who has engaged the student body in the development of personal and civic responsibilities by helping students develop participatory governance skills, and expanding and encouraging club development and participation (II.B.3.b). The college has recently realigned functions and responsibilities within the student services division in order to support student development and success. Student Services conducts regular program reviews with integrated Student Learning Outcomes that lead to program improvements. In addition, in response to state categorical budget reductions, the college has shifted fiscal and

personnel resources to best serve students (II.B.3.c). The college has established programs and services dedicated to diversity. It also established a diversity committee with the purpose of tracking the college's development in the areas of diversity and cultural competence. In fall 2008, the college prepared a Student Equity Report that included departmental data on student GPAs, units attempted, and student success and retention rates disaggregated by demographic category (II.B.3.d). The district office of institutional research evaluates placement instruments in terms of fairness and validity, errors of measurement, and disproportionate impact (II.B.3.e).

Program review and Student Learning Outcomes assessment provide the most comprehensive evaluation of student support services. Evaluation results are used as a basis for improvement (II.B.4).

Conclusions:

Point of service surveys, pre- and post testing of activities and workshops with integrated assessments are used to assess student learning and improve student support services. Shared leadership within student services is creatively working to maintain quality online and onsite student services despite dramatic funding shortfalls. General funds have been reallocated to enable programs such as Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS) to maintain functionality. Student government supports an array of clubs that enable students to maintain connections outside the classroom. The college meets this standard.

Recommendations:

None

Commendation:

The college is commended for the student services leadership in the development of a program that provides opportunities for expanding student participation in college governance and club activities.

C. Library and Learning Support Services

General Observations:

The Learning Resource Center is an attractive up-to-date facility reflecting the expansion and integration of technology into instruction and library resources. Students appear highly engaged in the utilization of resources.

Findings and Evidence:

The college supports the quality of its instructional programs through a variety of learning support services to meet the diverse needs of its students. These services include: library; audio-visual department; center for independent learning (an open student computer lab); twenty-five discipline specific computer labs; and the tutoring center. The library book collection includes approximately

111,460 titles which are further enhanced by online access to over 31,000 e-books, 400 reference books, and over 20,000 periodicals. This access along with online reference assistance is essential support for the college's distance education program. The audiovisual collection has 484 audio recordings and 2,732 video recordings. These collections are reflective of the breadth and depth of the college curriculum. The Center for Independent Learning (CIL) is an open computer lab which provides all student access to hands on media, computer software and discipline specific online tutorial programs. Upon publishers' approval the CIL provides access to textbook supplementary materials including lab packages through either the web server or directly online from publishers' websites. The CIL also has a computer lab for faculty and staff. In addition, the High Tech Center serves as a computer lab for persons with disabilities. The tutoring center provides learning support services in mathematics, sciences, and writing. Tutoring is provided by peer tutors (II.C.1). As evidenced by the library website, faculty participation in the selection of library materials is encouraged. Moreover, librarians are assigned to each instructional department to serve as liaisons to facilitate this participation. Faculty members are also encouraged to make recommendations for software for the Center for Independent Learning and other learning support labs (II.C.1.a).

Instruction in the use of library and other learning support services is a key function of each area. Furthermore, information competency is included as a degree-level student learning outcome. Library instruction is provided in: a one unit library science course, Information Literacy and Research Skills; course specific faculty requested instruction; walk-in library scheduled workshops; online tutorials; and point of service one-on-one instruction. Additionally, the library offers flex classes for faculty on library resources to support their instruction. The Center for Independent Learning provides instruction to students, faculty, and staff in the effective use of their resources. The center also provides faculty with instructional technology development assistance (II.C.1.b).

The library, audiovisual department, and Center for Independent Learning are open 70 hours per week during fall and spring semesters. This includes early morning and evening hours, but due to budget cuts no weekend hours. Additionally, the library website provides 24-hour/seven days per week access to: the library catalog which list holdings for all of the district's libraries; an e-book collection; and databases which provide access to reference and periodical resources. As evidenced by the library website, an authentication system provides authorized remote users, including distance learners, access to these information resources. Online reference assistance is also provided.

The tutoring center is open 47 hours per week including evening hours. The tutoring center pilot tested a writing tutorial service, but due to budget constraints the service was discontinued. The tutoring center staff has noted need to further explore online tutorial services in support of distance learners. The college meets this standard (II.C.1.c).

The Learning Resource Center provides appropriate maintenance and security for its materials and equipment. Equipment is secure through a cabling system. In addition, the library has a theft detection and alarm system to protect its materials and equipment (II.C.1.d). The library maintains collaborative relationships with several agencies for services and materials. The San Diego/Imperial Counties Community College Learning Resources Cooperative relationship is secured by a Joint Powers Agreement administered through the San Diego County Office of

Education. Membership includes participation in the shared video library collection and access to live chat reference services through Ask-a-Librarian. The library is also a member of Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) which enables the library to borrow and loan requested titles from many other libraries in the United States. Utilization data are maintained and evaluated periodically (II.C.1.e).

Library effectiveness is evaluated with a number of measures. These measures include: service and material utilization data; point of service surveys; student satisfaction surveys; and employee perception surveys. In addition, student learning outcomes established for Library Science 101 and instructor-requested library instruction classes are assessed. The center for independent learning, the academic computer labs, and the tutoring center conduct point of service surveys and maintain utilization data to evaluate their effectiveness. However, it is suggested that the center for independent learning, the academic computer labs, and the tutoring continue to evaluate their student learning outcomes and assessment methods to more clearly define their roles in student learning. Furthermore, as evidence by the 2006-07 Learning Resource Center program review, the program review process also provides an opportunity for evaluation (II.C.2).

Conclusions:

Within budgetary constraints, the library is addressing the challenge of maintaining the currency of the book and periodical collections while expanding electronic resources. As the Learning Resource Center programs' assessment of student learning outcomes is more fully implemented, it is anticipated that further refinement and alignment of outcomes and assessment methodology will occur on an ongoing basis. The college meets this standard.

Recommendations:

None

Commendation:

The library is to be commended for the breadth of resources and services available to remote users.

STANDARD III

Resources

A. Human Resources

General Observations:

Mesa College's self study addressed the major aspects of Standard III.A: Human Resources. The college employs qualified faculty, staff, managers, and administrators. Through its employee hiring, evaluation, and ongoing staff development policies, procedures, and programs the college attracts and retains qualified employees necessary to enable and support its commitment to student success. As evidenced by the college catalog, a large number of faculty members and administrators have doctoral degrees.

Minimum qualifications for faculty positions are established by the State Chancellor's Office and per board policy; the College and District office follow these requirements related to the discipline. All job announcements include these minimum qualifications; in addition, announcements also include information regarding request of equivalency by the applicant. Administrative Procedure 7211, which is a new means for disciplinary college faculty to determine equivalency, based upon set criteria has recently been approved. In January 2004, the three college Academic Senate Presidents proposed a new process for establishing equivalencies. A draft (AP 7211) was developed and approved by the Senates; it was presented to the Board and approved (III.A.1).

Classified positions, job classifications have established duties and responsibilities, which help to assure the quality and integrity of programs and services. The Mesa College Executive Staff Committee determines which classified positions will be filled according the programmatic needs (III.A.1).

The hiring for management positions is guided by District procedures and the provisions of the Management Employees Handbook. Minimum qualifications and affirmative action/equal opportunity principles along with specially developed job descriptions are used for the recruitment of qualified candidates (III.A.1).

Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are available on the District website and the intranet. Procedure 4200.1 details Employment of College Faculty, the responsibilities of the District Equal Employment Opportunity membership, recruitment, screening and selection process, review and evaluation (III.A.1).

The Human Resources Administration is a shared responsibility. The District provides the preponderance of Human Resources responsibilities.

Findings and Evidence:

Because the college's employees are sufficiently qualified by education, experience, and dedication to the college's standards and goals, the integrity and high quality of college programs and services is assured (III.A.1).

SDCCD Board Policy 7120, Recruitment and Hiring, states that the Chancellor will establish procedures for the recruitment and selection of employees that will include the implementation of an Equal Employment Opportunity Plan. The criteria and procedures for hiring classified employees will be established after affording classified organizations an opportunity to participate in the decisions under the Board's policies regarding local decision making (III.A.1).

The College employs safeguards to assure that hiring procedures are consistently applied. The site Compliance Officer ensures that the criteria and questions for each hiring committee include requirements that the applicant demonstrate experience in cultural competence and a sensitivity to and understanding of the diverse economic, cultural, disability and ethnic backgrounds of the community college students. In the 2009 Employee Perception Survey, 80% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the criteria for hiring employees were clearly stated (Q63) and 68% agreed or strongly agreed that the procedures for hiring employees are strictly followed (Q64) (III.A.1.a).

Evaluations are determined by District policies and procedures, the Human Resources Instructions Manual, the various collective bargaining agreements and the Meet and Confer Handbooks. An evaluation of all employees is strongly institutionalized within the SDCCD. In the 2009 Employee Perception Survey, 82% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their performance evaluations have been conducted according to their contract guidelines (Q65) (III.A.1.b).

Faculty evaluation is conducted in accordance with processes identified in the contract negotiated by the American Federation of Teachers, Local 1931. (III.A.1.c) The Faculty Appraisal Form includes multiple criteria upon which the faculty member is evaluated (III.A.1.b).

Faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated Student Learning Outcomes have engaged in significant dialogue and personal reflections regarding the creation, implementation and assessment of Student Learning Outcomes at the course, program, service area and College level (III.A.1.c).

Currently, the College catalog lists both the program and service area Student Learning Outcomes for the Division of Instruction. For the purpose of reporting, the SLO's were integrated into the College's Program Review process, which includes the divisions of Instruction, Student Services and Administrative Services (III.A.1.c).

The faculty evaluation currently includes a self-assessment about how the faculty is meeting the fifteen criteria on the Faculty Appraisal form, but the specific criteria of faculty "effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes" is not part of the Faculty Appraisal Form (III.A.1.c).

The team was told by some faculty that the role of outcomes assessment in faculty evaluation continues to be a concern. Concerns have been raised about the possibility that SLO assessment data could be used inappropriately to evaluate specific instructor effectiveness out of context as well as SLO information being used punitively in program review to decrease program funding. Academic Senate and bargaining unit representatives were interviewed, and while the process of SLO assessment is continuing, concerns raised by the bargaining unit remain unaddressed. The college is required to comply with Freedom of Information requests for public records, including data on learning outcomes when appropriate.

San Diego Community College District has long had policies that address professional ethics; however, they were dispersed according to subject, such as conflict of interest or sexual harassment. In 2009, the Vice Chancellor, Human Resources, began the process of drafting a formal centralized written code of professional ethics for all personnel. The draft policy is currently proceeding through the approval process (III.A.1.d).

Conclusions:

The College employs methods consistent with accreditation standards, District policy and bargaining agreements relative to hiring and evaluation of all its personnel. Faculty and administrators meet minimum qualifications specified in the California Community College Handbook, Education Code and Title 5 regulations. A number of desirable qualifications for faculty are also included in job announcements.

The College assures the effectiveness of its personnel through timely, specific evaluation processes that improve institutional effectiveness. However, there are some unfilled classified and administrative positions that are filled with interim appointments. With regard to faculty, the college employs individuals that are qualified by education, training, and experience to fill positions. The recruitment and selection process for selecting candidates for positions is broadly communicated and established in board policy. The college has developed policies with appropriate evaluation forms to assess the effectiveness of personnel, encourage performance improvement, and define goals and objectives for the next review period (III.A.1.a, b; III.A.6).

At this point, Student Learning Outcomes are not a formal part of an individual faculty member's evaluation and discussions continue on the manner in which SLOs are to be included in the process (III.A.1.c.).

Based on interviews with District and College staff and review of relevant documents the visiting team validates the self study and concludes that the College is in compliance with this standard with exception of the need for the District to adopt a District wide Code of Ethics. The draft was completed in May 2010 and is being considered for Board approval during fall 2010. The District needs to complete a centralized written Code of Professional Ethics for all personnel and that it is approved by the Board (III.A.1.d). The college meets this standard.

Recommendation:

None.

Commendation:

The college is to be commended for taking the lead in fostering a campus environment that welcomes and respects diverse life experiences and identifies and eliminates barriers to achieve a diverse workforce, and also the Mesa College's Diversity Committee's website:

<http://www.sdmesa.edu/diversity/>

B. Physical Resources

General Observations:

Mesa College has a comprehensive Facilities Master Plan which was developed subsequent to the passage of Propositions S (2002) and N (2006). The passage of these general obligation bonds has provided the majority of funding for the recent and continuing capital construction. The Facilities Master Plan is utilized in conjunction with the Educational Master Plan to ensure that physical resources are planned and constructed to support educational programs. The Facilities Master Plan is updated and revised on a continuing basis to respond to the changing needs of the college community.

With the passage of Proposition S in 2002 and Proposition N in 2006, Mesa began updating the campus with new facilities and renovations to modernize the College and expand its capacity to meet the educational workforce development needs of the community.

The College's efforts in physical resources administration demonstrate careful planning and execution. The College's comprehensive facilities planning activities ensure that its physical resources are planned and constructed to ensure effective utilization. Upgrades and replacement of facilities have been significant, due to the capital construction programs. Commitment to upgrading and replacing facilities that are functionally obsolete as well as maintaining the quality necessary to support the college's programs and services.

Many facilities projects have been completed, or are in progress, throughout the campus. The new buildings and strengthened infrastructure will provide students with improved facilities and access to programs that support student learning for many years.

Safety is of prime consideration to the College in the acquisition and maintenance of physical resources. All new buildings are planned and constructed to meet or exceed current national, state, and local educational safety standards. The Site Safety Plan for Mesa College is comprehensive and detailed (III.B.1).

The Mesa College Site Safety Committee has duties consistent with Policy 4800 and Procedure 4800.1 per the College's Site Safety Plan. Consistent with its commitment to safety, the College recently opened a new police substation. The campus police maintain a close watch with operations and activities at the College to assure a safe environment (III.B.1).

The Facilities Master Plan has been updated and revised on a continuing basis over the past four years in order to respond to the changing needs of the college community. The plan is overseen by the College's participatory governance Facilities Planning Committee (III.B.1).

Findings and Evidence:

The recently completed Allied Health Building was designed to meet the diverse learning needs of various programs including Dental Assisting, Physical Therapy Assistant, and Radiology. The room layout, technology and furnishings and equipment were designed and specified to assure an optimum learning experience and to be consistent with program-specific accreditation standards and laws relating to health care delivery, patient protection, and confidentiality of records (III.B.1).

Mesa College has over 24,000 students and currently has a fill rate of 96%. The College maintains timely, efficient and effective construction schedules and the Proposition S and N projects and expenditures are monitored by the Citizens' Oversight Committee. In addition, there are subcommittees for finance, audit construction and communications. The Citizens Oversight Committee has been effective in keeping planning and construction on schedule for the College and the District (III.B, III.B.1.a, III.B.1.b).

The Facilities Committee successfully integrates planning of institutional programs across the college into its facility planning to build appropriate facilities that meet the program needs. All facilities and equipment decisions are driven by needs identified at the program or service area level to support the College goals. A process exists for evaluating and addressing existing facilities and equipment. The process utilizes data to assist decision makers in prioritizing needs. Given the current budget restrictions, decisions are based on the most immediate need at the time. A concern in this area, observed by the visiting team, is that the planning process includes items to be funded in the future as funding becomes available, but does not include a process to determine items that will be reduced or eliminated (III.B.2, III.B.2.a).

Long-term needs are incorporated into the Facilities Master Plan and additional requirements are incorporated for IELM, Perkins CTEA, and General Fund expenditures. Program and service areas identify their needs for equipment and provide support for their inclusion to meet program goals and effective student learning (III.B.2.b).

The College reported using the Program Review process to assure that all planning, funding, maintenance, and replacement of physical resources are informed by student learning needs directly identified by those who deliver instruction and services. The use of Program Review results in all areas of planning assures that resources are allocated according to needs in support of student learning and achievement of stated Student Learning Outcomes. The visiting team was not able to find a direct linkage from Program Review to Planning and Resource Allocation college-wide (III.B.2.a and III.B.2.b).

Conclusions:

The primary planning documents for facilities include the Educational Master Plan, the Facilities Master Plan and Program Review plans.

The team did not find evidence of college-wide linkage of resource allocation to meet facilities needs and Program Review with the budget development process (III.B.2.a and III.B.2.b). The college partially meets this standard and Recommendation I relates to this specific concern.

Recommendation:

(See Recommendation 1.)

Commendation:

The college and district are to be commended on the recently completed buildings on campus and the outstanding utilization of the resources provided by the community through Propositions S and N.

C. Technology Resources

General Observations:

Mesa College's commitment in regards to technology is impressive. The college has made great effort to provide effective technology decisions. The self study states that funding for technology is supported through four sources: (i) IELM, (ii) CREA; (iii) General Funds, and (iv) Bonds S and N (III.C.1.a).

The College plans for acquisition, maintenance, upgrades and replacement for the technology infrastructure and equipment in a systematic way to meet the institutional needs (III.C.1.a).

There are two district-wide committees that are associated with the Purchasing Department and the Office of Information Technology. Through these committees, all three colleges and Continuing Education come together to identify the equipment that will best serve the needs of their respective institution. Purchases are approved by the Director, Information Technology to assure that all equipment is the best suited for its application and integration with existing and future District practices (III.C.1).

The Self Study Report outlines a process by which the college assures that technology support is designed to meet the needs of the college. Through the use of the Information Technology (IT) Strategic Plan and Mesa Information Technology Committee, there is evidence that the college provides technology support to meet the needs of learning, teaching, and operational systems. Program Review outlines the technology needs of the various divisions and schools. These requests are prioritized and funded, as budgets allow, through the process of the Mesa Information Technology Committee and the President's Cabinet (III.C.1).

The distance education technology support service area is strongly established and shows evidence of continuing growth. The College offers technology training through the Mesa College Staff Development Committee and its Flex Subcommittee and Classified Staff Development Subcommittee. A request for proposals and suggestions is sent out each spring to determine what training sessions will be offered the following academic year (III.C.1.b).

Accessibility to technology resources is assured through collaboration with Disability Support Programs and Services (DSPS) personnel. The DSPS High Tech Center is a fully accessible lab which provides alternative media, software and hardware support for DSPS students (III.C.1.d).

The college plans, acquires, maintains, and upgrades the technology infrastructure and equipment to meet institutional needs. The IT Strategic Plan, included in the Educational Master Plan (EMP), outlines the need for technology resources on the campus. However, this plan is not obviously or explicitly informed by Program Reviews from the appropriate areas (III.C.1.c).

Technology resources are distributed to support the maintenance of college programs, according to the IT Strategic Plan. There is a prioritization of distribution in place based on a “roll down” where the securing of new computers causes a redistribution to replace computers that are far out of warranty, with prioritization given to instruction (III.C.1.d).

Findings and Evidence:

The College makes technology purchases with improvement of teaching and learning in mind. CurricUNET provides faculty with online curriculum information, including syllabus template, course outline of record, and access to similar courses across the state and the nation. TaskStream houses the SLOs for the college, so faculty can include them in their syllabus. For the online courses, the Course Management System (CMS) Blackboard/Vista is used. The financial management system Colleague is used to maintain a consistent report of account status (III.C.1.c).

The Employee Perception Survey performed in 2009 (Evidence III.A-16) points out employee concerns about the inclusion of technology planning in institutional planning as well as sufficient availability of technology to support student learning. Only 63 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “technology planning is effectively integrated with institutional planning.” Only 60 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “the availability of computers, software, multimedia, and other technologies is sufficient to support teaching and learning.” The college planning agenda for this standard seeks to address these concerns, including the improvement of communication about the process of technology planning and how it is integrated into the institutional planning process, engaging non-users in technology, and locating a stable funding source for technology resources (III.C.1.d).

The Information Technology (IT) Strategic Plan is included in the Educational Master Plan (EMP) of SDMCC. However, the integration of Program Review in the IT Strategic Plan, and linkage to resource allocation is lacking. Evidence exists from the 2009 Employee Perception Survey that the effective use of technology resources is assessed, although no specific use of that data was described or identified (III.C.2).

Conclusions:

Funding for technology is supported through four sources: (i) IELM; (ii) CTEA; (iii) General Funds; and (iv) Bonds S and N in the case of new building Furnishings, Fixtures, and Equipment (F, F & E). In the case of IELM, CTEA, and General Funds, technology requests must compete with other resource needs on campus. Recommendations are made by the appropriate committees as detailed in III.C.1. In the case of new building equipment, there is a standard District formula for some equipment, such as AV, while other decisions are made based upon available funds and program level needs. The Vice President, Administrative Services, and the school dean work with external consultants on bond-funded purchases.

The creation and update of the Mesa College IT Strategic Plan has provided the vision and vehicle for determining what is needed in order to accomplish the College and program/service areas missions. It is based on identified student learning needs and institutional effectiveness. Although the college generally meets this standard communication and funding could be improved.

Recommendation 3:

The team recommends that the college improve communication concerning the process used for technology planning to all campus stakeholders, develop a method to engage non-users in technology and also secure stable funding sources for technology resources (III.C.1.a & d.).

D. Financial Resources

General Observations:

The College has financial resources that are sufficient to support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness. The College's overall adopted budget for 2009-2010 was \$70,545,747, which included \$51,579,775 General Fund Unrestricted, \$8,965,972 General Fund Restricted, and \$10,000,000 Restricted Funds. However, as with the previous year, there were budget reductions. These reductions totaled \$2,631,248 for the past two years, including \$840,000 for 2008-2009 and \$1,121,568 for 2009-2010, along with \$669,666 in FTEF funding elimination (169 class sections, 37.79 FTEF) (III.D).

The College ended the 2009-2010 fiscal year with a small ending balance of \$289,618 or 0.57% of the general fund budget expenditures of \$50,914,864. During 2009-10, the majority of vacant positions were left unfilled and defunded or hiring delayed, especially in categorical program areas, in order to balance the budget. Over a three-year period from 2007-08 through 2009-10, defunded or delayed hiring of positions contributed total savings of \$2,447,916. The operating budget for the 2010-11 academic year was approved by the Board of Trustees on August 19, 2010. Mesa College's general fund unrestricted adopted budget is \$51,070,618 (III.D).

The District and College have sufficient cash flow and reserves to maintain stability, strategies for appropriate risk management, and realistic plans to meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences. The College's ending balance carryover for General Unrestricted Funds for the past

three years has been 2006-2007: \$769,008; 2007-2008: \$434,858; and 2008-2009: \$443,349. The District's ending balance for General Unrestricted Funds for 2008-2009 was \$14,160,184. It maintains a minimum 5% reserve, in compliance with state law, and this is sufficient to maintain a reserve for emergencies (III.D.1).

The College developed an "Annual Integrated Planning Matrix" to guide planning and resource allocations.

Findings and Evidence:

The District allocates financial resources to the College based on unit revenue (FTES) generated by the Colleges (includes unfunded) and a productivity factor. Line item allocation is delegated to the College. Mesa received a \$102,415 allocation reduction in funding and it was at the College's discretion to reduce the allocation for the reassigned funding for faculty. The College, through its budgetary development processes could have reduced other expenditures and chose not to reduce the reassigned allocation to faculty.

The District maintains an 8% above reserve and did not experience cash flow problems during the 2008-09, 2009-10, or during the current budget year.

The District allocated \$4 million in 2010-11 to the Colleges based on the allocation formula to support additional sections in order to meet compliance with the 50% law. The District estimates 2,500 FTES unfunded units for 2010-2011.

Program Review findings were recognized as integral to resource allocations in the instructional and student services areas. However, the visiting team did not find evidence of linkage of resource needs integrated in Program Review to resource allocation decisions.

More significantly the visiting team found inadequate Program Review in the Administrative Services Division. The College indicates they will be compliant in 2011-12. The College based its decision to complete the Program Review in 2011-12 based on a letter from Barbara Beno from the ACCJC.

In her memorandum (dated September 9, 2008) to Chancellors, College Presidents, Chief Instructional Officers, and Accreditation Liaison Officers, Barbara Beno, President of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges stated:

"The Commission has announced the regard to performance discussed in the rubric.

- Institutions and teams should be aware that the Commission expects that institutions be at the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement level in Program Review of academic programs (including educational services). Many institutions have not developed sustained processes for evaluating administrative services, but all should be above the Awareness level in these efforts."*

It is apparently the last sentence of this memorandum that Mesa based its decision not to enter into complete Program Review for Administrative Services until academic year 2011-12.

On June 25, 2009, Barbara Beno issued an additional memorandum regarding the updated timelines for evaluating institutional effectiveness. This memorandum is slightly different from the previous one in that the paragraph does not contain the last line.

“The Commission has announced the regard to performance discussed in the rubric.

- *Institutions and teams should be aware that the Commission expects that institutions be at the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement level in Program Review of instructional and non-instructional programs and services.”*

Conclusions:

The visiting team found that the above analysis and findings show that the College has not integrated financial planning linked to program review and supportive of college planning.

The College has a long history of financial stability, and during these troubled times, the College has continued to be proactive by assessing its needs and seeking alternative sources of funding. The mission, vision, and values statements along with an evolving integrated planning process will continue to guide the College through these turbulent waters. The College will continue its efforts to ensure that its constituents participate in financial planning and budget development.

The College is financially sound. It operates with a balanced budget and has adequate reserves to absorb unanticipated financial events should they occur particularly as it relates to uncertainty related to the state’s current fiscal and budgetary crisis (III.D.1). The college should continue to communicate and educate with regard to budget development and financial outcomes so that both remain transparent and easily understood to ensure integrity in the process and foster trust (III.D.3).

Recommendation 4:

The team recommends that the College develop an adequate system for program review of Administrative Services which integrates planning and resource allocations and assures the linkage between program review and resource allocation (III.D.1.a).

Commendation:

The Board of Trustees, the district and college leadership should be commended for their prudent oversight of fiscal resources. Their long range planning relative to fiduciary management has allowed the college to maintain a high level of programs and services during this fiscally troubling time.

STANDARD IV

Leadership and Governance

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

General Observations:

The College provided evidence that the Board, District Chancellor and current Interim College President have appropriate roles and responsibilities. During the past several years the College has experienced several administrative changes that led to an interruption in its valued participatory governance culture which then disconnected the progress for planning. During this period, the usually effective communication channels were altered. Despite this interruption, College advocates worked collaboratively to revise the College's vision, mission and value statements. College employees recognize a governance structure that actively supports the voices of all groups, and they feel empowered. The College has now regained its momentum towards its participatory process which should ensure planning will be more robust. It appears that College employees care enough about improving the institutional effectiveness to participate in governance structure and leadership opportunities. In particular, Student Services has created an environment that demonstrates teamwork and innovation. Based on Student Services reorganization and the hiring of the Dean of Student Activities, students have learned to be valued in the organizational structure and there is a brilliant energy that allows students to achieve both in and out of the classroom. A social justice agenda offers students the opportunity to learn even through the grievance and disciplinary processes. Monthly reports from each area within Student Services provide opportunities to share best practices, data, accomplishments and challenges. And partnerships between student service functions and student government have made these services more accessible to students.

Findings and Evidence:

The San Diego Mesa leadership has generally created an environment of support for active college participation and encourages both initiative and creativity. The governance structure found on the College website, in the Faculty and Staff Handbook and elsewhere, clearly articulates the roles for administrators, faculty, classified staff and students. In a 2009 survey, 74% of employees agreed or strongly agreed that they were aware of their roles in various governing, planning, budgeting and policy-making bodies at the College. Participatory governance committees have wide representation, as evident in the Governance Committees structure and through membership on the President's Cabinet. All governance groups are represented on the President's Cabinet. The College's vision, mission and values were recently reviewed and revised through a participatory process and are clearly posted. The "We are Mesa" campaign ensures that understanding of the vision, mission and values spans the college community. Several initiatives have been instituted based upon proposals from College constituents, including the Smoke-Free Policy and Ecomesa, the College's environmental sustainability initiative. The President communicates regularly with the

College through regular electronic updates, and the College is seeking to create a portal and email for students to increase communication (IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.3).

While the Program Review process at Mesa may be mature, there appears to be a disconnect with continuous quality improvement relative to the analysis of data, planning and resource allocations. There is dialogue on the campus regarding student learning; however, the dialogue is not integrated throughout the entire institution, thus lacking any continuous improvement. A significant highlight is that while some institutional processes were slow, the Student Services area moved ahead to improve student learning by hiring a Dean of Student Activities, developing processes to actively engage students outside the classroom, and advocating and cultivating external agency partnerships. Monthly reports from each area within Student Services provide opportunities to share best practices, data, accomplishments and challenges. Partnerships between student service functions and student government have made these services more accessible to students.

In addition, recently there has been improved cross fertilization between student services and instructional services. The Basic Skills initiative was a collaborative effort, and in this area the assessment loop has been closed by setting student learning outcomes, assessing them, analyzing the assessment and using that assessment to make program improvements and linking resource allocation requests to those improvements (IV.A.2.a, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.4).

Conclusions:

The College has done an admirable job of developing student voices through its commitment to student activities and a governance structure that includes student government. The College has also been energized by the innovation of student services professionals despite a reduction in budget allocations.

The College has worked significantly to implement the Commission's recommendations, but has not found a way to connect the processes of planning throughout the institution. Through a variety of leadership changes a process that was being built three years ago was stalled and took a new direction. The College initially began a focus on institutional effectiveness including integrating planning, assessment and resource allocations, but systemic processes were never embedded in the institutional structure. As a result, the assessment loop has not been closed throughout the institution by assessing Student Learning Outcomes, analyzing the assessment, using that assessment to make program improvements and linking resource allocations to those improvements. However, the current leadership team, including administrators, faculty, staff, and students is committed to a collaborative approach to move the institution forward. The institution must work further to engage in a planning process that encourages the continuation of program review schedule, including the development of SLOs that link planning with budget allocations.

Recommendations:

None

Commendation:

The College is commended for re-energizing student involvement through the hiring of a Dean of Student Activities, support by administration, and collaboration with faculty and staff. The College is also commended for its approach in dealing with budgetary constraints in Student Services while providing services in an innovative and effective way.

B. Board and Administrative Organization

General Observations:

The leadership of the San Diego Community College Board of Trustees working with the District Chancellor establishes policies to ensure the quality, integrity and effectiveness of student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution. The Board has worked to develop, adopt and keep current on the District's vision, mission, shared values, shared goals, Strategic Goals and Strategic Plan. The Board develops policies consistent with the mission and to support student success.

The Board has deep respect and support for the Chancellor and her oversight of the District. The Board works in concert with the District Chancellor to allow her to implement and administer Board policies without Board influence. Both the Chancellor and the current interim President have the respect of the College community.

Findings and Evidence:

Members of the SDCCD Board of Trustees are elected from within District area and represent specific geographic areas. They are assisted by a Trustee Advisory Board that ensures that the Board serves the public interest. Board policies address Conflict of Interest, include a Code of Ethics and support the SDCCD mission, which, in turn, provides the framework for the College Mission, Values, Vision and Goals. The District has responded to the recommendations from the last visit and updated the Strategic Plan for the District in 2009 and made communication a priority. Also in 2009, the Board established a subcommittee on Accreditation and Student Learning Outcomes and has been actively involved in the accreditation process through committee and campus meetings (IV.B.1.a, IV.B.1.b, IV.B.1.h, IV.B.1.i).

Together Board members appear to be engaged in successful educational initiatives, recognizing their ultimate authority for educational quality, legal matters and fiduciary integrity for the District. Even during the current economic climate, the Board has been able to maintain adequate reserves while also supporting the needs for student learning at the College (IV. B.1.c).

The Board's ethical demeanor provides appropriate board development and orientation to provide continuity in board membership. Board Members have enhanced the Board's development through retreats and evaluation of themselves and of the Chancellor. They are clearly a body of individuals that act as a whole and appreciate the strengths of each member. They have worked to improve communication with the College and community through publishing Board Bylaws and Policies and

informing the College of Board meetings, agendas and minutes. While it is never enough, the Board has worked to enhance communication by having board meetings on campus and opening each board meeting with open forums for community members to interact with the Board members (IV.B.1.d, IV.B.1.f).

The Board has a systemic process for evaluating and revising its policies and has made progress in updating and communicating policy changes. A clear policy defines the selection and evaluation of the Chancellor for the SDCCD and the Chancellor is evaluated annually. The Board also undertakes a self-evaluation through a two-part process that includes evaluation among Board members and evaluation of Board members by faculty, staff, administration and other parties that interact with the Board. By policy, the Chancellor gives full responsibility and authority to the President of the College. While the college president is routinely evaluated in accordance with the Management Handbook, there is no Board Policy that defines this evaluation (IV.B.1.e, IV.B.1.g, IV.B.1.j, IV.B.3.e).

San Diego Mesa College is in a multi-college district where past recommendations guided improved clarity of delineation of function between the district and college. A Functions Map now clearly delineates responsibilities of the District and that of the Colleges and Continuing Education. The District has worked with the College in a variety of ways to enhance communication, provide effective services that support the College and provide fair distribution of resources. Mirroring a program review process, the District has recently developed a regular assessment of its role in governance which will provide a systemic, regular assessment (IV. B.3a, IV.B.3b, IV.B.3c, IV.B.3d, IV.B.3f, IV.B.3g).

The current interim president has primary responsibility for the institution and provides effective leadership in planning and District and College operational procedures, including organization, budgeting, and assessing institutional effectiveness. She has created an effective management team and clearly delineated roles and responsibilities. The President is working to improve internal communication and engagement in strategic planning using the President's Cabinet as a forum for participatory governance involvement. Also the current Interim President has taken responsibility to reignite the planning processes with linkage to resource allocations (IV.B.2a, IV.B.2b, IV.B.2c, IV.B.2d, IV.B.2e, IV.B.3.d).

Conclusions:

The District has a culture of significant Board leadership in support of the citizens of this district. The Board's interest in providing stewardship as a team includes working in collaboration with the Chancellor to best serve the public. They work collegially and effectively to create and update policies appropriately and evaluate their own practices. Their emphasis on learning and making changes through the self evaluation process is both effective and transparent. The Board maintains a healthy relationship with the Chancellor and Presidents. The District provides direction and support to the College appropriately, and has done significant work to clarify district and college roles and responsibilities and communicate effectively with the College. The current Interim President has authority for the institution and has used that authority to create a collaborative climate in which efforts to improve integrated planning processes can move forward.

District Recommendation 1:

The team recommends that the district's Board of Trustees develop a policy to address the selection and evaluation of the college presidents. (IV.B.1.j)

Commendations:

The Board of Trustees is commended for its transparent and thorough annual self-evaluation process which ensures that all parties who frequently interact with the Board have the opportunity provide input. This process ensures effective operations and continuous quality improvement.