

ACCREDITATION EVALUATION REPORT

Los Angeles Valley College

5800 Fulton Avenue
Valley Glen, CA 93021

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

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited
Los Angeles Valley College on March 19-22, 2007

Dr. Helen Benjamin, Chair

LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE COMPREHENSIVE VISITING TEAM ROSTER

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SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Institution: Los Angeles Valley College

Date of Visit: March 19-22, 2007

Team Chair: Helen Benjamin
Chancellor, Contra Costa Community College District

A nine-member accreditation team and two assistants visited Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC) from March 19 – 22, 2007, for the purposes of determining whether the institution continues to meet accreditation standards, evaluating how well the college is achieving its stated purposes, analyzing how the college is meeting the commission standards, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement, and submitting recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) regarding the accredited status of the college.

The team chair and assistants met with representatives of Los Angeles Valley College during a campus visit on February 2, 2007, to finalize arrangements for the team visit. On February 13, 2007, the team itself met for an all-day training session conducted by AACJC, at which time team members studied and discussed the process and philosophy of accreditation in general. They shared initial impressions of Los Angeles Valley College, based on their reading of the college self study and information on its website. Team members had received the self study from the college by mail at the beginning of February.

LAVC is one of nine colleges in the Los Angeles Community College District and one of three colleges in the district visited during this same time period. On the morning of March 19, the LAVC team chair and the four standard team chairs met at the LACCD office with representatives from the Pierce and Mission College teams. Team members from the three teams met with members of the Board of Trustees, the chancellor, district office administrators and classified staff, and the district union and Academic Senate leadership to ascertain information about the district as it relates to accreditation standards and to review evidence to verify information contained in the respective self study documents.

After completing their work at the district office, the five team members joined the rest of the team in Valley Glen in the afternoon. Aware of their individual standard assignments and having read the self study (and supporting evidence supplied to each member by the college on a compact disc), team members discussed the self study in depth. The self study is a model of clarity and organization, and compact disc access to so much of the supporting evidence in advance of the visit permitted team members to set foot on campus well prepared.

During the three-day visit, team members met either individually or in groups with college faculty, classified staff, students, administrators, and involved citizens from the community. The team was gratified and impressed by the candor and the forthright discussions that ensued. The college and district provided evidence requested by the visiting team in an accommodating and timely manner. Team requests made in advance of the visit were quickly met. College staff worked assiduously to ensure that the team room contained information the team required to complete their work; that requested appointments were made; and that college committee meetings were scheduled so that team members could attend and experience Los Angeles Valley College in action.

It is evident Los Angeles Valley College has excellent leadership and many employees who are dedicated to creating a climate focused on student learning.

INTRODUCTION

Los Angeles Valley College was established in 1949 as the second of the district's colleges in the San Fernando Valley; the others are Los Angeles Pierce College (1947) and Los Angeles Mission College (1975). The campus covers 105 acres and currently serves some 16,000 students. About half of the students reside in the nearby communities of North Hollywood, Van Nuys, and Burbank. Many of the college students are financially challenged: the average adjusted gross income of the North Hollywood, Van Nuys, and Burbank communities is below that of the San Fernando Valley as a whole. Forty-five percent of the students are the first in their families to attend college. Hispanics account for 40 percent of the current student body, and the Armenian-speaking population (which is ethnically classified as "White") is also increasing.

In the years since the 2001 college comprehensive accreditation visit, two major changes have occurred. As a result of two local bond elections and one at the state level, coupled with other state funding, Los Angeles Valley College is in the midst of a \$286 million remodeling and construction boom. At the same time, the college suffered an enrollment decline in 2005-06 and, as a result, has a current budget deficit of \$1.9 million to repay to the district.

The Commission deemed two of the 2001 accreditation report recommendations worthy of an interim report and visit in two years:

- The college should develop a system that links research, planning outcomes, and the budget.
- The college should develop and refine the current program review processes for all academic and student services programs in a predetermined cycle.

That visit occurred in November 2002, and the interim visit report concluded the college had made progress in both areas.

The 2007 visiting team found Los Angeles Valley College employees to be a community of dedicated individuals who support students in numerous ways. Members of various

constituencies were quick to praise others, and there seemed to be a sense that the college was a good place to work. The relationship between Academic Senate and American Federation of Teachers appeared to be one of mutual support. Everyone interviewed said the relationship between the two is collegial, supportive, and better than in most colleges. Further, the staff members interviewed expressed appreciation for the assistance in having their voice heard in shared governance despite being outnumbered by faculty.

Students themselves seemed pleased to be at the college and were invariably pleasant and helpful to team members. They praised faculty, staff, and their educational experiences at Los Angeles Valley College.

The team found a college in transition, simultaneously experiencing some changes that appear to be conflicting and inspiring: shifting from a teaching college to a learning college; facing, for the first time, an enrollment decline that has resulted in a financial challenge, testing their abilities to reach consensus; changing student demographics that require the re-examination of what the college does in and outside the classroom to ensure success for its students; and developing and implementing plans that will modernize the facility for use by current and future students. It is against this backdrop the following commendations and recommendations are made.

COMMENDATIONS

- The team commends the Associated Students Union for acting to disseminate the college mission and vision statements throughout the campus by posting them in its dedicated display cases, an example worthy of emulation in all administrative offices and student services areas.
- The team commends the college for its continued support of the Strategic Team for the Advancement and Retention of Students (STARS) that strengthened the dialogue about the teaching and learning process.
- The team commends the college on its continuity of administrative leadership and its ongoing support of the president and her leadership team.
- The team commends the college on its shared governance process, handbook, and commitment to the concept of receiving input from all segments of the college community.
- The team commends the college on its commitment to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) construction principles.

COLLEGE RECOMMENDATIONS

College Recommendation 1: Review and Reference of Mission

The team recommends that the college develop written institutionalized procedures for the regular review of its mission and that it formally reference the mission in all its planning and decision-making processes. (Standards I.A.1, I.A.3, I.A.4)

College Recommendation 2: Integration of Planning Processes

The team recommends that the college strengthen, document with narrative, and disseminate the integration of all its planning processes. These processes should incorporate evaluation, improvement and re-evaluation, as needed, of all its programs and services. (Standards I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.2.f, III.A.6, III.B.2.b, III.C.2, III.D.3, IV.B.2.b)

College Recommendation 3: Development and Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

The team recommends that the college accelerate the continued development and assessment of student learning outcomes at the course, program, certificate and degree levels to ensure continuous improvement. (Standards I.B.1, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.b, II.A.3, IV.B.2.b)

College Recommendation 4: Current Deficit and Plans for Future Financial Stability

The team recommends that the college take action to address the current \$1.9 million deficit immediately and develop plans to establish financial stability in the long term to ensure fiscal responsibility and accountability. (Standards III.D.2.c, IV.B.2.d)

College Recommendation 5: Communication and Participation in Decision-Making

The team recommends that the college implement its planning agenda regarding communication and participation in the decision-making process and evaluate its implementation and overall effectiveness. (Standard IV.A.1.b)

DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS

(Shared in Los Angeles Mission College and Los Angeles Pierce College reports)

District Recommendation 1: Student Learning Outcomes and Faculty Evaluation

The team recommends that the district provide leadership in supporting the progress toward incorporating achievement of stated student learning outcomes as a component of faculty evaluation. (Standard III.A.1.c.)

District Recommendation 2: Retiree Health Benefit Liability

The team recommends that the college closely monitor in future years the success of the district's plan for addressing retiree health benefit liability to assure out-year obligations are met without significant impact on the financial health of the institution. (Standard III.D.1.c)

District Recommendation 3: Board Self-Evaluation

The team recommends that the Board of Trustees complete the self-evaluation process by discussing and developing a set of board goals to respond to any issues identified in their self-evaluation and that the board institutionalize the goal-setting and measuring of accomplishments as part of the self-evaluation process. (Standard IV.B.1.g)

District Recommendation 4: Evaluation of Presidents and Chancellor

Although in practice the evaluation of the college presidents and district chancellor occurs on a regular basis and is an inclusive process, the team recommends that the district develop a written policy that clearly defines the evaluation process. (Standard IV.B.1.j)

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREVIOUS TEAM

2001 Team Recommendation 3.1

The college should develop a system that links research, planning, outcomes, and the budget. Further, the college needs to continue to develop and implement a broad-based integrated system of research, evaluation, and planning systems to assess institutional effectiveness and use the results for institutional improvement.

2007 Team Response to Recommendation 3.1

The college partially responded by developing capacity in adding an Office of Research and Planning. The college needs to further its efforts on integrating evaluation and planning.

2001 Team Recommendation 3.2

The college should develop and refine the current program review process for all academic and student services programs in a predetermined cycle. The team recommends that the college implement criteria to measure institutional effectiveness which overarch and extend beyond the current program review process. Further, the college needs to develop comprehensive student learning outcomes assessment programs and make a greater effort to improve quality and achievement of institutional purpose through its evaluation and planning activities.

2007 Team Response to Recommendation 3.2

The college has responded to this recommendation. The college has revised the program review process twice since the previous visit. The 2002 revision included training workshops for department chairs, a handbook of the process, linking the hiring prioritization process to program review, and creation of the research data profile report.

The 2006 revision provided updated guidelines that incorporated student learning outcomes into the program review process. The college has established a program review cycle and has developed criteria for measuring its effectiveness. All instructional and student services programs have completed reviews and the cycle has started again. Efforts have been made to link program review to planning and budgeting processes, although it is not clearly articulated.

2001 Team Recommendation 4.1

The college should develop comprehensive student learning outcomes assessment programs and make a greater effort to improve quality and achievement of institutional purpose through its evaluation and planning activities. The college needs to set as a primary educational goal a new focus on identifying learning outcomes at the class, program, and discipline level, train its faculty in these areas, and hold itself accountable for progressive movement in desired student outcomes.

2007 Team Response to Recommendation 4.1

The college has partially responded to this recommendation. Work on student learning outcomes has begun. The college has identified collegewide student learning outcomes and established first-year goals for the development of program and course outcomes. However, the college has not implemented an overall program for the systematic assessment of outcomes and utilization of resultant data for improvement.

2001 Team Recommendation 4.2

The college should provide sufficient and consistent financial support for the acquisition, maintenance, and technical resources to facilitate the educational goals and objectives of the institution. Planning should address a process for funding and implementing a facilities improvement plan which includes established criteria for prioritizing space utilization and equipment acquisition and replacement, and expanded technological infrastructure for instruction, student support services, and faculty and staff.

2007 Team Response to Recommendation 4.2

The college has responded to this recommendation. Since the last accreditation, the college has doubled the instructional technology support staff from four to eight. The college has established consistent source of funding by allocating 1 percent of the college budget for technology. The Facilities Master Plan, which is being reviewed, includes the technological infrastructure necessary to bring new or modernized buildings online.

2001 Team Recommendation 6.1

The college needs to assess information resources in view of the changes in information technology and provide the budget to build a library collection that will support faculty and students with the resources and skills to operate in the information age.

2007 Team Response to Recommendation 6.1

The college has responded to this recommendation. Within budgetary constraints, the college has increased student and faculty access to technology-based information resources, as well as books, as evidenced by collection growth and library materials budget data.

2001 Team Recommendation 7.1

That appropriate shared governance bodies develop long-range staffing plans which are linked to the college mission/program goals and diversity needs. This is a recommendation dating back to the 1989 Accreditation Report and therefore is reiterated here with the additional stipulation that such staffing plans be developed for faculty and staff, with particular emphasis on classified personnel, and that they be tied to specific time lines and objectives.

2007 Team Response to Recommendation 7.1

The college has responded to this recommendation. The college has developed staffing plans both for faculty and classified staff through the Instructional Programs Committee and the Classified/Administrative Staffing Committee, respectively.

2001 Team Recommendation 9.1

The college should move swiftly and deliberately to complete the planning process begun years ago, develop relative strategic and tactical plans, and identify financial, enrollment and efficiency standards and criteria that will guide the college through a clearly defined budget development process.

2007 Team Response to Recommendation 9.1

The college has responded to this recommendation. The college has defined and implemented a budget development process, and it has created and adhered to a budget development calendar. The college is currently in the process of explaining the process in greater detail through a narrative and is also expanding the role of the Budget Committee for more inclusive participation.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

ER 1 – Authority

The team confirmed that the Los Angeles Valley College is in good standing with the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and receives state approval for its programs and services.

ER 2 – Mission

The team confirmed that the current mission statement was approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2006. It is clearly defined and highly appropriate to the constituency it serves and widely disseminated. The mission is appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education and the diverse community it serves.

ER 3 – Governing Board

LAVC is part of the Los Angeles Community College District which has a seven member board. The team confirmed that the District has a highly functioning governing board responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the institution and for ensuring the mission of the college is carried out. Its membership is sufficient in size and composition to fulfill its obligations.

ER 4 – Chief Executive Officer

The team confirmed that the college president is the chief executive officer and is primarily responsible for the operation of the college.

ER 5 – Administrative Capacity

The team confirmed that the college has sufficient and well-qualified staff to provide the administrative support needed to support the mission of the college.

ER 6 – Operational Status

The team confirmed that the college is operational, with thousands of students engaged in pursuit of their academic endeavors.

ER 7 – Degrees

The team confirmed that the college offers 47 Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees, 55 occupational certificates, and one non-occupational competency certificate.

ER 8 – Educational Programs

The team confirmed that the degree programs offered by the college are congruent with its mission and are based on recognized higher education fields of study. They are sufficient in content and length and are conducted at levels of quality and rigor appropriate to the degrees offered. However, identified student outcomes have not been developed for each degree.

ER 9 – Academic Credit

The team confirmed that the college awards academic credits based on generally accepted practices in degree-granting institutions of higher education.

ER 10 – Student Learning and Achievement

The team confirmed that compliance with this requirement is in progress.

ER 11 – General Education

The team confirmed that the college defines and incorporates into all of its degree programs a substantial component of general education designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry.

ER 12 – Academic Freedom

The team confirmed that faculty and students at the college are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as judged by the academic/educational community in general.

ER 13 – Faculty

The team confirmed that the college has a substantial core of full-time faculty (240) and that the faculty contract has a clear statement of their responsibilities.

ER 14 – Student Services

The team confirmed that the college provides appropriate student services for all students. Those services support student learning and development within the context of the institutional mission.

ER 15 – Admissions

The visiting team confirmed that the college has adopted and adheres to admission policies consistent with its mission that specify the qualifications.

ER 16 – Information and Learning Resources

The visiting team confirmed that the college provides long-term access to sufficient information and learning resources and services to support its mission and instructional programs in whatever format and wherever they are offered.

ER 17 – Financial Resources

The team confirmed that the college documents its funding base and financial resources but needs to improve in the area of planning for financial development adequate to support student learning programs and services, to improve institutional effectiveness, and to assure financial stability.

ER 18 – Financial Accountability

The team confirmed that the college/district annually undergoes and makes available an external financial audit by a certified public accounting firm.

ER 19 – Institutional Planning and Evaluation

The team confirmed that the college publishes a fact book and effectiveness manual containing, among other data, success, transfer, and retention rates. However, student learning outcomes are not being assessed. In addition, planning processes need to be integrated, consistent, and evaluated.

ER 20 – Public Information

The team confirmed that the college meets this requirement.

ER 21 – Relations with the Accrediting Commission

The team confirmed that the college adheres to the eligibility requirements and accreditation standards and policies of the Commission.

ACCREDITATION THEMES

Dialogue

It was evident to the team that members of the college community are engaged in dialogue on a variety of topics vital to the accomplishment of the college mission. The college is in transition in several areas: shifting its emphasis from teaching to learning; modernizing its decades-old facility; planning for new construction; improving its support services to meet the needs of a changing student population; and making decisions about its financial future. Serious dialogue is taking place in all these areas. Ongoing, self-reflective dialogue is definitely occurring at the college; however, more members of the community should be engaged in these extremely important discussions.

The dialogue theme is a thread throughout the self study and actively occurring at the college and district levels.

Student Learning Outcomes

There is no doubt every employee at LAVC is aware of student learning outcomes. It is a major theme in the self study and in discussions at the college. The development of student learning outcomes at the course, program, and degree levels is a major undertaking and requires a change in the culture of the college. The change is occurring very slowly, especially in the instructional area. More progress has been made in the development of the outcomes in student services because the effort is less complicated to implement and does not involve as many participants. In instruction, outcomes were developed at the collegewide level first, and a plan was established for the development of outcomes at the course, program, and degree levels. In order to meet the requirements of the Commission, the process must be accelerated for the development, implementation, and assessment of student learning outcomes.

Institutional Commitments

The college mission statement was recently revised using an inclusive process. In revising the statement, the changing demographics of the student body were taken into consideration. The mission statement reflects these changes and the commitment of the college community to the success of the students it now serves. It was evident to the team that the college provides high quality educational experiences congruent with the mission.

Evaluation, Planning, and Improvement

Program review is at the heart of the college evaluation, planning, and improvement processes. All instructional and student service units participate in program review. The process includes components that address evaluation, goal setting, resource distribution, and implementation for instruction and student services. Participation in the process is the gateway to resources that result in program improvements. However, this process is not tied to institutional goals and objectives which are under development and will result in a college strategic plan. The college does not meet the Commission requirement of an ongoing, systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation and evaluation. Evaluation, planning, and improvement are major threads in the self study and in the actions of the college, but they are not fully connected.

STANDARD I

Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

A. Mission

General Comments

The college has recently revised its mission and vision statements and added to them learning goals that are aligned with the collegewide student learning outcomes, all of which have been approved by the governing board. The college has made substantial efforts to publish and disseminate the mission statement. There is limited evidence of a plan for regular review of the mission or for the integration of the college mission throughout the college planning processes.

Interviews suggest the college community genuinely perceives that the process of revising the college mission allowed ample opportunity for broad-based input and that the mission informs the college planning and decision-making activities. Those interviews reflected some latitude in interpretation of what is the actual mission statement and about whether the dialogue on revision and the use of the mission are institutionalized. The team found no written plan for regular review of the mission in documentation.

Findings and Evidence

The recently revised college mission statement, adopted by the governing board (Board of Trustees Minutes) May 24, 2006, consists of a two-sentence statement broadly defining the college “community” as its intended student population and enumerating its purposes, greater goals, and a commitment to fostering student success. The self study states this paragraph serves as an umbrella for the college vision statement and for its learning goals, which embody the college student learning outcomes. More extensive “efforts toward promoting student achievement and success” follows these statements in the 2006-2007 college catalog. (Standard I.A.1, I.A.2)

The college publishes the complete mission, vision, and learning goals statements on its website, in the schedule of classes, in the student handbook (a version of the previous mission and vision, slightly inconsistent with the previous mission published in the 2005-06 catalog), and in the catalog, where the collegewide student learning outcomes follow them. Public information releases do not regularly reference the college mission, vision, and goals. The single-paragraph umbrella mission statement is also disseminated throughout the campus on tote bags and coffee mugs, on Associated Student Union bulletin boards throughout the campus, and on the agendas of some campus committees. (Standard I.A.2)

The newly revised mission, vision, and goals statements were drafted by the college Student Learning Outcomes Committee, a subcommittee of the Academic Senate’s Curriculum Committee, through a process begun in 2003. This process invited input through general distribution of draft versions. Multiple opportunities existed for

individual input; the team did not, however, find evidence of extensive, formal constituency-based review of the drafts leading to the final iteration. Documented approval of the statements prior to submission to the Board of Trustees came from the College Council, the Academic Senate, the Valley College Curriculum Committee and the president. The team found no evidence of formal, institutionalized plans for regular review of the college mission. (Standard I.A.3)

The college decision-making processes reference the mission in some, but not all, documents that define planning and decision-making processes. The LAVC Decision Making, Governance, and Procedures Handbook 2006-2007 establishes the college vision, mission, and learning goals as fundamental to all planning and decision-making processes. It further stipulates “everyone’s responsibility to work towards achieving the Vision, Mission, and Strategic Goals of the College” (p.15). College Council and the Instructional Programs Committee agendas state the college mission, and the College Council has mandated the mission be stated on the agendas of key college committees, some of which have yet to address the mandate. Certain decision-making processes, such as the block-grant equipment request process, require linkage to the mission. However, other critical planning processes do not directly address linkage to the college mission; for example, the program review handbook, central to the college planning efforts, requires program-specific missions, but does not cite or require reference to the college mission. The college *draft* strategic plan for 2007-2012 proceeds from the college overarching goals, which are appended to the mission; but it does not in its most recent iteration reference the college mission itself. (Standard I.A.4)

Conclusions

The college has, after a period of limited attention to its stated mission, engaged in thoughtful discussion of its mission, acknowledging the changing demographics of the college and addressing student achievement and success. The opportunity for involvement in the dialogue was broad-based but not institutionalized, and there is no clearly stated plan for regular review of the mission to assure continued, constituency-based input to the development of programs and services aligned to the college purposes, character, and student population. While interviewees cited the college mission as central to planning and decision-making, some of the most important college decision-making processes may not yet be explicitly linked formally to the college mission in the documented procedures. There is, moreover, no formal plan for regular review of the mission that assesses and addresses the learning needs of the college community. The college has made progress toward, but not yet fully linked, institutionalized planning and decision-making processes with the college mission.

The team believes the college partially meets this standard.

Recommendations

College Recommendation 1: Review and Reference of Mission

The team recommends that the college develop written, institutionalized procedures for the regular review of its mission and that it formally reference the mission in all of its planning and decision-making processes. (Standards I.A.1, I.A.3, I.A.4)

B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

General Comments

The college goals, which are derived from the mission and vision statements, provide the basis and context for planning. The college uses its governance process to engage in dialogue on institutional improvement. The college has had a master plan since 2002 and is in the process of revising that plan. There is also a student equity plan (2002-03), as well as plans for technology (October 2006) and a facilities master plan (September 2006). The college has used the state and district strategic plans as resources in drafting a college strategic plan, which is still in progress but intended to contain a series of goals and targets.

The college demonstrated its commitment to an ongoing evaluation of institutional programs by revising its program review process (September 2006). Data are supplied by its Office of Institutional Research for Program Review. Department chairs work with their division deans to determine goals for their respective areas.

Some of the components for planning are being addressed. For example, a budget and planning calendar have been prepared. In addition, recommendations from the Instructional Programs Committee (IPC) are also used to make decisions on resource allocation. However, final integration of the mission statement, strategic plan and educational plan has yet to be achieved.

Findings and Evidence

The college appears close to finalizing plans for an ongoing, collegial, self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes. (Standard I.B.1)

Numerous planning documents provide evidence that planning is occurring on campus. However, when the team asked how the documents linked to the college strategic plan, few respondents were able to articulate these connections. One administrator noted a retreat is planned within the next two months to further refine the integration of their planning efforts. (Standard I.B.3)

The college relies heavily on program review for college planning. It is unclear how the goals developed in program review link to, or are driven by, other plans on the campus.

In addition, goals need to be stated in measurable terms “so that the degree to which they are achieved can be determined and widely discussed” (Standard I.B.2). This is not apparent in most planning processes, including program review.

The most recent iteration of program review attempts to inform the planning, budgetary and student learning outcomes processes. Not all departments have gone through the most recent version of program review, so it is difficult to determine how it has improved planning or decision-making at the campus. A narrative of how program review, annual departmental goals, and annual budget and planning processes are linked was not evident. (Standard I.B.2, I.B.6)

There are opportunities for input into the planning process through four shared governance committees to College Council. At the same time, many interviewees and the self study indicated concern for the lack of participation on campus in committees and the governance mechanisms (Standard I.B.1). Planning needs to be broad-based and offer opportunities for input which leads to institutional improvement. The college has made strides to articulate their shared governance process with the publication of Decision Making, Governance, and Procedures Handbook 2006-2007. (Standard I.B.4)

The college has done an excellent job of providing usable data related to demographics, transfer, educational goals, degrees and certificates. Data have been produced in a fact book and effectiveness manual covering the past six years. It is used not only for program review, but also to support other activities such as grant proposals. The fact book does not use narrative and analysis of data to help further disseminate information that communicates quality assurance. (Standard I.B.5)

The self study indicates, “The measurement process is a cycle, specifically, a cycle of research leading to planning leading to implementation leading to more research.” There is evidence of evaluation occurring throughout the campus. (e.g., program review, STARS, and activities in Student Services); however, the team did not observe a cycle of evaluation, improvement and re-evaluation in all programs, including the assessment process itself. (Standards I.B.3, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7)

The college has begun the establishment of student learning outcomes, but assessment lags behind despite the statement in the self study that the “college works extremely hard to conduct assessments of our various programs and share the results . . .” (p. 77). (Standard I.B.3)

Conclusions

Program review was the process most often cited when the team asked about planning. In fact, program review was the process most often mentioned when planning was discussed. However, some departments are not participating in their assigned cycle of review. There needs to be a campuswide evaluation of the effectiveness of program review as it relates to planning.

Members of the college lauded the work done by the Office of Research and Planning. The office has steadily provided valuable assistance to anyone who has asked for data. In addition, their fact book was cited on numerous occasions as especially helpful.

Many segments of the campus have developed and implemented plans for improvement. It was difficult for the team to see the relationship between various planning bodies and documents. One reason may be that two major documents are in initial draft stages, namely the strategic plan and the educational master plan.

An important component to planning is the engagement of the entire campus in the process. The college needs to move to more dialogue in its participatory structures in order to inform its faculty and staff of planning initiatives. It is important the entire college move to a shared understanding of how various plans link to the college strategic plan.

The team believes the college partially meets this standard.

Recommendations

College Recommendation 2: Integration of Planning Processes

The team recommends that the college strengthen, document with narrative, and disseminate the integration of all its planning processes. These processes should incorporate evaluation, improvement and re-evaluation, as needed, of all its programs and services. (Standards I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.2.f, III.A.6, III.B.2.b, III.C.2, III.D.3, IV.B.2.b)

Standard II Student Learning Programs and Services

A. Instructional Programs

General Comments

Los Angeles Valley College offers a diverse curriculum that supports the mission of the college to prepare students to further their education, enter the workforce, and/or engage in personal development. The needs of students are identified through assessment results, research, self-identified student goals, and enrollment patterns. The college relies heavily upon the data compiled by the Office of Research and Planning in needs assessment. The curriculum review process, which is incorporated into program review, ensures the curriculum, degree programs, and certificates meet student needs. While the majority of the instructional program delivery mode is traditional, to ensure the quality of the online program, all courses with an online component -- no matter how small -- must be reviewed and approved by the curriculum committee.

Program review has been a primary focus of the college since the last self study. The cycle, beginning in 2002, included training workshops for department chairs, a handbook statement of the process linking hiring prioritization to program review, and creation of the research data profile report. The 2006 revision provided updated guidelines that incorporated student learning outcomes into the program review process. All the instructional and student services programs have completed their first program review under the 2002 guidelines and have begun the second round. Developing student learning outcomes is a major goal of this round of reviews. A program review cycle has been established, and the college has developed criteria for measuring its effectiveness. While efforts have been made to link program review to planning and budgeting processes, more work needs to be done integrating the individual program reviews into the college planning process.

The college has begun to develop student learning outcomes (SLOs). Over the past few years, flex activities and workshops on SLOs have been held for faculty. In order to overcome resistance, the Student Learning Outcomes Committee decided to initiate a top-down process by developing institutional SLOs after the mission statement was revised. A goal that each course/program develops at least one SLO and assessment plan has not progressed very far. Four course/program SLO plans have been approved by the SLO committee. Thus, there is no systematic assessment of program SLOs in place; the college relies on passage data from external licensing boards and self-reporting of former students for measures of success. To assist programs in this endeavor, the SLO Committee has modeled best practices by creating a rubric to help them evaluate proposed learning outcomes and their assessment plan.

Findings and Evidence

The curriculum offered by the college includes basic skills, transfer-level, vocational, and degree-applicable courses. Extension & Outreach offers a wide range of not-for-credit classes through its extension and community education program (Standard II.A.1.a). The college offers a variety of modes of instruction including distance education, hybrid classes, and a PACE program to meet the needs of its students (Standard II.A.1.b). Course outlines were readily available for review and showed evidence of periodic review of the content by discipline faculty and the curriculum committee. Sample course syllabi were also available that illustrated the link to the course outline. They are collected by department chairs and used in evaluations. (Standard II.A.6)

The College Curriculum Committee works to ensure the high quality and rigor of the curriculum. Recently, a decision was made that all courses incorporating an online component must submit an addendum to the course outline indicating how the instructional methodology would be modified to accommodate distance learning. All faculty involved in distance learning must be certified (Standard II.A.2.c). The college instituted the STARS program to aid in the transition from a teaching college to a learning college. In addition to the more traditional teaching methodologies, the college offers independent study, service learning, and online classes. Workshops help students understand their learning styles, allowing them to select the type of instructional method that best suits their style. (Standard II.A.2.d) At this time, the college does not use departmental or program examinations. (Standard II.A.2.g)

Both the college catalog and the schedule of classes clearly delineate the transferability of classes (Standard II.A.6.a). General education requirements for both the associate degree and transfer are listed, identifying the courses the College Curriculum Committee has determined meet the criteria set forth in board policy. (Standard II.A.3.a.b.c.). Also included in the college catalog are the requirements illustrating the core courses required to earn either an associate degree or certificate. (Standard II.A.4) Occupational programs rely on advisory committees to keep their curriculum, certificate, and degrees reflective of current practice. Programs such as nursing and respiratory care receive pass rate information of their students on external licensing exams. (Standard II.A.5)

Much of the work on student learning outcomes has occurred since spring 2004. The Academic Senate established a student learning outcomes committee. Dialogues, workshops, and training focused on SLOs occurred. As evidenced by the college catalog, collegewide outcomes have been adopted and disseminated. However, mechanisms for their assessment have not been established. A survey of the evidence related to program and course level outcomes revealed numerous departments are at various stages of refinement in the process of developing outcomes for their programs and courses. As a result, a systematic process for the assessment of outcomes has not been implemented in departments. (Standards II.A.1.c, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.h, II.A.2.i)

The college has identified program review as the mechanism by which the ongoing cycle of assessment, implementation, and improvement will occur. (II.A.2.e) Program reviews are maintained in the Office of Academic Affairs and are readily available for review. The program review handbook has been modified periodically since 2002 to incorporate additional items, including SLOs. A perusal of the virtual campus showed a varying degree of student contact. Within the program review process, particular efforts are needed in the area of evaluating courses offered through distance education to ensure academic rigor, quality, and integrity. (Standards II.A.1.a, II.A.2.a) In 2006, the student services division began requiring that student learning outcomes be included in their program reviews. The counseling department has created SLOs for each of its areas.

Although the components of the process are in place, integrated planning remains problematic. Program review is central to the college planning process; however, there appears to be a disconnect between program review results and the alignment of resources which lead directly to institutional improvements. The self study indicates a task force of the Academic Senate is currently working on a new educational master plan to align the revised mission and vision statements, collegewide student learning outcomes, program reviews, and other planning documents. (Standard IIA.2.f)

The college catalog, website, informational brochures, and the Career/Transfer Center provide information about educational programs and courses, graduation requirements, and transfer requirements. Faculty members distribute course syllabi to students and submit copies to department chairs. Department chairs, program directors, and administrators from Academic Affairs are responsible for the accuracy of information in the college catalog, which is updated annually. Programs are seldom eliminated at the college; however, as a result of program review, the college discontinued the wildland fire technology program. Students who were enrolled in

the program at the time of its elimination were allowed to complete their degrees. (Standard II.A.6.b.c.)

Board policy related to academic freedom is published in the schedule of classes. Policies and guidelines related to academic standards, academic honesty, student conduct, and disciplinary actions are outlined in the college catalog, schedule of classes, and the college website. (Standard II.A.7.a.b.c.) The college does not offer any courses in foreign locations. (Standard II.A.8)

Conclusions

The overall quality of student learning programs and services is very good. The breadth of the college educational programs and support services attests to its attempts to address the diverse needs of its students. The college has implemented the instructional program review process, and all programs have completed their first review. However, implementing a systematic student learning outcomes assessment process is problematic. The college has adopted collegewide student learning outcomes but is relying on the departments to create course and program SLOs to provide the assessment portion rather than developing a direct assessment of college-level outcomes. Significant work is needed in the areas of course- and program-level outcomes.

The team believes the college partially meets this standard.

Recommendations

College Recommendation 3: Development and Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

The team recommends that the college accelerate the continued development and assessment of student learning outcomes at the course, program, certificate and degree levels to ensure continuous improvement. (Standards I.B.1, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.b, II.A.3, IV.B.2.b)

B. Student Support Services

General Comments

Los Angeles Valley College is to be commended for its student support services. The college offers an array of student support services to assist students in meeting their goals. The area has taken to heart the college mission of student success. The quality of its program is evaluated through the program review process and, in some cases, by external agencies. A committee of faculty, students, staff, and administrators evaluates each student services program on a rotational basis every six years. Student satisfaction surveys are an integral part of the process. As evidenced by the "Program Review Schedule and Progress Report" issued by the Office of Vice President of Student Services, all student services programs have completed one full cycle of program review and have begun the second. Student Services is proposing an online early alert system in order to identify those students who could benefit from the services offered in a timely manner.

Findings and Evidence

The college utilizes its program review process to ensure student support services meet the needs of its students. Student satisfaction surveys are used throughout the area to improve the quality of services. In a recent student satisfaction survey for financial aid, 99 percent of the respondents stated they received the help they needed, and 98 percent felt the information was clear and accurate. In addition, external agencies evaluate some programs for quality. A committee of faculty, students, staff, and administrators evaluate each student services program on a rotational basis every six years. As evidenced by the “Program Review Schedule and Progress Report” issued by the Office of Vice President of Student Services, all student services programs have completed one full cycle of program review and have begun the second. The college assesses the needs of its diverse student population through program review surveys, campuswide surveys conducted by the Office of Research and Planning, annual year-end reports, and reports from outside studies. Based upon these data, the college provides a variety of student support services, including academic support, counseling, disabled students programs and services, a child development center, and a citizenship center. These services are geared toward achieving positive student learning outcomes. However, data indicate that each semester approximately 18 percent of the college students are on academic or progress probation. The college is piloting a new online early alert system to capture students at risk and provide them with support services as soon as possible. (Standards II.B.1, II.B.3, II.B.3.c, II.B.4)

The college publishes an annual catalog containing all the components outlined in the standard. The catalog is available in a printed format or in an electronic format via the college website. (Standard II.B.2)

The student services areas seeks to ensure equitable access to all students by providing evening service hours, as well as telephone and website information access. Usage of an online application process and orientation has increased availability of campus services to new students. Students may make counseling appointments, register for classes, check financial aid status, obtain transcripts, and learn about transfer requirements online. (Standard II.B.3.a)

The college provides opportunities for students to participate in cultural and civic activities in support of collegewide student learning outcomes focusing on civic responsibility and aesthetic responsiveness. (Standard II.B.3.b)

The counseling department provides a variety of services designed to enhance student success among its diverse student population. Services include college orientation sessions, as well as individual and group counseling. The department also offers personal development courses. Furthermore, counselors serve as liaisons to faculty through a departmental liaison program, which links a specific counselor to a particular program or department. Program review documents, including student satisfaction surveys and utilization data, evidence evaluation of counseling services. The team believes the college meets this standard. (Standard II.B.3.c)

Understanding diversity and developing an appreciation for the history and culture of diverse groups is a collegewide student learning outcome. Toward this outcome, the college has a variety of programs and services designed to support and enhance diversity. The college has

implemented programs designed to enhance access to college for members of traditionally underrepresented groups. In addition, the college publishes informational materials in multiple languages and has expanded resources to students with disabilities. (Standard II.B.3.d)

The Office of Research and Planning regularly evaluates placement and assessment instruments according to guidelines provided by the State Chancellor's Office. (Standard II.B.3.e)

Student records are maintained in a digitized format with CD-Rom back-ups. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure the safe maintenance of student records. However, the self study recommends that the college use technology to improve the overall security of student records. (Standard II.B.3.f)

Conclusions

The student support services program has incorporated a process of evaluation in its effort to improve services to students. Evidence supports this belief. Student Services has embraced the college mission of student success. At this time, they are concerned with how to address the increased number of students on probation. They find the current situation unacceptable and are working to devise processes to intervene with these students earlier and help them succeed.

The team believes the college meets this standard.

Recommendations

No recommendations.

C. Library and Learning Support Services

General Comments

Library and learning support services are accessible at various service points on campus including the library and learning resource center. The library collection includes books, periodicals, electronic databases, and e-books reflective of the breadth of the curriculum. Furthermore, an intralibrary loan service among district libraries provides access to resources not currently in the collection. The college has adopted information competency as a collegewide outcome; however, mechanisms for the assessment of this outcome and an implementation plan have not been established.

Findings and Evidence

The library subscribes to 360 periodicals and has a collection of more than 132,000 books. This basic print collection is further enhanced by electronic databases which provide full text access to over 10,000 periodical titles and an e-book collection of 8,450 titles. Additional learning support services include 30 laboratories: computer and general tutoring laboratories, as well as discipline-specific tutoring laboratories. These resources are reflective of the breadth of the college curriculum. (Standard II.C.1.a)

Instruction in the use of library and other learning support services is a key function of the library. The college has adopted information competency as a collegewide student learning outcome, but evidence indicates an assessment of its impact on the instructional program, facilities, and staffing needs of the library has not been conducted. (Standard II.C.1.b)

The library is open 64.5 hours per week, including evenings and Saturdays. Additionally, the online catalog, which includes the holdings of all of the district libraries, and some electronic full-text databases are accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week, via the webpage for the library. As evidenced by the website, an authentication system provides remote users, including distance learners, access to information and library resources. An intralibrary loan service among district libraries provides access to resources not currently in the LAVC collection. Besides the discipline-specific tutoring laboratories, the learning resource center offers general tutoring, as well as targeted tutoring through a supplemental instruction program. The college provides comparative data related to the academic achievement of students using learning support services. The self study states, and the Associate Dean of Extension and Outreach verifies, that students of the extension and community education programs do not have access to library and learning support services. They are not allowed to check out materials or to use the computer laboratories. (Standard II.C.1.c)

The library and learning support services provide appropriate maintenance and security for their materials and equipment. Information technology instructional assistants are responsible for maintenance of equipment in computer laboratories and appropriate means are taken to secure all equipment. The library has materials-theft detection and intruder-alert alarm systems to secure its materials and equipment. (Standard II.C.1.d) The library participates in an electronic resources purchasing consortium in connection with the Community College League of California. These resources are accessible, and utilization data are maintained. Library and learning resources personnel conduct periodic evaluations of these resources and services. (Standard II.C.1.e)

Program review and other related documents validate the systematic evaluation of library and learning support services. Assessment methods also include user surveys, the curriculum review process, departmental evaluations of library resources in terms of meeting course needs, and workshop evaluations. The units covered by this standard undertake evaluations with the goal of improving library and learning support services. (Standard II.C.2)

Conclusions

The library maintains a collection of print and nonprint materials reflective of the breadth of the college curriculum. Technological resources are incorporated into the collection to increase access to information resources from locations outside the library. The challenge remains regarding how to maintain a quality, traditional print collection while expanding technological information resources with limited financial resources remains. The variety of learning support services offered to students promotes student success. Evidence shows the impact of the services on student achievement.

With the implementation of the collegewide student learning outcome in information competency, it is imperative the library and the college community evaluate the impact of the implementation on the instructional program, facilities, and staffing needs of the library.

The team believes the college meets this standard.

Recommendations

No recommendations.

STANDARD III Resources

A. Human Resources

General Comments

The self study report on human resources is concise and flows smoothly. The evaluations are honest and realistic, leading to logical planning agendas. The descriptions show a clear picture of how effectively the college uses its human resources to which 95% of the annual college budget is dedicated in the form of salaries and benefits. The college hires and professionally develops personnel in order to carry out the mission of the college. A family atmosphere permeates the college, and people are generally friendly and accommodating.

Some of the notable changes since the last team visit set the stage for a discussion of human resources: (1) the college created a committee to address short- and long-term human resources planning; (2) for the first time in several years, the college has a deficit of \$1.9 million for fiscal year 2005-2006; and (3) the district implemented the human resources and payroll module of SAP.

Findings and Evidence

Los Angeles Valley College has recruitment policies and procedures that ensure the hiring of qualified, certificated personnel. It prides itself on a full-time to part-time faculty ratio of 78 percent, which exceeds the state required 75 percent. However, the hiring of classified employees is a slow, cumbersome process. For example, when a need to hire is forwarded to the personnel commission, it can take up to six months before applicants are sent to the college for interview. Also, sometimes there is a disconnect between college needs and existing job classifications. (Standards III.A.1.a, III.A.2)

Evaluation procedures for all employees are in place, but more training on faculty evaluations is needed. Some adjunct faculty members are regularly evaluated, while others are not. Los Angeles Valley College has collegewide SLOs, and there is a plan/model in place to include SLOs in faculty evaluations. The plan/model has been made available to the college for implementation.

Classified employees are not consistently evaluated. In order to address the issue, the district implemented a new evaluation cycle, called the "birthday rule," wherein the employees' evaluations are to coincide with their birthdays. (Standards III.A.1.b, III.A.1.c.)

Staff development for all employees and training for new hires has been available even during periods when state funding was discontinued. Orientation for adjunct faculty is provided each year. The college compliance officer regularly conducts workshops on the prevention of sexual harassment. Workshops, events, and programs that promote

diversity are held throughout the year. All workshops and other professional development activities are evaluated by participants as a basis for designing future programs. The general atmosphere at the college is one of collegiality. Students surveyed agree they are treated fairly and with respect and dignity by instructors. (Standards III.A.4.a, III.A.4.c, III.A.5.a, III.A.5.b)

As a result of a recommendation in the Commission's 2001 evaluation report, the college formed the Classified/Administrative Staffing Committee to establish short- and long-term staffing plans, which will be integrated with the other plans of the institution. The staffing plan is established and is to be adjusted as necessary by the results of program review. (Standard III.A.6)

Personnel policies and procedures are widely distributed and easily accessible. These are administered fairly and consistently at the college. There is a written code of professional ethics for all college personnel that is likewise widely disseminated. All personnel records are housed at the district office, ensuring their security and confidentiality. (Standards III.A.3.a, III.A.3.b, III.A.1.d)

The state chancellor's office required colleges to submit employment equity and diversity information until affirmative action plans were deemed not legal in 2001. The college has continued to gather demographic information, although it is not required by the state. (Standard III.A.4.b)

Conclusions

Los Angeles Valley College has sufficient faculty and staff to support student learning programs and services. The college treats its diverse personnel equitably and provides opportunities for professional development. The college has a short- and long-term classified staffing plan, which is designed to integrate with program review. Los Angeles Valley College has the highest full-time to part-time faculty ratio in the district.

Los Angeles Valley College complies with most requirements of this standard; however, evaluation of staff has not occurred regularly or systematically. Although the college has the evaluation processes in place, these have not been implemented consistently. Los Angeles Valley College is not fully in compliance in this regard.

Another area which is a source of frustration for the college is classified recruitment. This process should be streamlined by the personnel commission to be more responsive to the needs of the college.

The team believes the college partially meets this standard.

Recommendations

District Recommendation 1: Student Learning Outcomes and Faculty Evaluation
(Shared in Los Angeles Mission College and Los Angeles Pierce College reports)

The team recommends that the district provide leadership in supporting the progress toward incorporating achievement of stated student learning outcomes as a component of faculty evaluation. (Standard III.A.1.c.)

B. Physical Resources

General Comments

Two districtwide bond measures, Proposition A and Proposition AA, and a statewide measure, Proposition 47, have passed since the last accreditation visit. Funds generated from these new sources of revenue, combined with other state funding, have resulted in \$286 million for capital improvements at Los Angeles Valley College. These dollars represent the largest infusion of funds for capital improvements since the founding of the college in 1949 and will facilitate major and needed renovations and new construction. As new construction, upgrades, and renovations are planned and implemented, the college assures its compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The college is guided in its modernization efforts by the Facilities Master Plan which was updated in 2003, approved by the Board of Trustees in 2005, and scheduled for revision in 2010. Members of the college community are actively engaged in the implementation of the Facilities Master Plan. Modernization planning and implementation are done through the college shared governance process. Four college committees (Facilities Master Plan, Space and Work, Design Review, and Building User Groups) have specific roles and responsibilities in the realization of the Facilities Master Plan. All college constituencies are represented on the committees.

Findings and Evidence

The college has been in its current location since its inception in 1949. Many of the buildings are old and in need of repair or replacement which has been made possible by the recent infusion of funds into the college for the specific purpose of upgrading the entire campus. The college Facilities Master Plan provides details for the improvements to be made to the campus in the next ten years and for building, maintaining, and upgrading facilities to assure effective utilization. Many improvements have already been made to the college campus. Many old classrooms have been upgraded with state-of-the-art equipment, furnishings, and lighting. The Board of Trustees approved a sustainability program for the district that mandates a minimum certified Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) in all new construction as a means to conserve energy and to create a healthful learning environment. LAVC has embraced the program, having constructed the first LEED-certified building in the district. The college has also established an energy management system to ensure further energy savings.

The college has made improvements to ensure safety on campus as well. An emergency response plan has been developed and shared with members of the college community. Handicap access has been improved and provisions made for ADA compliance while the many areas of the college are under construction. Plans for improved exterior lighting

and the installation of emergency telephone service for use by students are underway. Security services are provided for the college by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department housed on the campus. The college boasts a very low crime rate. (Standard III.B.1.a)

The majority of the courses, programs and services offered by the college are conducted on the main campus. Some courses and laboratories are conducted throughout the community in high schools, hospitals and other off-campus locations. The off-campus sites are governed by regulatory bodies as well; the college has limited influence on the construction and maintenance of these facilities. However, students are surveyed as to the adequacy of the sites, and the college can change locations on the basis of student feedback. (Standard III.B.1.b)

The college has the plans required by the state for deferred and scheduled maintenance and the Five-Year Construction Plans. It is through these plans that the evaluation of the facilities and equipment occurs and institutional physical improvement goals are developed. (Standard III.B.2.a) Physical resource planning is not fully integrated with institutional planning. There is evidence, however, that the college evaluates its physical resources and uses the evaluation as a basis for improvement. (Standard III.B.2.b)

Conclusions

LAVC offers high quality educational programs and services to its very diverse student population in facilities that are undergoing major improvements. The college is in a physical transition and is offering its programs and services in a facility that is adequate and safe. The college does its best to ensure the locations where programs and services are offered provide adequate access, safety, security, and a healthful learning environment. The infusion of funds for capital improvements has permitted the college to focus its attention on buildings constructed in and for another era. The facilities plan is well-developed, and major renovations and construction projects are underway. The college has an excellent Facilities Master Plan that will ensure a state-of-the-art facility upon completion.

The team believes the college partially meets this standard.

Recommendations

See College Recommendation 2: Integration of Planning Processes

C. Technology Resources

General Comments

The college has made considerable progress in the use of technology instruction, student services, maintenance and operations, and communications. Through increased funding, mostly from grants, Program 100, specially funded programs, and local bond measures,

the college has made significant improvement in its telephone system, infrastructure, software applications, and computer hardware. Staffing in the technology services department has increased, and the services offered by the unit are vital to the success of the college. Ideally, the college sets aside 1 percent of its annual budget for technology, but is not always able to use it for that purpose. Despite that fact, the college realizes the need for the support of technology and uses other sources of revenue, when prudent, to enhance its services. The district has installed and implemented new software for human resources (SAP). The college has created a comprehensive technology master plan to guide the development and implementation of all aspects of its identified technology needs.

Findings and Evidence

Technology support services are well organized with well trained and professional staff. Systems are in place for responding to urgent needs, making and responding to requests, and tracking progress. Technology services are also provided by Instructional Media Services and the Maintenance and Operations departments. Currently staffing levels in IT meet the state requirement. A new VoIP phone system has been installed and allows telephone functions to be carried out from any computer. The new phone system will facilitate the movement of major areas, such as Business Services and the library, into swing spaces during periods of construction. Student accessibility to online resources has been greatly improved. The college has expanded its resources available through online library access. Student services technology now offers ASSIST (Articulation System Stimulating Interinstitutional Student Transfer) to provide transfer information for counselors to work with students. Students have the ability to make counseling appointments or take an orientation session online. A financial aid computer lab is available for students to complete their financial aid applications online. The campus boasts over 2,000 personal computers and more than 200 Macintoshes. The TRIO Center offers students a number of computers, a copier, and a printer, as well as opportunities for students to check out a laptop with a USB flash memory. (III.C.1.a)

A variety of technology training is offered for employees. Tutorials in Word, Access, Excel, and SAP are accessible from any networked computer on campus. Although the transition to a new management information system, SAP, has been a challenge for the college, the district is addressing the technological glitches and reducing them systematically. A number of employees remain frustrated by SAP. Payroll was particularly hard hit by glitches initially. Training on the system took place almost three months prior to the implementation of the new system, resulting in end-user frustration by the time the system was operative. The college and district seem to be working through these annoying problems, which are common with the introduction of any such large, new system. The Professional Media Resource Center provides a versatile classroom with state-of-the-art equipment. It allows the flexibility to deliver satellite connections, videoconferencing, teleconferencing, and professional development activities. Students are trained in a variety of ways from classroom instruction to library orientations to one-on-one help from computer lab monitors. (III.C.1.b.)

The distance education course offerings are expanding primarily in the area of online and hybrid courses. The college should focus its attention on maintaining the quality of the online course content (particularly student-faculty contact) and increasing the number of offerings in the online mode. The college needs to continue to create professional development opportunities for faculty to learn how to be proficient in the delivery of online courses. Mentoring programs for faculty and technical support for faculty and students should be considered to facilitate faculty participation in the development and delivery of online courses. (III.C.1.b.)

The college has a strong IT manager and staff. A program is in place for the acquisition, maintenance, upgrading, and replacement of technology infrastructure and equipment to meet the needs of the college. IT has systems in place to maintain the integrity of its infrastructure, keep track of equipment requiring upgrading or replacing, assure reliability of the data provided by the network, and secure the system. The IT manager is very actively involved in all aspects of technology services at the college and advocates on behalf of the college at the district level. The department makes effective use of its limited funds in ensuring that campus standards and operational procedures are developed and followed in order to provide equipment and services that meet the changing needs of the college. (III.C.1.c)

The team did not discover evidence of any area being slighted in the distribution and utilization of technology resources. Each academic and student services unit must include an assessment of its technology needs in its program review. The Technology Committee reviews and makes recommendations regarding technology needs at the college, including utilization of the funds designated in the college budget for technology. The college has voice and electronic mail capability, wireless internet access in ten locations on campus, many smart classrooms throughout the campus, 17 computer labs, and a sufficient number of computers, printers, servers, and fax machines. The technology needs of the programs and services offered by the college are well supported despite financial challenges. (Standard III.C.1.d)

Full formal integration of technology planning and institutional planning has not yet been achieved; however, the college has a good process in place for decision-making in this area. The cross-constituency based Technology Committee plays a major role in planning and coordinating “campus-wide computing, telecommunications, and technology”. (Standard III.C.2)

Conclusions

The college developed its current Technology Plan in response to a mandate from the State Chancellor’s Office. The college has made significant advances in technology, and the plan provides clear guidance for implementation. The college must now begin the implementation of the plan as set forth in its planning agenda. The college is beginning to move into distance learning with the establishment of various online courses. Growth in this area will require more consideration of the information and learning resource

needs of students who will take these courses. In addition, faculty and appropriate staff must be adequately trained in the development and delivery of online instruction.

The team believes the college partially meets this standard.

Recommendations

See College Recommendation 2: Integration of Planning Processes

D. Financial Resources

General Comments

The report on financial resources is well-written and well-organized, such that it flows in an understandable, easy-to-follow format. The themes prescribed by the Accrediting Commission have been adopted by Los Angeles Valley College and are therefore interwoven in the standard. It is thorough, and all the requirements of the standard are sufficiently addressed. Validating the report was a straight-forward process. The Los Angeles Valley College personnel were very helpful and knowledgeable. They provided additional information as requested.

Los Angeles Valley College has traditionally had sufficient financial resources to support its programs and services. At the end of fiscal year 2005-2006, however, the ending fund balance for Los Angeles Valley College was a \$1.9 million deficit. According to the self study report, the financial security of the college is ensured by the availability of district resources if needed.

Another significant change noted is that the college has implemented the HR/Payroll components of the SAP system. This required significant training for those persons involved, testing and debugging of the system, and resolving any problems that arose. The conversion and its effects are still a challenge, although the problems associated with it have been reduced to a manageable level.

The college budget is broken down as follows: 95 percent for salaries and benefits; 1 percent for contingency reserves; and 1 percent for technology, leaving 3 percent in discretionary funds. The college has received an infusion of \$286 million for capital projects from the passage of bond measures as well as state funding. A Citizen's Oversight Committee was created to monitor the spending of the bond funds. The district has recently adopted a new budget allocation model which, in principle, uses the SB 361 state funding model. The district guarantees, for 2006-2007 only, funding for the colleges shall be at least equal to the amount of base revenue received under the old district budget allocation model, excluding any revenue adjustments resulting from a college enrollment decline below its base.

Finally, the district has formulated a plan to address its long-term retiree benefits liability. The district will continue to provide retiree health benefits annually; it will continue to

put an amount approximately equal to the Medicare D rebate each year (about \$1 million) into the retiree fund; and it will contribute 1.92% of the previous year's fulltime employee payroll to pre-fund retiree health care costs. A one-time 1.92% "payroll tax" was contributed by staff into the retiree fund in 2006-07.

Findings and Evidence

The allocation of resources is a shared responsibility, and decisions are based on input from stakeholders. Financial planning at the college occurs based on a published budget development calendar, wherein specific assignments of different individuals/committees are described. Other institutional plans, such as the Educational Master Plan, Facilities Master Plan, Technology Plan, etc., are used to determine funding prioritization although the integration of all the plans is not clearly delineated. Budget needs are based on departmental annual goals. The results of program review are likewise considered in budgeting. The college is in the process of creating a budget narrative which will explain the budget process. (Standards III.D.1.a, III.D.1.d)

The Los Angeles Valley College unrestricted budget for 2006-2007 is \$51.4 million, and was \$46.6 million in 2005-2006. Of the total college budget, three percent is discretionary. The college maintains a one percent reserve and sets another one percent aside for technology. A huge challenge for Los Angeles Valley College is the fact that it has to repay the district its deficit of approximately \$1.9 million starting in 2007-2008 while attempting to grow enrollment. The college can mitigate its deficit by applying to the district's Grant Allocation Task Force for reduction or elimination of its deficit. Task force members are appointed by the chancellor and charged with the responsibility of examining all the financial operations of the college and making recommendations to the college on improving its financial status. If the college implements the recommendations of the task force, its debt to the district would then be reduced or eliminated. The college relies on the district to plan for fiscal emergencies and payment of future obligations. However, the college should be financially responsible and accountable. (Standards III.D.1.b, III.D.1.c, III.D.2.c)

The district budget, which includes the college budget, is presented to the Board of Trustees for approval. It is a public document and is widely disseminated. The district also undergoes an annual audit, which the external auditors attest to as presenting fairly the financial condition of the district. For the last three years, the external auditors have issued an unqualified opinion. In both these documents, the budget and the audit, financial resources from auxiliary activities and grants are included. These documents also cover various contractual agreements made by the college. (Standards III.D.2.a, III.D.2.e, III.D.2.f). Financial information is provided throughout the institution. With the implementation of SAP HR/Payroll, some problems were encountered in the beginning, resulting in unreliable information. However, most of the technical problems have been resolved. (Standards III.D.2.b, III.D.2.d, III.D.2.g)

Assessment of the effective use of financial resources occurs at the program and department levels, which then informs budgeting. The college anticipates redefining the

role of the budget committee in evaluation, as well as in all other aspects of the budget process. Budgeting and other planning occurs across the college, which is commendable, but the integration of all planning should be articulated and documented. (Standard III.D.3)

Conclusions

Until fiscal year 2005-2006, the college had managed its financial resources well, as evidenced by the positive ending fund balances in the previous years. In 2005-2006, Los Angeles Valley College experienced an enrollment decline. This initiated an institutional evaluation of what went wrong, and what corrective action(s) may be necessary. The college has responded by restructuring its class schedule and increasing its marketing efforts to maximize enrollment. The college is exploring ways in which to maximize its revenues, including a strategy in summer FTES reporting.

The team believes the college meets this standard except as noted.

Recommendations

College Recommendation 4: Current Deficit and Plans for Future Financial Stability

The team recommends that the college take action to address the current \$1.9 million deficit immediately and develop plans to establish financial stability in the long term to ensure fiscal responsibility and accountability.

(Standards III.D.2.c, IV.B.2.d)

District Recommendation 2: Retiree Health Benefit Liability

(Shared in Los Angeles Mission College and Los Angeles Pierce College reports)

The team recommends that the college closely monitor in future years the success of the district's plan for addressing retiree health benefit liability to assure out-year obligations are met without significant impact on the financial health of the institution. (Standard III.D.1.c)

STANDARD IV

Leadership and Governance

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

General Comments

The college decision-making roles and processes are clearly defined, well organized, and understood by employees. All personnel interviewed expressed satisfaction with the shared governance process and the collegial and cooperative working relationships. Various people expressed concern that many of the same faculty members seem to appear on several committees. Several faculty members and administrators also expressed concern about the level of participation in institutional governance.

Findings and Evidence

College Council is the primary shared governance body at Los Angeles Valley College. Monthly consultations with the college president are another vehicle for shared decision-making and problem-solving although outside the scope of the formal shared governance structure. Members of the college community also participate in districtwide shared governance committees. The team believes faculty and staff consider the college to be a leader in shared governance and collegial management. All persons interviewed expressed satisfaction with the shared governance process and see the college president as setting the appropriate tone. (Standard IV.A.1)

Shared governance structures appear to be well established. The college previously used a shared governance handbook. This document was rewritten in January 2007 and became the LAVC Decision Making, Governance, and Procedures Handbook 2006-2007. This document clearly outlines the shared governance process at the college and identifies representatives by position or office held. (Standard IV.A.2.)

A broad theme that has emerged both from the self study and from individual interviews is that faculty and staff do not take advantage of full participation in shared governance and committee work. It appears the same willing volunteers serve on several committees, while some committees have empty seats. Meanwhile, others are concerned too many of the same people serve on multiple committees. The planning agenda item on decision-making roles and processes addresses both the communication and the participation issues. Although the college meets this substandard, more work must be done to ensure all voices are heard (Standard IV.A.2.b). Unlike the practice at many colleges, Academic Senate members are elected “at-large” and have no specific constituency for accountability.

The college identifies “strengthening communication involving college governance” as being part of its planning agenda. While all persons interviewed expressed satisfaction with the process, each one additionally was concerned with communication between

College Council members and their constituent group members. Similar concerns were expressed in the self study. (Standard IV.A.3)

The college advocates and demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies. (Standard IV.A.4)

The college should implement its planning agenda as stated in Decision-Making Roles and Processes and evaluate the implementation. While all the elements of a good process are in place, broad-based, active engagement in the planning agenda and its evaluation is vital. (Standard IV.A.5)

Conclusions

The college appears to have good processes in place for decision-making and providing input and leadership. The College Council performs its tasks well, and its committees function acceptably. The shared governance handbook is well done, and there is a commitment to the concept of receiving input from all segments of the college community. While all the elements of a good process are in place, there is still a broad-based opinion that not enough people participate, and not enough voices are heard. Active engagement in the planning agenda item already outlined would help to solve this issue.

Further work is needed in the area of inclusion of new members and the area of transmitting the outcomes of these committees to the constituents who are represented, namely all of faculty and staff. Election of Academic Senate members “at large” removes the accountability of representing the interests of a specific constituency of voters. Changing this system might offer opportunities for newer faculty members to represent their areas in this body.

The team believes the college meets this standard.

Recommendations

College Recommendation 5: Communication and Participation in Decision-Making

The team recommends that the college implement its planning agenda regarding communication and participation in the decision-making process and evaluate its implementation. (Standard IV.A.1.b)

B. Board and Administrative Organization

General Comments

The self study, interviews, and evidence suggest the relationship between the college community and the board is outstanding. An equal amount of confidence was expressed in the leadership of the college president. No dissenting comments were registered. It

appears the continuity of the president's leadership has helped Los Angeles Valley College to grow and thrive in a changing community.

Findings and Evidence

The governing board is an independent policy-making body that reflects the public interest in board activities and decisions. The board visits each college annually by rotating the location of its meetings among the nine colleges. The college staff and faculty say these meetings are well attended and appreciated and that the board listens to the concerns of faculty, staff, students and concerned community members. (Standard IV.B.1.a)

The self study reports part of the decentralization process of the past six years has been to place curriculum approval on the campus instead of at the district. Several faculty members interviewed expressed appreciation for this change and agreed it was in the best interest of the local students and their educational needs (Standard IV.B.1.b). Still, the board retains ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity. (Standard IV.B.1.c)

The bylaws and policies, specifying the size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures of the governing board are all listed on the Los Angeles Community College District website. (Standard IV.B.1.d)

As a result of the board's ongoing evaluation of its policies and bylaws, individual colleges have more control of their curricula and their hiring practices. The board is viewed as not micromanaging and as being vested in student success. (Standard IV.B.1.e) A policy does exist for board development and new member orientation. Retreats were held in September and October of 2006. (Standard IV.B.1.f)

The governing board engaged in self-evaluation in October 2006 at the its annual retreat. The self-evaluation results were available to the team. However, no plan was developed to improve board performance. The board adopted a code of ethics in October 2005 and subsequently adopted a clearly defined policy for dealing with behavior that violates this code on February 21, 2007, as evidenced in board policy. (Standards IV.B.1.g, IV.B.1.h)

The governing board is informed about the accreditation process. (Standard IV.B.1.i) The board selects and evaluates the chancellor, delegates full responsibility and authority to him, and holds him accountable for the operation of the district. (Standard IV.B.1.j) The governing board has a clear policy for the selection of college presidents. Forms for evaluation of the college presidents exist, but a corresponding evaluation policy and procedure has not been developed. (Standard IV.B.1.j)

No individuals interviewed expressed any reservations about the leadership of the college, including the president and the administrative team. The president is characterized as a widely respected leader with the best interests of the college at heart. She participates in the shared governance processes and consults with constituency

leaders. Her collegial process was praised by each individual interviewed. Concerns about leadership and student learning outcomes are addressed in Standard II. Concerns about institutional planning and implementation are addressed in Standard I. (Standards IV.B.2.a, IV.B.2.b)

The college meets the standard of assuring implementation of statutes, regulations, and governing board policies. (Standard IV.B.2.c) The president works closely with the college budget officer in ensuring that controls are in place for effectively controlling the expenditures. (Standard IV.B.2.d) The president has an excellent reputation for working with the community. The team observed her meeting with the local bond oversight committee and listening to its concerns and ideas. (Standard IV.B.2.e)

The district service outcomes document clearly delineates and communicates the operational responsibilities and functions of the district from those of the colleges. (Standard IV.B.3.a)

The district has adopted a new computerized database system, SAP, for processing payroll and for human resources information. The system has incurred many challenges, including erroneous paychecks. While the districtwide error rate is improving, it remains greater than acceptable. (Standard IV.B.3.b)

The district, with participation from all constituencies, recently revised its allocation model to be based on the SB 361 allocation rubrics. The new allocation model includes such elements as a basic allocation for small colleges of \$500,000, guaranteed current base funding in the initial year, and the responsibility of the college president for the successful operation and fiscal performance of the college. (Standard IV.B.3.c)

The district is predicting a 6.7 percent fund balance in the tentative 2006-2007 budget document. By maintaining a strong fund balance, the district is able to assist the colleges in minimizing the impact of state budget reductions and supporting the small colleges for new programs. (Standard IV.B.3.d)

The chancellor gives full responsibility and authority to the college presidents to implement and administer delegated policies and holds them accountable for the operation of their colleges. The practice of college control over the college budget is a prime example. (Standard IV.B.3.e)

The district does an effective job in its role as liaison between the colleges and the district board. The board has seven members who are elected at large. The district manages all board-related matters. College presidents participate in board meetings and interact with board members on matters pertaining to their respective colleges as appropriate. Board meetings are held at each college once a year. Communication between the district office and the colleges occurs in many forms. The chancellor conducts meetings at the campus and communicates regularly with employees. Districtwide committees and operational work groups (vice presidents, student services officers, and others) meet regularly to

facilitate the sharing of information and resolve issues affecting all sites. (Standard IV.B.3.f)

No evidence was provided to demonstrate the district regularly evaluates district/system role delineation and governance and decision-making structures and processes. The district service outcomes document has only recently been developed and can be evaluated after full implementation. (Standard IV.B.3.g)

Conclusions

Considerable improvements have been made in this area since the last accreditation visit. There is widespread respect for the role of the district trustees and how they live that role. The president is also widely respected and is visible all around the campus. The team personally saw her participating in the International Day celebration in the multi-purpose room, as well as attending several other meetings during the course of the visit. The president is widely connected in the district and the community, and this connection serves to benefit the college.

The team believes the college meets this standard, except as noted.

Recommendations

District Recommendation 3: Board Self-Evaluation

(Shared in Los Angeles Mission College and Los Angeles Pierce College reports)

The team recommends that the Board of Trustees complete the self-evaluation process by discussing and developing a set of board goals to respond to any issues identified in their self-evaluation, and that the board should institutionalize the goal setting and measuring of accomplishments as part of the self-evaluation process. (Standard IV.B.1.g)

District Recommendation 4: Evaluation of Presidents and Chancellor

(Shared in Los Angeles Mission College and Los Angeles Pierce College reports)

Although in practice the evaluation of the college presidents and district chancellor occurs on a regular basis and is an inclusive process, the team recommends that the district develop a written policy that clearly defines the evaluation process. (Standard IV.B.1.j)