

# EVALUATION REPORT

## College of the Siskiyous Weed, California

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

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that  
Visited College of the Siskiyous from March 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> 2010

William Duncan IV, Chair

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**College of the Siskiyous  
Visiting Team Roster  
March 2010**

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## SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

INSTITUTION: College of the Siskiyous

DATES OF VISIT: March 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> 2010

TEAM CHAIR: William Duncan, IV, Superintendent/President Taft College

A nine-member accreditation team visited College of the Siskiyous from March 1<sup>st</sup> to March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010, to assess how well the college is meeting the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) standards, provide recommendations to assure quality and encourage institutional improvement, and submit recommendations to the ACCJC regarding the status of the college.

The team chair and assistant conducted a pre-visit to COS on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010, to meet with the COS president and discuss logistics for the upcoming site visit. They toured the campus, visiting several buildings.

The visiting team prepared for the visit by attending an ACCJC all-day training session on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, and by studying ACCJC materials prepared for visiting teams. The chair attended an all-day training session for accreditation site visit chairs on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

Prior to the visit, team members carefully read the college's Self Study Report, 2007 Focused Midterm Report, recommendations from the 2004 visiting team, and began reviewing online and digital evidence provided by the college. The team members were assigned to two or more of four committees, one each for the four ACCJC standards. Each committee was comprised of one lead member and two or three additional members. Team members completed written evaluations of the Self Study Report and began identifying areas for further investigation. On the day before the formal start of the visit, the team members met at the college to review and discuss evidence provided by the college, and review other materials submitted to the ACCJC since its last accreditation site visit in 2004.

During the visit, the team continuously met with numerous faculty, staff, administrators, Board of Trustees members, and students. Five of the team members visited the off-campus center in Yreka. Two open forums were held to allow participation from any individuals who wished to participate, one in Yreka and one at the main campus in Weed. A third open forum was conducted for students at the Weed campus.

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The Self Study Report was posted online and mailed to visiting team members about 30 days prior to the site visit. The team felt the Self Study Report was well written and organized, with some inconsistencies that needed to be clarified during interviews with campus faculty and staff. The college was well prepared for the site visit and was accommodating in meeting requests for additional information and interviews.

## **Commendations**

### 1. Planning Days

The college is commended for the twice-a-year college-wide Planning Days and the direct role they play in promoting dialogue and effecting positive change at COS (IB.1, IB.4, IVA.1, IVA.2.A).

### 2. Advanced Technology

The college is commended on its proactive use of advanced technology to support the delivery of programs and services to students regardless of location. This investment in advanced video conferencing and other distance learning methodologies demonstrate its commitment in reaching its geographically remote student population (IIA.1.b, IIIC.1.b).

### 3. Improved Facilities

The college is commended on its commitment to the development of new green-building facilities that are improving the environment in which students learn. In particular the team commends the college on its development of Career and Technical Education facilities and its foresight in preparing students for jobs in this region (IIA.2.f, IIA.3, IIIB.1.a, IIIC.1.a).

## **Recommendations**

### 1. Research Capacity

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends the college increase the research capacity of the institution to conduct the college's research agenda, to assist college staff with the use of research-based information in decision-making, and to ensure that the college's planning and resource-allocation processes are infused with relevant and timely information on the effectiveness of the institutional practices and student learning (IB.2, IB.3, IB.6, IIA.1.C, IIB.4, IIIA, IIIB, IIIC, IIID.3, IVB.2.B).

## 2. Program Review

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends that all college departments and programs complete the annual program review and strengthen its linkages to the college's planning and resource allocation processes. The team further recommends that the college make its mission statement and detailed student achievement and student learning data central in the dialogue and reflection that informs the program review, institutional planning, and all college decision-making processes (IB.1 – 7, IIA.2, IIB.3, IIB.4, IIC.2).

## 3. Evaluation

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends the college conduct regular, rigorous and inclusive evaluation(s) of its participatory governance, program review, and planning processes. The results of the evaluation(s) should be broadly communicated to the campus community and the Board of Trustees, and the evaluation results should be central to process improvement (IB.1, IB.3, IB.6, IIC.2, IVA.5).

## 4. Assessment of Student Needs

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends the college conduct regular, systematic evaluations of its students' learning and support needs and of the campus environment in regards to diversity and ensure that instruction and support services meet those identified needs, regardless of location (IIA.1.b, IIA.2.d, IIA.3.C, IIB.3.a, IIB.3.D, IIB.4).

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## 5. Student Learning Outcomes

The team recommends the college build on its recent efforts to reach a proficiency level in the development and assessment of student learning outcomes by 2012 and establish a timeline to do so. Specifically, the team recommends that the college:

- Complete the development of student learning outcomes for all courses and programs, including basic skills and distance education, and all learning support and student services programs
- Develop and implement timelines for the continuous and regular assessment of all course, program and institutional student learning outcomes
- Use those assessments as occasions for regular dialogue about improving learning at the college
- Link evidence of SLO assessment to planning and resource allocation.

(IIA.1.c, IIA.2.a, IIA.2.b, IIA.2.f, IIA.2.i, IIA.3, IIB)

## 6. Library and Learning Support Services

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends the college evaluate library and learning support services staffing to provide adequate student access and support at all locations and for all delivery methods and maintain sufficient physical and electronic materials to enhance student learning (IIC.1.a, IIC.1.b, IIC.1.c).

## 7. Strategic Plan

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends the college's new strategic plan fully integrate human resources, facilities, technology, and financial resources to support the college's short- and long-range needs (IIIA.6, IIIB.2, IIIC.1.c, IIID.1.a).

## 8. Ethics Policies

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends the college develop ethics policies for all staff (IIIA.1.d).

## 9. Updated Board Policies and Procedures

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends the college establish a timeline and specific responsibilities for completing the remaining Administrative Procedures that support the recently revised Board Policies (IVB.1.e).

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## **ACCREDITATION EVALUATION REPORT FOR COLLEGE OF THE SISKIYOU**

### **Introduction**

College of the Siskiyous (COS) is a public two-year community college located in the town of Weed in Siskiyou County in Northern California. It is part of the California Community Colleges System and has an enrollment of approximately 3,000 students, including part-time students. It is the northernmost college in the state of California and the only college in Siskiyou County, serving a portion of Shasta County as well. It lies in the service area of California State University, Chico. It is one of only eleven community colleges in California that provides on-campus dormitories for students.

COS was founded in 1957 after a special election. Buildings on the current location first opened their doors on September 8, 1959. Facilities at COS include Herschel Meredith Stadium for football and track and field events, and the Ford Theater for theatrical performances. COS also is known for its fire academy, one of the best in California. The athletic mascot is the Eagle.

The college prides itself on providing comprehensive educational opportunities in traditional areas as well as Career and Technical Education programs while also affording students experiences, degrees, and certificates in the Performing Arts. Music, Theatre, Media Communications, and Visual Arts are of significant importance to the College of the Siskiyous. Students from every major participate in these classes and activities to enrich their education. Nursing programs, including the new LVN to RN step up program, are a hallmark of the College of the Siskiyous.

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## **Evaluation of Institutional Responses to Previous Recommendations**

### **Recommendation #1 (2004 Page 33 of the Self Study Report)**

*The college promptly review and revise its mission statement, so that the accreditation focus on student learning is incorporated into the statement. Once revised, COS should establish a regular review cycle for its mission statement that provides for updates to the mission as needed. The college also needs to develop a systematic and regular way to assess the achievement of its mission, and then communicate its progress to all of its constituents. (IA, IA.3)*

The college began a review process imbedded within the strategic planning process in 2004. A revised mission statement was adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2005. The mission statement defines the educational mission of the college and includes the college's commitment to student learning. The mission statement of the college appears in the catalogue, college website and other college publications. The college provides an annual opportunity for feedback regarding the mission statement. Board Policy 1200 was adopted in 2008 stating the mission will be reviewed and revised on a regular basis. The college has begun a visioning process that may lead to a future revision of the mission statement. The college has responded appropriately to this recommendation from the previous team.

### **Recommendation #2 (2004 Page 34 of the Self Study Report)**

*The college develop a new broad-based strategic planning process that clearly incorporates the revised college mission into the plan. The process should provide the college with measurable, long-term goals and include a systematic cycle of evaluation, implementation, and reevaluation leading to improvement. (IA.4, IB.2, IB.4, IB.6)*

The creation of a Strategic Master Plan for the college began in 2005. The plan includes the college mission and value statements and identifies priorities for the college. The Strategic Master Plan was adopted by the Board of Trustee in 2005. Annual reports have been published between 2006-2009. The college's planning process, including program review, are linked to the mission statement and college goals. The annual budgeting process is linked to department plans which reference college goals and the mission statement.

Although there has been progress in developing a planning process, there does not appear to be a systematic cycle of evaluation, implementation, and reevaluation leading to improvement. The college collects data and campus



constituency groups perform assessments, but that information appears to be disseminated randomly. Information of quality assurance is not reported in a regular, reliable, organized manner (I.B.5).

While the college has made progress, the standard is not yet fully met.

### **Recommendation #3 (2004 Page 35 of the Self Study Report)**

*The college develop an institution-wide process, with timelines and responsible parties, for the establishment of specific student learning outcomes and criteria for measurement and review. The plan should include the identification of student learning outcomes for courses, programs, general education, certificates and degrees, and for student services and learning support services; the assessment of student and employee achievement of those outcomes; and the utilization of the assessment results in a systematic way to make improvements. (IIA.1.c, IIA.2, IIA.3, IIB.1, IIB.4, IIC.1, IIC.2)*

The college has addressed this recommendation in part. An institution-wide process is now in place, with timelines and specific assignments, for the identification of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) at the course, program, general education, degree and certificate levels, as well as in all Student Services. The college has devoted an impressive amount of fiscal resources and staff and faculty time to this area since the 2004 site visit, including attendance at numerous regional and state trainings and the dedication of college-wide planning events to SLOs and their use in student learning in planning and resource development. At the time of the site visit, SLOs had been identified at the institutional level, in General Education, in all instructional programs, in all Student Services programs, and in all but a handful of courses. A new (2008-09) instructional program review process includes the requirement that SLO assessment and outcome information be included in the review. At the time of the site visit, in most courses and in all Student Services programs the SLOs have been assessed; the use of the outcome data for course or program improvement, however, remains somewhat uneven.

At the time of the site visit, the college can be described as in transition from the Developmental stage of the ACCJC SLO Rubric to the Proficiency stage. The college is well positioned to be at the Proficiency stage by 2012.

### **Recommendation #4 (2004 Page 41 of the Self Study Report)**

*The college review its values, policies, procedures, and practices with regard to issues of diversity to enhance the learning environment and create a*

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*climate of mutual respect and appreciation. (ACCJC Policy Statement on Diversity, IIA.3.c, IIB.3.d, IIIA.4)*

The college has fully addressed this recommendation. COS's current Mission Statement, which was updated subsequent to the 2004 site visit, includes diversity as one of eight values and a vision that celebrates diversity. Board Policy 7100, adopted in mid-2009, clearly states the Board's and the college's recognition of the value of diversity in student success and the commitment to seeking diversity in the college's workforce. Human Resources includes an EEO officer on all hiring committees. Instructional faculty have embraced this commitment to diversity very seriously. Beginning very shortly after the 2004 site visit, the Academic Senate initiated discussions on how to incorporate diversity into individual courses and into the General Education requirements. A Diversity area was added to General Education and the Curriculum Committee began establishing criteria by which courses would be reviewed for inclusion in that area. Over a dozen courses are now identified as meeting that requirement. Additionally, the college's standing Diversity Council continues to sponsor events on campus, including outside speakers, to expose students and staff to a wide variety of other cultures and perspectives.

It is not clear from the self study, however, if or how the college has assessed the extent to which these changes in Board Policy, Human Resources procedures, instructional courses and General Education requirements, or cultural events have, in fact, enhanced the learning environment and created a climate of mutual respect and appreciation.

#### **Recommendation #5 (2004 Page 42 of the Self Study Report)**

*The college establish a process, including timelines and responsible parties, to systematically review its board policies and procedures on a regular basis to ensure their currency. (IVB.1.e)*

The college has addressed this recommendation in part. The Board of Trustees adopted a process (Board Policy 2410) and timeline for the review of all Board policies, beginning in fall 2008 and using the statewide Community College League of California (CCLC) Policy and Administrative Procedures Service. Lead responsibility for each respective policy area was assigned to the president, the three vice presidents, and the director of human resources. The revised policies were adopted by the Board as they were completed, from August 2008 through August 2009. This same process was used to identify needed Administrative Procedures and to begin the development of them. At the time of the site visit, approximately 60 percent of the identified Administrative Procedures have been written and

implemented in line with Board Policy 2410. In late 2009, the Board also adopted a four-year cycle for reviewing and updating all policies and procedures in the future, beginning in the 2010-11 academic year and continuing through 2014. The site visit team reviewed Board meeting minutes and a sample of the revised policies and interviewed college administrators and faculty and classified leaders to confirm that the process for policy development, revision and adoption was in place and widely understood.

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## Eligibility Requirements

### 1. Authority

The team confirmed that College of the Siskiyous is part of the California Community College system and is authorized to offer educational programs by the California Education Code. The college is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.

### 2. Mission

The team found that the college's current mission statement was adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2005. It defines the college's educational purposes and is published in Board Policy 1200, in the College of the Siskiyous 2009-2011 Catalog (page 4), and on the college's website.

### 3. Governing Board

The Siskiyou Joint Community College District, of which College of the Siskiyous is the sole institution, is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees whose members are elected at large to represent specific district regions. The Board is empowered to set District policy and to ensure the integrity and quality of the educational programs offered by the college. The Board of Trustees has both a Code of Ethics (BP 2715) and a Conflict of Interest policy (BP 2710).

### 4. Chief Executive Officer

The Board of Trustees appoints and evaluates a Chief Executive Officer who has the authority to manage the college, implement Board policies, and guide institutional planning.

### 5. Administrative Capacity

College of the Siskiyous has a sufficient number of administrators to conduct its business.

### 6. Operational Status

The team confirmed that students enrolled at College of the Siskiyous are actively pursuing degrees and certificates in a variety of educational programs.

## **7. Degrees**

The catalog and schedule of classes reveal that the majority of College of the Siskiyous' offerings is in programs that lead to degrees.

## **8. Educational Programs**

The team found that College of the Siskiyous' degree programs are congruent with its educational mission, are based on recognized patterns of study, and demonstrate appropriate quality and rigor.

## **9. Academic Credit**

The college awards academic credit based on generally accepted practices in degree-granting institutions of higher education.

## **10. Student Learning and Achievement**

Although the institution has defined SLOs for almost all of its courses, it has yet to define and publish them for all programs. Some course and program assessment has occurred; regular and systematic assessment processes need to be developed and implemented.

## **11. General Education**

College of the Siskiyous incorporates into all its degree programs a substantial general education component to ensure breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry.

## **12. Academic Freedom**

College of the Siskiyous has adopted a statement of Academic Freedom defined in Board Policy 4030.

## **13. Faculty**

As of Fall 2008, College of the Siskiyous employed 46 full-time and 155 adjunct faculty members. Full-time faculty develop curriculum and programs, engage in program and curriculum review, participate in college planning, serve on governance committees, and maintain quality in courses and programs.

**14. Student Services**

College of the Siskiyous provides an array of student support services appropriate for its student body and community.

**15. Admissions**

College of the Siskiyous has open admission policies and procedures that are consistent with its mission and with California regulations governing public community colleges.

**16. Information and Learning Resources**

The college meets this eligibility requirement by providing library and learning support services to enhance student learning. Further findings on the provision of long-term and sustainable access are addressed in Standard IIC.

**17. Financial Resources**

The college has an adequate funding base and resources with which to support its educational and student support programs.

**18. Financial Accountability**

College of the Siskiyous is audited annually by an external auditing firm that reports its findings to college managers and the Board of Trustees. Audit findings have been responded to in a manner satisfactorily to the audit firms.

**19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation**

While College of the Siskiyous has made considerable progress in the past several years to integrate and assess planning, it does not yet have an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation, and re-evaluation.

**20. Public Information**

The College of the Siskiyous 2009-2011 Catalog provides current, accurate information about the college and its programs of study. That information is also available on the college's website.

## **21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission**

College of the Siskiyous and its Board of Trustees fulfill their obligations to the ACCJC by incorporating its standards into planning and assessment activities.

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## Accreditation Themes

### Institutional Commitments

College of the Siskiyous has expressed its commitment to its students and its community in its mission statement, which focuses on “. . . any student who can benefit from an exceptional learning environment which is safe, attractive and promotes a passion for learning, cultural enrichment, and sense of belonging for all.” As a comprehensive, public community college, the college’s mission statement is appropriate for the students it serves and their diverse goals.

The team noticed that the college has made substantial effort to link its mission to the college-wide planning process. In particular, it was noted that functional areas on campus included their mission statements and the college’s mission statement in all program review documents. However, the linkage between the program reviews and the college’s mission statement was not evident in the program reviews.

The college’s commitment to high quality education congruent with its mission was evident in a number of other ways, among them the investment in advanced distance learning technology to serve students in remote parts of the college’s district and the considerable focus on improving facilities, especially for the college’s renowned Career and Technical Education programs.

### Evaluation, Planning, and Improvement

The college has made considerable progress in the development and implementation of a program review and strategic planning process that involves a high percentage of college faculty and staff. In particular, the program review process was shortened from a six-year cycle to a one-year cycle to more effectively tie program review to the budget cycle, SLO implementation at the course and program level, and the strategic planning cycle. Likewise, the college has adopted a three-tier planning process that many faculty and staff praised. The team found some evidence that these processes were evaluated and improved as a result of the evaluations; however, the evaluation processes did not rise to the Standards’ requirement of an “ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation, and re-evaluation.” In particular, as noted in the team’s recommendations, evaluation of the planning and program review processes for the purpose of improvement was sporadic and not well documented.



## **Student Learning Outcomes**

Nearly all courses have identified SLOs; individual instructors select assessment techniques from a list of several possible methods. However, far fewer courses have begun to assess outcomes, and improvements based on assessment results are not yet regularly implemented or evaluated.

Program-level SLOs have been identified and are published in the catalog (pp. 29-143). General education SLOs have been identified but are not widely published; they do not appear in the current catalog. General education and program SLOs are embedded in course SLOs; that is, they are considered to be met when course SLOs are met. Some certificates and degrees do not have SLOs distinct from program SLOs; the relationship of certificate/degree SLOs to program SLOs needs clarification. Four institutional SLOs have been identified.

COS is well positioned to reach the Commission's Proficiency level for SLOs by 2012 if they continue their current level of effort.

## **Organization**

College of the Siskiyous is a small rural college that has found ways to leverage its size to assist students. Many students and faculty spoke of the advantage of the college's small size in creating an environment conducive to learning where students receive individualized attention.

The college lacks needed research capacity to support its otherwise well structured program review and strategic planning processes and, consequently, many evaluation and reporting needs are not being met. The three-level planning process was mentioned by numerous faculty and staff as being useful and effective in achieving its purpose. The college has a robust, mostly collegial committee structure which encourages organization-wide support for decisions that are made.

## **Dialogue**

The team found evidence that COS engaged in inclusive, informed, and intentional dialogue about institutional quality and improvement at all levels, and that this dialogue purposely guided institutional change. As an example, the college has created an opportunity for dialogue by implementing two "planning days" per year in which all college employees have an opportunity to provide input. Given this, the team's interviews also revealed a lively, even heated, college-wide discussion on proposed institutional reorganization. The discussion is not taking place within the college's regular

planning structure. A Reorganization Committee has been established that is not directly or formally linked to the planning structure. Staff with whom the team spoke were not in agreement about the extent to which the Reorganization Committee provides information on its continuing discussions to the rest of the college, and there was likewise disagreement about the extent to which the reorganization should be driven by a planning-based analysis of the college's current strengths and weaknesses rather than by a vision of where the college needs to be in the future.

### **Institutional Integrity**

The team found that College of the Siskiyous represents itself to internal and external audiences with honesty and truthfulness. It has numerous policies in place that speak to issues of integrity: a Board of Trustees ethics policy, a Board of Trustees conflict of interest policy, student honesty policies, and an academic freedom policy. The team did note that the college has yet to develop ethics policies for all employees. By most accounts communicated to the team, the college treats its students and employees with respect and care. In fact, the team did not hear a negative comment about the college from students during the visit; it heard many positive ones from both internal and external constituencies.

The college presents itself and its policies and programs accurately in publications and on its website. It has moved significantly to embrace and support the diversity of its student body over the last six years with an array of support and instructional programs for students.

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## **STANDARD I**

### **Institutional Mission and Effectiveness**

#### **A. Mission**

##### **General Observations**

A review of the College Catalog, the College of the Siskiyous (COS) Accreditation Survey, and planning documents shows COS has a clear statement of mission that defines the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning. A review of the board meeting minutes, interviews with staff, and review of planning documents shows the college has revised the mission and obtained board approval.

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

The team agrees that College of the Siskiyous' student learning programs and services are aligned with its purposes, its character and its student population. While COS describes efforts to meet the needs and interests of the general student population in transfer, degrees, and certificates, the same evaluation does not mention basic skills or developmental education. The college schedule indicates basic skills courses are offered, but these are not discussed in the description, evaluation, or in a plan to align programs and services to meet the needs of its student population (IA.1).

The College of the Siskiyous mission statement is approved by the Board of Trustees and is published on the college's website, in the Student Handbook, and in the College Catalog (IA.2).

The college mission statement asserts that the college "will serve any student who can benefit from an exceptional learning environment which is safe, attractive and promotes a passion for learning, cultural enrichment and sense of belonging for all." The college provides appropriate service for students and upholds an exceptional learning environment. To assess the appropriateness of services, student success measures should be disaggregated by ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and disability to further validate exceptional service to "any student" and establish a true sense of belonging for all students at College of the Siskiyous as described in the college mission statement. Furthermore, a process that measures progress on achieving the college mission is not identified in the review document. In short, the review of the evidence does not demonstrate that the college was able to ". . . develop a systematic and regular way to assess the achievement of its mission, and then communicate its progress to all of

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its constituents” (IA, IA.3).

The current annual review process states that college personnel will review the mission and planning documents and then provide feedback to the President’s Advisory Council (PAC) through campus forums open to all staff and students. The primary purpose of this inclusive review process is to obtain input on revisions to the mission, vision, values, and goals as well as to develop plans for projects to be carried out on campus and to ensure that such projects are aligned with the mission and the Strategic Master Plan. This institutional review process is designed to encourage college personnel to use assessment results and data to evaluate the college’s achievement of its mission. The team found evidence that the college’s Mission Statement was revised in 2005; however, Board Policy 1200 was not updated by the Board of Trustees until 2008. The evidence does not show the college is consistently using the institution’s governance and decision-making processes to review its mission statement on a regular basis (IA.3).

The ideals of the institution’s mission statement are stated throughout all campus planning tools and decision-making processes. Program review documents contain the college mission statement and all departments have developed a unique mission statement. The evidence is not clear the institution’s mission is central to institutional planning and decision making. In a recent staff survey, only sixteen percent of the respondents strongly agree that the mission is central to planning. Additionally, the evidence was not clear that governance Levels One, Two, and Three routinely ensure the mission is central to the planning process (IA.4).

## **Conclusions**

The college mostly meets this standard. There was evidence to support that the institution demonstrated a strong commitment to making the mission statement central to student learning and to communicating the mission internally and externally. However, the evidence was inconsistent. Consequently, COS is encouraged to continue to improve its governance and decision-making processes to strengthen the linkage between the college’s mission and student learning at all levels of the institution and to document these improvements to provide assurances both internally and externally.

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## **B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness**

### **General Observations**

College of the Siskiyous (COS) engaged in a five year strategic master planning effort beginning in 2005 and ending in 2010. The Strategic Master Plan (SMP) was approved in May 2005 by the COS Board of Trustees. The COS SMP was used as the basis for the successful Measure A bond campaign in November 2005. This new college revenue resulted in the construction of three new buildings and significant improvement to various areas on campus. The annual planning process includes establishing SMP goals, establishing unit, program, and department goals, and developing action plans to develop budgets for the coming year. In March, all annual plans with any action plans are presented to President's Advisory Council (PAC) which recommends priorities and reviews the college's progress towards meeting the college's strategic planning goals. In January 2006, an annual review process for the SMP was implemented that included a description of activities, assessment of goals, and achieved outcomes. An examination of the annual strategic planning reports revealed a collaborative college-wide and inclusive process, numerous intended interventions, intermittent success at implementing effective activities, limited success in accomplishing stated goals, and substantial efforts to re-assess progress and create additional interventions as appropriate. The planning process reflects evidence of the college's ability to improve its approaches and practices through an institutional practice of making improvements to college initiatives to obtain better results.

### **Findings and Evidence**

There has been progress in developing a broad-based strategic planning process. In May 2005, the COS Board of Trustees approved a Strategic Master Plan (SMP). The annual planning process includes establishing SMP goals, setting unit, program, and department goals, and developing action plans. Annual plans with any action plans are presented to President's Advisory Council. Here, college priorities and alignment with the college's strategic planning goals help prioritize and, if agreed, fund requests for the following year.

The college's shared governance model, campus committees, planning days, and open forums provide the structure for collegial, self reflective dialogue. Instruction, Student Services, Administrative and Information Technology Services, and the Superintendent/President's Office work collaboratively with committees and college planning processes to help guide the college toward improvement. Each year, the college community participates in Campus

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Planning Day. This twice-a-year event offers an opportunity for significant and meaningful campus dialogue. Past topics have included communication, governance on campus, accreditation, and college planning. In fall 2009, the topic was the college mission and the need to adapt it to the needs of students and the community over the next twenty years. Through interviews with administrators, faculty, and staff, it is evident that dialogue often occurs in college efforts to increase planning effectiveness (IB.1).

COS embraces the notion of ongoing planning through the four-level District Institutional Planning Process. The first level is with the program, division or discipline. The second level includes the broader shared-governance and other ad hoc committees. Level three is the college Presidents Advisory Council (PAC). The PAC membership includes representatives from different constituent groups (classified, faculty, administrative). College decisions and recommendations to the President are often made at the third level. The fourth level is the Board of Trustees (IB.1).

COS uses the annual program review process, which follows a regularly scheduled timeline, to set priorities. Each program completes and submits an annual review of its progress toward the previous year's goals. That document is used to determine ways to improve the program. An action plan, budgets, and new annual goals are then established through a review of documents and interviews. It appears there is broad-based knowledge of the institutional planning process. Planning documents are disseminated widely. Through the three-level college institutional planning process the college implements its goals. Goals are articulated widely to the campus community (1B.2).

While the team found the annual strategic planning reports revealed many interventions, implementation of activities, and some success in accomplishing stated goals, COS should use additional detailed student achievement and student learning outcomes data to further inform the program review, institutional planning, and college decision-making processes (1B.3).

Although there has been progress in implementing a broad-based planning process, the evidence does not support an ongoing effective data-driven systematic process of focused evaluation and planning. When available, data are generated differently in different departments and they are not regularly analyzed and interpreted for use by the college community. COS, without a college researcher for a number of years, acknowledges it could do a better job of reporting assessment results, compiling research, and making institutional improvements to the college constituency groups, students, and community (IB.4).

Through the planning process described above, COS purchased an online SLO management program (TracDat) to assist faculty in assessment of student learning outcomes. Faculty members have begun measuring SLOs and were expected to enter the data into TracDat. Based on the team's review of planning documents, interviews, and observations, the team has no evidence showing faculty use this program. It appears that the college use of TracDat has been discontinued. Thus, results from assessment of any SLOs are not readily available (IB.4).

Although the college collects some quantitative data, research-based assessments are not done regularly. Information that may inform assessment of program, services, and instructional quality is not collected or reported in a regular, reliable, and organized manner (IB.3, IB.5). COS periodically reviews and modifies its cycle of planning and allocation of resources (IB.6), but does not assess its evaluation mechanisms for their effectiveness in improving institutional practices and student learning (IB.7).

## **Conclusions**

The institution demonstrates an awareness regarding the need to produce and support student learning, recognizes the need to measure that learning, and expresses intent to assess how well learning is occurring. There does not, however, seem to be an effective, systematic, mission and data-driven planning effort to implement changes to improve student learning.

The institution organizes some key processes and allocates its resources to support student learning.

The institution demonstrates its effectiveness by providing evidence of the completion of course and program student learning outcomes and sharing evidence of institution and program planning.

The institution strives to use ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning to further refine its key processes and improve student learning.

The institution has developed a framework for maintaining an ongoing, collegial, self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes.

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## **Recommendations**

### 1. Research Capacity

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends the college increase the research capacity of the institution to conduct the college's research agenda, to assist college staff with the use of research-based information in decision-making, and to ensure that the college's planning and resource-allocation processes are infused with relevant and timely information on the effectiveness of the institutional practices and student learning (IB.2, IB.3, IB.6, IIA.1.C, IIB.4, IIIA, IIIB, IIIC, IIID.3, IVB.2.B).

### 2. Program Review

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends that all college departments and programs complete the annual program review and strengthen its linkages to the college's planning and resource allocation processes. The team further recommends that the college make its mission statement and detailed student achievement data central in the dialogue and reflection that informs the program review, institutional planning, and all college decision-making processes (IB.1 – 7, IIA.2, IIB.3, IIB.4, IIC.2).

### 3. Evaluation

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends the college conduct regular, rigorous and inclusive evaluation(s) of its participatory governance, program review, and planning processes. The results of the evaluation(s) should be broadly communicated to the campus community and the Board of Trustees, and the evaluation results should be central to process improvement (IB.1, IB.3, IB.6, IIC.2, IVA.5).

## **Commendations**

### 1. Planning Days

The college is commended for the twice-a-year college-wide Planning Days and the direct role they play in promoting dialogue and effecting positive change at COS (IB.1, IB.4, IVA.1, IVA.2.A).



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## **STANDARD II**

### **Student Learning Programs and Service**

#### **A. Instructional Programs**

##### **General Observations**

Section IIA of the Self Study Report is complete, clear, consistent, and mostly transparent, though it sometimes makes statements unsupported by specific evidence. The college has implemented a new program review process that requires identification of student learning outcomes (SLOs) for courses and programs. The college is well along in the assessment of SLOs at the course level; assessment at the program and institutional levels is still undergoing refinement, and the step from assessment to improvement has yet to be taken.

Despite several changes in leadership, the college has maintained and improved its functioning since the last accreditation visit. It has added new facilities, technology, and programs to address student needs: one outstanding example is the new Rural Health Care Institute at the Yreka site, which incorporates sustainable building principles, advanced distance learning modalities, and a state-of-the-art Nursing lab. It has created a comprehensive student web portal for college information and services, and provides library and learning support services for its students.

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

College of the Siskiyous (COS) offers high-quality instructional programs in recognized and emerging fields of study. It offers traditional academic and occupational programs that culminate in degrees, certificates, and transfer to higher education institutions. It offers a full range of courses, including basic skills and fee-based community service classes. The new Emergency Services Training Center (Weed) and Rural Health Sciences Institute (Yreka) are laudable innovations that match college offerings with needs specific to the communities it serves, providing training for service and employment within the region (IIA.1).

COS is a small college set in a sparsely-populated, rural, low-income area. The college uses several methods to ensure that its courses meet the needs of its communities, using enrollment information, discussions during the curriculum process, advisory committees, student surveys, COMPASS and CalPASS to assess incoming students' needs. Career and technical education advisory committees review their programs once or twice yearly; nevertheless, only half the responders to the fall 2008 Accreditation Survey

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agreed with the statement that the college “is careful to ensure there is alignment of the program or course purpose and the needs of the student population.” The ethnic diversity of the student population (27% non-Caucasian) is greater than that of the county as a whole (12% non-Caucasian); the Report does not state how the college encourages underrepresented populations to attend COS or address their particular needs. The Self Study states that Siskyou County has a higher-than-average poverty level, and Basic Skills faculty suggest that non-native speakers in tribal and migrant locations may need ESL classes; no evidence is offered of assessment of these particular student needs (IIA.1.a.).

COS makes a concerted effort to offer instruction to students in remote areas who would not otherwise have access to college-level education. Because of the sparse population of the county, the college makes extensive and growing use of distance learning (DL) technologies, including online, hybrid, and synchronous interactive videoconferencing classes in up to six locations simultaneously. Remote locations include high schools and community centers. The total number of DL courses grew from 34 in 2001-02 to 158 in 2008-9; the spring 2010 schedule of classes lists 19 videoconferencing classes and 57 online and hybrid classes. The college offers DL training to faculty and staff in the form of flex workshops, one-to-one mentoring, and a manual, and provides on-site instructional technicians to assist students and monitor technology. Counselors, high school principals, and community members are consulted on which courses are needed, and the curriculum process reviews proposed DL courses for appropriateness and student demand. Student satisfaction with DL courses has been assessed by student surveys; the data were compiled and sent to the Chancellor’s Office but the results were not systematically used to improve services to students. Student success in DL courses varies: success in videoconferencing classes is comparable to that in traditional classes, while success in online classes is much lower (IIA.1.b).

In 2007-08, the college adopted an annual program review process, replacing an earlier six-year cycle of program review; the new process began to be implemented in 2008-09. The new Instructional Program Review template instructs each program to identify SLOs at the course and program level, identify assessment methods, report results of assessment, and discuss whether and how the assessment results are used for improvement of instruction. The template also has space dedicated for mapping course and program SLOs to general education and institutional SLOs. A web page on the college’s web site offers useful resources for creating and assessing SLOs, but it has not been updated since 2008. Fee-based 300-level community classes do not undergo program review and are not required to identify or assess SLOs.

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Program Reviews are reviewed by the deans, who are to give feedback to the programs, though some faculty report that feedback is not always given. The Vice President of Instruction submits Program Reviews in summary form to the President's Advisory Council (PAC), along with any Action Plans requiring funding that arise from them. Their progress from there is not well charted: there is no evidence of a systematic means of deciding on Action Plans or reporting on their funding. In 2008-09, no Action Plans were required to be submitted, since the college did not have funding to complete them.

As of fall 2006, official course outlines require student learning outcomes as well as relevant teaching methods and assessment strategies. New course proposals and updated or revised course outlines must conform to this new template. The Self Study's statements that course outline updates were far behind schedule was apparently inaccurate: the course list generated by the curriculum software program shows that almost all courses have been updated within three years as required. The current software program for creating and updating course outlines, Course Master, requires each course to identify one or more SLOs and allows easy mapping to general education SLOs. The college is about to move to a commercial curriculum program, CurricUNET.

Nearly all courses have identified SLOs; individual instructors select assessment techniques from a list of several possible methods. However, far fewer courses have begun to assess outcomes, and improvements based on assessment results are not yet regularly implemented or evaluated.

Program-level SLOs have been identified and are published in the catalog (pp. 29-143). General education SLOs have been identified but are not widely published; they do not appear in the current catalog. General education and program SLOs are embedded in course SLOs; that is, they are considered to be met when course SLOs are met. Some certificates and degrees do not have SLOs distinct from program SLOs; the relationship of certificate/degree SLOs to program SLOs needs clarification. Four institutional SLOs have been identified. Faculty members have been instructed to measure one institutional SLO and enter the data into an online SLO management program (TracDat), but faculty are not using this program, and its use has been discontinued. Thus, results from assessment of the institutional SLO are not available (IIA.1.c).

The college assures the quality and improvement of its instructional courses and programs by relying on faculty expertise to design student learning outcomes, deliver instruction, and assess student learning. The college

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follows established, faculty-driven procedures to create, schedule, and deliver courses. The course outline of record template, created by faculty, requires SLOs, methods of instruction, and methods of evaluation; however, the Faculty Handbook does not explicitly require faculty to measure SLOs or give instruction on creating or assessing SLOs, nor is faculty evaluation linked to assessment of SLOs. The institution of department chairs (in spring 2008) may provide guidance and motivation to consistently assess outcomes and use the resultant data to improve programs (IIA.2.a).

The college relies on faculty and, for Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, on advisory committees to identify outcomes, but regular assessment is not yet in place, and there are no consequences for faculty who fail to submit SLO assessments. Further, program reviews for programs which are taught only by adjunct faculty must be written by full-time faculty in other disciplines; the Self Study declares this practice to be unsustainable but does not propose a solution (IIA.2.b).

The college relies on the faculty, through the Curriculum Committee's review of new and updated courses, and on advisory committees to ensure quality, breadth, depth, and rigor of education (IIA.2.c).

The college uses a mix of remediation, traditional classroom instruction, and distance learning modalities to serve its diverse student population. Tutoring and self-paced remediation are offered in the Academic Success Center, which comprises the Reading, Writing, and Math Labs and a computer lab. The Self Study offers no evidence that use of these academic support services actually increases student success. Basic skills and transfer-level courses use a variety of teaching methodologies to reach students with different learning styles.

The college's Accountability Report for Community Colleges (ARCC) Self Assessment 2010 states, "The Basic Skills Improvement Rate is still relatively low in 2008-09." The Reading Lab coordinator states that staffing and hours in the Reading Lab have been significantly reduced. The Basic Skills Task force and a smaller all-faculty basic skills committee do not always agree on the best uses of Basic Skills funding. The college offers a Summer Bridge program, including counseling and math and English classes, for about 100 incoming students, mostly athletes.

Despite its small faculty and large, sparsely-populated community, the college has been highly creative in using state-of-the-art technology, including multi-site videoconferencing, to serve its students (IIA.2.d).

Courses are reviewed by the Curriculum Committee once every three years.

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Approval through the course review process is not linked to achievement of learning outcomes. Advisory committees meet once or twice a year to discuss and review their programs for relevance and currency (IIA.2.e).

Research and analysis are an institution-wide problem. The program review process is intended as the locus and motivation for identifying and assessing SLOs for courses and programs. However, there is no evidence that course or program SLOs are regularly or systematically assessed, or that SLO assessment is used for improvement. The loss of the institutional researcher and outcomes assessment specialist positions in 2008 have hindered progress toward completing the cycle of assessment and improvement, as programs do not have access to consistent or contextualized data for program review. Although the college purchased an SLO tracking system (TracDat) in 2008, it is not used by faculty to record course or program assessment data; this makes it hard to compare student learning data from within a program or from one program to another.

While program review documents show evidence of assessment in many courses and programs, there is as yet no clearly defined pathway from assessment to improvement. Once program reviews are forwarded to deans, and thence to their Level II Councils and the PAC, there is no evidence of regular feedback (IIA.2.f).

The college does not use departmental course and/or program examinations (IIA.2.g).

Credit is awarded consistent with generally accepted norms in higher education (IIA.2.h).

Degrees and certificates are awarded based on students' success in the required courses, all of which have identified student learning outcomes. The college recognizes the need to clarify the relationships between course-, degree/certificate-, and program-level SLOs (IIA.2.i).

The college's general education philosophy was developed and approved by the Academic Senate in 2004 and has been modified several times since then; for example, Diversity was added as a new general education area in 2005. The general education philosophy is published in the 2009-10 college catalog (p. 22). The college relies on its faculty, through the Curriculum Committee's review of new and updated courses, to determine whether a course is to be included in the general education curriculum (IIA.3).

A review of selected course outlines and syllabi confirms that the college's general education courses include the principal areas of knowledge –

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humanities and fine arts, natural sciences, social sciences – and each of the general education courses includes content that supports the student’s acquisition of knowledge in that area, as well as methodological skills (IIA.3.a).

General education courses develop students’ oral and written communication skills, information competency, computer literacy, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis, and the overall ability to acquire and critically examine knowledge through a variety of means (IIA.3.b).

The college offers students a wide variety of in-class and extracurricular means of developing civility and interpersonal skills, skills as an ethical human being, respect for cultural diversity, historical and aesthetic sensitivity, and the willingness to assume civic, political, and social responsibilities. These means include student clubs, student-sponsored activities, domestic and international study trips, and work experience associated with students’ credit courses. The college’s student code of conduct and plagiarism policy (Board Policy 5500) reinforces the emphasis on ethical principles. The college demonstrates its commitment to this standard by selecting as its college-wide Institutional SLO, “Students will take responsibility for their learning,” to be assessed across all instructional and student services programs in 2009-10 (IIA.3.c).

Each degree requires at least 18 credit units in a major or area of emphasis (IIA.4).

Each of the college’s vocational areas of study, which cover 24 different certificates, is reviewed and approved through the Curriculum Committee process, augmented by a labor market study, approval of the advisory committee, local or regional employer survey, and approval by the California Community College Chancellor’s Office. Vocational programs also require separate approval by the Board of Trustees. Three of these programs prepare students for state or national licensure examinations (Vocational Nursing, Registered Nursing, Paramedic), and two others prepare students for state certification (Fire, Administration of Justice). The college’s vocational programs meet local and state requirements. The Self Study describes the college as surveying its former vocational students every two years to assess their later educational and employment status, but provides evidence only from a 2000 survey. Instead, the college’s CTE programs monitor exiting students’ placement into nursing, EMT/Paramedic, fire, and administration of justice employment immediately after they leave the programs (IIA.5).

Clear, accurate information about individual courses, programs of study, and

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transfer policies are available to students on the college's web site, in the catalog, and in the printed and online schedule of classes. A wide variety of detailed brochures describes particular programs and support services, including transfer assistance; these are periodically updated by the appropriate instructional faculty and counselors. Other sources of information are the Student Handbook, group orientations, in-class handouts, and the online ASSIST/CAN system. For faculty, the same information (and much more) is available in the Faculty Handbook and the Curriculum Development Handbook.

The 2009-10 catalog contains detailed information on each degree and certificate program, including the general purpose, the content covered, specific course and unit requirements, and expected student learning outcomes (pp. 27-145). Syllabi describe learning outcomes drawn from the course outline of record. Instructional faculty report that each student receives the syllabus on or near the first day of instruction, and many instructors use a portion of the first day of classes to review in detail the course syllabus, including grade expectations, deadlines, etc. (IIA.6).

The catalog describes its policies for transfer of credit from other institutions (p. 148), reflecting the college's Administrative Procedure 4237 on transfer of credit. The college also accepts credits from "alternative education" sources such as U.S. Military schools, Advanced Placement high school courses, and selected CLEP and International Baccalaureate courses. The college does not give unit credit for prior work experience or life experience. Where the credit being received by the college is part of an articulation agreement with another institution, the Articulation Officer ensures that the learning outcomes are similar to the college's course(s) (IIA.6.a).

The catalog describes the student's catalog rights in case degree or certificate requirements change while the student is enrolled, including the right to petition for course substitutions (p. 150). Administrative Procedure 4021 describes how an instructional program would be discontinued. The Self Study describes the elimination of a program in 2006 based on lack of physical facilities and qualified faculty; students were allowed to finish the program before it was eliminated (IIA.6.b).

All college publications and web pages are reviewed periodically and updated or corrected where necessary. The college has a policy for the regular review and updating of Board policies and related administrative procedures (IIA.6.c, IVB.1.e).

The Board-adopted policy on academic freedom and the objective presentation of material (Board Policy 4030) is published in the college

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catalog (p. 5), the Faculty Handbook, and on the college web site. The college informs students of its expectations in regard to academic honesty and behavior in general in the Student Handbook as well as in the catalog (pp. 151-152). The student code of conduct is also codified in Board Policy 5500 and Administrative Procedure 5500. Interviews with faculty, staff, and administrators confirm that the college makes clear its commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge (IIA.7).

Similarly, the college states its commitment to academic freedom and professional ethics in Board Policy 4030 and in the Faculty Handbook. The Handbook is reviewed with new full-time faculty upon hiring and with adjunct faculty during the adjunct faculty orientation. The instructional deans have the responsibility of ensuring that all instructors are aware of the college's commitment and expectations. The accreditation survey confirms the Self Study's assertion that faculty and students recognize the faculty's adherence to these standards. The Faculty Handbook was last updated in 2007; it should be updated regularly, as is other information provided to faculty (IIA.7.a).

The college spells out in detail its expectations of acceptable student behavior in Board Policy 5500 and the Student Code of Conduct, including sanctions or penalties for violating the Code. Faculty have access to turnitin.com to check for plagiarism. The Student Code of Conduct is published in the catalog (pp. 151-152) and in the Student Handbook, and is reviewed during new-student orientation. Students' rights and responsibilities are similarly specified, including a process for filing a complaint or grievance (IIA.7.b).

As a public institution, the college does not seek to instill specific beliefs or worldviews. Board Policy 4030 requires that all instructional material be presented in a fair, balanced manner, with respect for differing views. The college's expectations and requirements of its staff, faculty, and students are clearly specified in Board policies and in staff and student handbooks (IIA.7.c).

The college does not offer curriculum or instruction in foreign locations (IIA.8).

## **Conclusions**

College of the Siskiyous has made tremendous progress on the implementation of SLOs since its last accreditation site visit in 2004. Likewise, the college has made considerable progress on utilizing SLOs as the basis for making institutional change. However, COS still has a way to go



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to fully meet the Standard's expectations of systematically assessing instructional programs and providing evidence that SLOs are used to inform decision making and improve student learning. Additionally, although it is apparent that COS has taken numerous steps to meet the previous accreditation site visit team's recommendations in regards to meeting student needs, especially in the use of advanced teleconferencing technology and other technologies, there is a lack of evidence on the evaluation of the impact of these efforts.

## **Recommendations**

See Recommendation #1 (2010)

### **4. Assessment of Student Needs**

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends the college conduct regular, systematic evaluations of its students' learning and support needs and of the campus environment in regards to diversity and ensure that instruction and support services meet those identified needs, regardless of location (IIA.1.b, IIA.2.d, IIA.3.C, IIB.3.a, IIB.3.D, IIB.4).

See Recommendation #2 (2010)

### **5. Student Learning Outcomes**

The team recommends the college build on its recent efforts to reach a proficiency level in the development and assessment of student learning outcomes by 2012 and establish a timeline to do so. Specifically, the team recommends that the college:

- Complete the development of student learning outcomes for all courses and programs, including basic skills and distance education, and all learning support and student services programs
  - Develop and implement timelines for the continuous and regular assessment of all course, program and institutional student learning outcomes
  - Use those assessments as occasions for regular dialogue about improving learning at the college
  - Link evidence of SLO assessment to planning and resource allocation.
- (IIA.1.c, IIA.2.a, IIA.2.b, IIA.2.f, IIA.2.i, IIA.3, IIB)

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## **Commendations**

### 2. Advanced Technology

The college is commended on its proactive use of advanced technology to support the delivery of programs and services to students regardless of location. This investment in advanced video conferencing and other distance learning methodologies demonstrate its commitment in reaching its geographically remote student population (IIA.1.b, IIIC.1.b).

### 3. Improved Facilities

The college is commended on its commitment to the development of new green-building facilities that are improving the environment in which students learn. In particular the team commends the college on its development of Career and Technical Education facilities and its foresight in preparing students for jobs in this region (IIA.2.f, IIA.3, IIIB.1.a, IIIC.1.a).

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## **B. Student Support Services**

### **General Observations**

The college offers a comprehensive program of student support services that is developed and implemented by a team of talented professionals. The student service programs work well together to offer high-quality services while avoiding duplication of services. Consistent with its mission statement, the college recruits and admits diverse students who are able to benefit from its programs. The college partners with local school districts, college and university outreach programs, and community agencies to help promote a college-going culture in its service area. Via these partnerships, middle and high school students as well as adults in remote areas receive information about the college's education and training programs. Student services staff meet with students in person or via telephone or videoconferencing at distance learning sites.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The college provides quality support services to support student learning, regardless of location or means of delivery. Student services staff from programs such as counseling and Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS) meet with students in person or via videoconferencing at distance learning sites. However, the college does not use data to systematically evaluate the student support needs of students at the Yreka campus or other distance locations. Several comments in the accreditation survey remark that fewer services are available to students at remote locations (IIB.1).

The 2009-11 catalog is current, complete, easy to use, and well structured. The "Navigator: Steps to Success" clearly outlines the specific matriculation steps that prospective students should take, from applying for admission through course and program completion. The catalog contains:

- the required general information: official name, address, telephone number, and web site, address of the institution; educational mission; course, program, and degree offerings; academic calendar and program length; academic freedom statement; available student financial aid; available learning resources; names and degrees of administrators and faculty; and names of Governing Board Members (IIB.2.a);
- requirements: admissions; fees; degree, certificates, graduation and transfer requirements (IIB.2.b); and
- major policies affecting students (IIB.2.c).

The catalog states that there are other policies and regulations that students

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must follow (p.146), but does not list locations where those policies can be found. The next catalog update should indicate where students can access all college policies (IIB.2.d).

The catalog is published every two years. It is available in print and online. Every two years a Catalog Committee with broad campus representation reviews and updates all information. A catalog editor in the Instruction Office oversees the development of the new catalog, using input for improvements from the Catalog Committee (IIB.2).

Student Services include admissions and records, financial aid, counseling/advising, assessment, orientation, career and transfer services, transfer center, veterans' services, JumpStart, and Student Support Services (SSS). Categorically funded support services include EOPS/CARE, SSS, CalWORKs, DSPS, and MESA. The college identifies the learning support needs of its students and provides services and programs to address those needs.

The college offers services to students regardless of the service location or delivery method. Comprehensive student support services are located on the Weed campus. The Yreka campus provides admissions and registration services. Assessment, counseling, financial aid, and DSPS appointments are available by appointment at Yreka and at the remote sites. The DSPS staff provide intake services by appointment. The Weed Academic Success Center offers adaptive equipment and software for students who require accommodations. Videoconference courses are available with closed-captioning for DSPS students. Fewer services are regularly available at remote locations, though services can be provided via videoconferencing, email, or telephone contact (IIB.3.a).

The college creates an environment that encourages personal and civic responsibility, as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development for all of its students. The college adopted the institution-wide SLO of Responsibility, developed instruments, and implemented it during the fall 2008 semester. Financial Aid and Admissions and Records used their internal databases to assess the institution-wide SLO of Responsibility, while counseling and the categorical programs developed a rubric to measure it (IIB.3.b).

The college evaluates its counseling and advising programs to support student development. Counselors and advisors hold staff meetings twice a month. As the budget allows, they attend professional development conferences and use internet tools to stay current on community college teaching and counseling topics. Counselors provide ongoing training to the

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academic advisors (IIB.3.c).

The college offers a variety of programs and services to support student appreciation of diversity. These include student clubs, student-sponsored activities, and domestic and international study trips. A Diversity requirement was added to the general education program in fall 2005. As of spring 2009, 13 courses had been accepted as satisfying this Diversity requirement; these courses are offered regularly so students can satisfy the requirement. To enhance student understanding of diversity, the college's Diversity Council sponsors special cultural events, hosts multicultural artists and guest speakers, and hosts study abroad in Argentina. In 2007-08, COS students responded favorably on a Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) when asked if the college contributed to their understanding of people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds. However, there is no evidence of data collection, analysis, and implementation of institutionalized practices that deepen the college's understanding and appreciation of diversity. Among the best practices recommended to achieve these goals are targeted student focus groups, climate surveys, cultural competence training, and focused faculty and staff development. The college may wish to consider developing an institutional Diversity plan, with goals and measurable outcomes, supported by the administration and broader constituency groups, to further integrate diversity into the college values, policies, procedures, and practices to enhance the learning environment and create a climate of mutual respect and appreciation (IIB.3.d).

The college evaluates its admissions and placement instruments to validate their effectiveness while minimizing bias. Placement processes are evaluated as required by the California Community College Chancellor's Office to ensure their consistency and effectiveness. The college uses the COMPASS test for English, reading, and math placement; it will soon purchase the COMPASS ESL segment for ESL placement. Discipline faculty validate cut-scores and report that while COMPASS does not make fine distinctions in math and ESL competencies, it is sufficient for the college's purposes (II.B.3.e).

Board Policy 5040 governs the maintenance, security, and release of student records. The Technology Services Department maintains a secure computer system, which includes registration and transcript information. Procedures permit the routine back-up of records onto microfiche. Electronic records, which include registration and transcripts, are backed up daily, and the back-up tapes are stored off-site in a secure location. Students are notified of college policies regarding privacy rights and release of student information in the catalog and Student Handbook (IIB.3.f).

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The college evaluates student support services to ensure they meet student needs. An external review of categorical programs was conducted by the California Community College Chancellor's Office in 2007. Student services used the results of the 2007-08 CCSSE survey and the 2008 Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) survey to improve services to students. For example, SENSE results were used to improve the Siskiyous Orientation, Advising, Registration (SOAR) student orientation program in 2009.

All programs are reviewed annually through a program review process, which follows a regularly scheduled timeline. Financial Aid and Admissions and Records use data from their internal databases to assess the institution-wide SLO of Responsibility. Counseling and the categorical programs developed a rubric to measure the Responsibility SLO; individual questionnaires are filed in student files for later reference, but the data are not collected and analyzed for overall program improvement.

The college does not use data to systematically evaluate the student support needs of students at the Yreka campus or other distance locations. For eight years, the Distance Learning Center administered the California Community College Chancellor's Office Distance Education Student Satisfaction Survey in the videoconference classes at Yreka and other sites. The data were compiled and sent to the California Community College Chancellor's Office but the results were not used by the college to assess and improve services to students (II.B.4).

## **Conclusions**

This standard is mostly met. The visiting team confirmed that COS Student Services enhanced student learning by creating and maintaining a supportive learning environment. Students acknowledged repeatedly that the services they received were exceptional and the faculty and staff within Student Services were friendly and helpful. COS could augment its exceptional student services by evaluating the effectiveness of programs already implemented aimed at providing appropriate services for all students at all locations, as per the college's mission statement.

## **Recommendations**

See Recommendations #1, 2, 4, and 5 (2010).

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## **C. Library and Learning Support Services**

### **General Observations**

The college library based at the central Weed campus is rated high in a student satisfaction survey. There is a formal and informal courier system to deliver library materials to the Yreka campus and more remote satellite sites; however, there is no provision of in-person library services to students and staff at those locations. The other learning services are comprised of the computer lab, Writing Lab, and tutoring services available at both the Weed and Yreka sites. Reading and Math Labs are open at the Weed Campus.

The library participates in the program review process, which includes program-level SLOs. The continued assessment of these learning outcomes will be important to the maintenance and improvement of the college's library services in view of the increasing use of technology and need for additional resources. Learning Support Services administers surveys to indicate satisfaction and to inform the planning process.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The library's mission statement defines the criteria for material and equipment selection. There is a mechanism for faculty to request purchases for the library. The learning support services faculty and staff meet regularly to review software, instructional materials, and equipment to support student learning. The library maintains an active advisory board to provide feedback and direction. Reductions in funding have impaired the library's ability to provide current and new materials to support student learning and achievement (IIC.1.a).

Learning outcomes for the general education program include English composition/information competency. Courses meeting the Area A requirement are required to incorporate and assess English composition/information competency outcomes. An information competency SLO is identified as a course-level outcome for English 1A and 1C. Assessments have been administered and results reported, but analysis for improvement has not begun (IIC.1.b).

The reading and writing lab faculty provide training on information competency. The library was formerly able to provide limited instruction to students in information competency skills, through library orientations, one-on-one reference interactions, and classroom instruction. However, since the writing of the Self Study, the library has lost its reference librarian and no longer has faculty, full-time or adjunct, to teach information competency

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skills. According to the Self Study, the current staffing shortage prevents the library from adequately meeting student needs. The English Department program plan for 2008-09 surmises that its unsatisfactory student learning outcomes in information literacy for English 1C may be due to the loss of the reference librarian (IIC.1.b).

Student surveys from the library, reading lab, writing lab, and tutoring services in the Academic Success Center all indicate high levels of satisfaction. Many library resources, including subscription databases and E-books, are available to all students at all times regardless of location. Physical materials can be requested and sent to the Yreka campus. This enables the library to expand service beyond its single physical location at the Weed campus. However, the ongoing funding that supported the purchase of electronic resources was eliminated in July 2009, and there is no evidence of an alternative funding source to maintain access to a core level of electronic materials to support student learning regardless of location. Budget reductions have further necessitated the elimination of the interlibrary loan service (IIC.1.c).

A writing lab, computer lab, and tutoring services are available to students at both the Weed and Yreka campuses. The Weed campus additionally provides reading and math Labs. Satellite locations are supported through online, telephone, and postal exchanges. The Weed writing lab conducts limited workshops via videoconferencing facilities. Hours and services in library and learning support areas have been substantially reduced because of staffing shortages and budget reductions, thus reducing their ability to meet student needs (IIC.1.c).

The library and learning support areas rely upon campus maintenance services and technology services for general maintenance, cleaning, security, and repair of the building and equipment. Service contracts are kept for most office equipment and for the integrated library system. Suitable security measures are taken to ensure the integrity of data, systems, and equipment (IIC.1.d).

Customary agreements and contracts are used by the library to support operations and purchase resources. The library routinely evaluates its services as part of its student survey. The 2009 survey indicated 90 percent satisfaction with the library's collections and equipment. The loss of the interlibrary loan service will be assessed during the next annual library survey (IIC.1.e).

The library has completed program reviews as part of the college's planning and resource allocation processes. The reading, writing, and math labs do



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not complete a program reviews separate from their discipline departments; hence there are no specific program-level outcomes associated with the labs. There were multiple comments by library and learning resource staff that the linkage between actions plans (identified as part of program review) and resource allocation is weak (IIC.2).

The library has developed four program-level SLOs for services and has implemented an assessment cycle through annual surveys and questionnaires. The program review process incorporates SLO identification, assessments, and results. The library's program review indicates that the library has not been able to continue supporting the implementation and assessment of the instructional English composition/information literacy SLO and information competency graduation requirement because of the lack of a faculty librarian. The reading, writing, and math labs and tutoring services support the assessment of course-level SLOs in the English and Reading departments' program reviews. The reading and writing labs and tutoring services evaluate their services through student surveys and faculty and staff feedback; the math lab does not have a formal process to evaluate its services (IIC.2).

## **Conclusions**

Review of library and learning support services indicates a level of success in supporting student learning throughout the college's service area. Staff members are positive and dedicated to providing services to support student achievement and create a welcoming environment. Student surveys have indicated that library and learning support services have a high level of student satisfaction. However, limited funding has caused a significant reduction of staffing, services, and library resources and materials to meet student needs.

## **Recommendations**

See Recommendation #2 (2010)

See Recommendation #3 (2010)

### **6. Library and Learning Support Services**

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends the college evaluate library and learning support services staffing to provide adequate student access and support at all locations and for all delivery methods and maintain sufficient physical and electronic materials to enhance student learning (IIC.1.a, IIC.1.b, IIC.1.c).

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## **STANDARD III Resources**

### **A. Human Resources**

#### **General Observations**

College of the Siskiyous (COS) has a dedicated, qualified staff that is widely viewed as collegial and supportive of student learning. It has longstanding hiring processes that lead to the employment of excellent staff. The college has evaluation procedures delineated in its collective bargaining agreements that detail how evaluations for each employee group take place. Ethics statements are in place for faculty and are being developed for other campus groups.

The college administers the personnel policies and procedures through established hiring practices that are consistently followed and equitably applied by trained hiring committee members for filling vacancies in positions approved by the President/Superintendent and the Board. An Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Hiring Committee serves as a resource to ensure compliance with equity and diversity in conjunction with Board Policies Chapter 7100 and 7120. The college continues to work on its established broad goal to achieve greater ethnic diversity among employees.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

College of the Siskiyous (COS) appears to have an adequate process to ensure the recruitment and selection of qualified personnel meet standards established by the state and district. Board policy 7120 on recruitment and hiring outlines the basic regulations for employment and procedures for the selection of staff and faculty. The college has standard written job descriptions for all employee categories. Human Resources policies are scheduled to be reviewed by the President's Advisory Council (PAC) this fiscal year and most of the Human Resources procedures have been updated and are in draft form (IIIA.1a).

Procedures are designed to ensure that all hires meet the minimum qualifications advertised in the job announcement. The faculty collective bargaining agreement indicates that in hiring full-time faculty, the discipline faculty determines and evaluates applicants' minimum qualifications. Faculty and classified positions are reviewed for compliance and currency as vacancies occur. Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are publicly stated in position announcements that include the job definition, duties and responsibilities, qualifications, conditions of

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employment, application procedures, and deadlines (IIIA.1a).

The 2008 Accreditation Self Study Survey Results Report, 73 percent responded, "yes, all of the time" or "yes, some of the time" to the statement, "At COS, the hiring process is fair and objective and established policies are followed."

The college has written criteria for the evaluation of faculty. Tenured faculty are evaluated every three years while non-tenured faculty are evaluated their first, second, and fourth year. Adjunct faculty are evaluated every six years. The college states the evaluation process is well established and consistently carried out. All classified staff are tracked in the Human Resources Department (IIIA.1b).

A 2008 Accreditation Self Study Employee Survey Report indicated that 81.3 percent of survey respondents strongly agreed, agreed or were neutral to the statement, "The evaluation of all employees is systematic and conducted at stated intervals."

COS' faculty members are engaged in a dialogue about student learning outcomes. As part of program review, departments and disciplines are at the early stages of assessing program and course-level student learning outcomes. The faculty evaluation process includes a link to the assessment of student learning outcomes. The collective bargaining agreement with the faculty directs the review of faculty; however, out of the seventeen criteria listed, only one addresses student achievement of learning outcomes. A faculty member will be evaluated on where they provide student learning outcomes (SLO's) including appropriate assessments (IIIA.1c).

COS has a Faculty Professional Ethics Statement that is included in the Faculty Handbook; however, no specific codes of professional ethics exist for classified staff or management. COS' Human Resources Department has indicated the District and the Management and Classified Bargaining Unit will develop a Professional Code of Ethics to ensure the entire staff of the college is covered by a code of ethics to be adopted by the Board (IIIA.1d).

COS has an appropriate number of adequately trained staff: 46 full-time faculty, 155 part-time faculty, 117 staff, and 6 administrators. Qualified full-time faculty teach more than 75 percent of the faculty contact hours at COS. One exception, however, was indicated on a recent Maintenance, Operations and Transportation (MOT) survey where respondents identified that more custodial and grounds staff are needed (IIIA.2, IIIA.3a).

To ensure equitable treatment for employees, complaint and grievance

procedures are in place as well as proactive measures such as employee workshops. Policies and procedures are reviewed to ensure compliance with federal and state personnel regulations and laws (IIIA.3a).

Official personnel files for all employees, including evaluations, are maintained and secured in locked cabinets under the control and within sight of the Human Resources Department. Procedures are followed to limit access to personnel files and ensure confidentiality (IIIA.3b).

The district demonstrates a commitment to promoting diversity in hiring practices in spite of the ethnic demographics of the region. That being said, the California Community College Chancellor's Office Employee Category Ethnicity Distribution Report for the fall 2008 indicates the following statistics for the College of the Siskiyous:

Employee Group	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Native American	Pacific Islander	White	Other
Educational Administrator			16.67%			83.33%	
Tenured Faculty	6.52%		8.70%	2.17%		80.43%	2.17%
Academic Temporary	.65%	1.94%	3.23%	.65%		89.03%	4.52%
Classified Professional	3.57%		3.57%	3.57%	3.57%	85.71%	3.57%
Classified Support	2.25%	2.25%	5.62%	2.25%		85.39%	2.25%

Students, faculty, and staff are offered an array of opportunities to be involved in training and celebrations related to issues of ethnic diversity. COS needs to update the District's Equal Employment Opportunity Plan to incorporate the requirements of the new State model plan. Recent retirements have reduced the membership on the EEO Hiring Committee. The college has indicated it will identify and provide training for new EEO Hiring Committees representatives in order to increase the number of individuals available to serve on hiring committees (IIIA.4a and IIIA.4b).

In the 2008 Accreditation Self Study Employee Survey Results, 79.3 percent responded "strongly agree" or "agree" to the statement "The general college climate is respectful and responsive to a diverse educational and cultural campus environment (IIIA.4c).

Students are informed of their rights and responsibilities in college policies via the catalog and the student handbook (IIIA.4c).

The District indicates it provides a variety of professional development opportunities and funding sources for all staff to participate in professional

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development. College commitments to ongoing professional development include:

- Faculty flex/staff development provides 13 flex workshops each academic year;
- Faculty sabbatical leaves;
- Professional growth award provides annual stipends to classified staff who meet certain point thresholds for presenting workshops, completing units, and holding elected office.

(IIIA.5)

Given the opportunities for professional development enumerated above, staff survey results indicate that nearly 50 percent of survey respondents did not feel the college provided sufficient support for professional development. Consequently, a district-wide professional development plan is being written to guide professional development activities coordination, fund allocation, and to measure the effectiveness of the professional development activities (IIIA.5a).

COS states the three-level institutional planning process and annual program review help direct the institution in the effective use of the Human Resources Department. These planning and evaluations processes provide opportunities for broad input, from the individual department level up through the college's shared governance body. At every level of this process, human resources needs should be identified and discussed prior to decisions being made. The team could not substantiate that Human Resources planning was integrated into their strategic plan nor that the results of any evaluations were being used for improvement (IIIA.6).

## **Conclusions**

This standard is mostly met. The team noticed only two areas where COS was deficient in meeting Standard IIIA, namely, that the college still has no written ethics codes for classified and management categories of employees (IIIA.1d) and that the college needs to improve the integration of human resources planning into institutional planning in a way that is clear to all college constituencies (IIIA.6). The team also encourages the college to look into expanding professional development opportunities (IIIA.5).

## **Recommendations**

### 7. Strategic Plan

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends the college's new strategic plan fully integrate human resources, facilities, technology, and financial resources to support the college's short- and long-range needs (IIIA.6, IIIB.2, IIIC.1.c, IIID.1.a).

### 8. Ethics Policies

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends the college develop ethics policies for all staff (IIIA.1.d).

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## **B. Physical Resources**

### **General Observations**

College of the Siskiyous' (COS) 260-acre campus is located at the base of Mount Shasta in the town of Weed. Students enjoy a variety of modernized facilities in 23 buildings, including a 600 seat theater, television studio, state-of-the-art fire tower, emergency services training facility, computer labs, library tutoring labs, distance learning facilities, vocational education shops, science labs, gymnasium and a number general purpose classrooms. In addition, COS has a satellite campus located 30 miles north of Weed in Yreka, the site of the college's new Rural Health Science Institute.

In November 2005, the residents of Siskiyou County passed Measure A, a \$31 million bond, to support further development on campus. Key elements the bond has supported are the construction of three new buildings: the Tactical Training Center (Weed), the Emergency Services Training Center (Weed), and the Rural Health Science Institute (Yreka).

The college indicates a departmental program review occurs annually for all District departments. The result of this review feeds upward through the District planning process and shared governance structure. This process culminates in the District Strategic Plan and the Facilities Master Plan. Feedback is also received from various committees within the college. These committees include the Safety Committee, Facilities and Grounds Committee, and the various Level Two Committees within each of the college's major divisions.

COS has a Long Range Site Development Plan, dated March 2000, which addresses physical planning issues, including an assessment of the current conditions, identified needs (at that time) and projected future interests. The District's Scheduled Maintenance Five-Year Plan, December 2001, provides very minimal guidance in the upgrade of physical resources.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The system by which Facilities requests are tracked and completed according to the college is antiquated and cumbersome. Status updates of work order requests are not relayed to the requesters in a timely manner, nor are notices of completion, progress, or prioritization. These findings were expressed in a recent Maintenance, Operations and Transportation (MOT) Department Survey in which over 50 percent of all District employees responded. The overall MOT Department survey was positive in most aspects (IIIB.1).

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The college is encouraged to continue implementing its identified plan, which included the following:

- Implement the Custodial Staffing and Standards recommendation to enable the provision of adequate custodial services to the District and to protect the public's investment.
- The MOT Department will develop formal safety standard for leased facilities.
- The MOT Department will upgrade or replace the MOT Service Request system with a more robust and capable system for data monitoring, report generation, trend analysis, and customer notifications.
- The MOT Department will establish a more effective key control system for improved tracking of keys, unauthorized use of keys, loss control, and effective key retention (IIIB.1.b).

The District indicates that facility condition assessments were last performed by a third party prior to the last Self Study. There is no formal cycle established to ensure that these assessments occur more frequently and that the data are used to formally tie into long-range District planning. The college indicates no formal Facilities Master Plan has been developed (IIIB.2.a).

The college admits that despite the development of the draft Facilities Master Plan and the other planning documents such as the Schedule Maintenance Five Year Plan, there is a need to develop a more formal and structured connection between instructional planning and facilities planning for both short- and long-range needs (IIIB.2.b).

## **Conclusions**

The college mostly meets this standard.

The team found sufficient evidence that the institution plans and maintains its physical resources in a manner that assures effective utilization and continuing quality to support its programs and services offered both on-campus and off-campus (IIIB.1 and IIIB.2).

College of the Siskiyous is currently in the process of developing a thorough facilities and maintenance planning process which is integrated with institutional planning and the college's short-term and long-term educational goals through four mechanisms:

Program reviews and surveys completed at college retreats identify needs for facilities. The strategic planning committee reviews, revises as needed,



and forwards college recommendations for facilities to the district strategic planning committee. Using this information as well as projected classroom usage, a long-term maintenance schedule could be developed for repairs and improvements to buildings and equipment.

The college should develop a formal connection between long-range instructional planning and long-range facilities planning, with the MOT Department involved in all planned instructional changes that involve any facilities-related issue from the beginning of the planning process.

### **Recommendations**

See Recommendation #7 (2010)

### **Commendations**

See Commendation #3 (2010)

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## **C. Technology Resources**

### **General Observations**

It is evident that technology is important to delivering instruction, supporting student learning and providing a backbone to manage the college. The college technology infrastructure is robust to serve multiple instructional locations throughout a rural county.

The Information Technology (IT) department has goals to support the college's mission and institutional outcomes. As part of the college planning process, the Technology Council reviews and prioritizes technology requests identified through program review documents.

IT staff is responsible for the email system, wide area network, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), Banner enterprise management system, videoconferencing, CurricNet, web information systems, media equipment, and support for the computer labs.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Technology clearly plays a valuable role in instruction and student support at COS. The college is presently upgrading its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system from an in-house solution to the commercial Banner system. Significant investment and staff time have been allocated to transition to the new ERP system (IIIC.1).

The college has robust technology services, facilities, hardware and software to support teaching and learning and to enhance the effectiveness of the institution. As part of the program review process, the Shared Governance Council (SGC) evaluates proposals submitted from college departments and areas for technology needs. Approved proposals are implemented by the Information Technology Department. There has been substantial one time funding towards upgrading faculty and staff computers over the last several years (IIIC.1.a).

A technology survey described that 90.8 percent of respondents reported their expectations were exceeded or met and 90.5 percent reported they were able to accomplish their work with very little technology related interruption (IIIC.1.a).

The IT department has responsibility for support of distance education. The college uses the Etudes course management system to facilitate the delivery of distance education. The college has contracted to host the Etudes system

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and provide technical support. Primary technical support is provided by a part-time Online Learning Coordinator that assists faculty and students in using the system and acts as the liaison to Etudes (IIIC.1.a).

In 2005 the training service supported by the Technology Learning Center (TLC) ended, limiting the college's ability to provide on-going systematic training to faculty and staff. The 2008 Accreditation Self Study Employee Survey indicates that 56 percent of employees agree or strongly agree that the college provides adequate software program training. The college has responded to training needs by offering one time trainings and flex day activities on topics including Dreamweaver, posting grades, Microsoft Office 2007, and webpage development (IIIC.1.b).

Faculty training regarding distance education and using the Etudes system is supported by the part time Online Learning Coordinator position. All instructors are required to complete training before teaching their courses online. There is no staff position to facilitate and manage instructional design training for faculty. Training regarding distance education and Etudes has been offered as part of the college's flex day programs (IIIC.1.b).

The college provides technology training opportunities to students both formally and informally. The computer and writing labs provide instruction on the use of internet, Microsoft Office software, methods of citation, and plagiarism avoidance (IIIC.1.b).

Technology infrastructure and equipment needs are conveyed to the IT department through the Technology Council which prioritizes needs based on program review data. Final decisions are arrived at between dialogue amongst administration, the Instructional Council, and the Technology Council. The college maintains a four-year warranty program for computers and hardware, a license agreement for the Etudes system, and the purchase of a turn-key ERP system (IIIC.1.c).

The planning process has lead to the widespread adoption of technology. The college has several nodes throughout the county. Videoconferencing technology and the Etudes system provide the backbone for offsite instruction. Computers are located in departmental offices, student labs and classrooms, and most faculty and staff offices. The Technology Council is charged to maintain and update the college Technology Plan. Meeting minutes confirm that the council meets regularly (IIIC.1.d).

The Technology Council is the primary forum for college planning regarding technology resources. Technology Council recommendations are integrated with institutional planning through the program review and resource

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allocation processes. The Technology Council is a participatory governance committee that regularly meets to discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of campus technology and to make recommendations for improvement. The 2004-2007 Technology Strategic Plan was developed to support and coordinate college technology needs. The Information Technology Department and the Technology Council are charged with updating the technology plan. Technology Council meeting minutes validate that the updating process has begun (III.c.2).

## **Conclusions**

The college mostly meets this standard. Technology infrastructure is important to the population served by College of the Siskiyous in a vast service area. To address these needs the college has committed to increased student access to technology, facilities that support technology enhanced teaching modalities, and services to support teaching and learning.

The Self Study and college personnel stated the need to identify sustainable funding to support the upgrading and replacement of technology. The college is implementing advanced technology standards, such as VoIP, latest fiber cabling and Power over Ethernet (PoE) to create a robust network environment. As reported in the Self Study, there is a deficiency in providing regular on-going training to personnel. The college is encouraged to evaluate its professional training needs and develop a plan to meet those needs.

It was noted that the college lacks a long-term funding source to support upgrading and replacement of technology. The most recent Technology Plan ended in 2007. The college is currently finalizing the 2008-2013 Information Technology Strategic Plan. The implementation of this plan will help address and guide the distribution of technology resources.

## **Recommendations**

See Recommendation #7 (2010)

## **Commendations**

See Commendation #2 (2010)

See Commendation #3 (2010)

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## **D. Financial Resources**

### **General Observations**

COS relies upon its mission and goals as the foundation for financial planning by using action plans as the base for its planning process. Action plans, which include budgets, are developed by all college units and are utilized in the planning process. The college states the budget planning process starts with the development, by the Business Office, of basic budget assumptions reflecting district goals and current State budget information. These assumptions adhere to important Board-directed concepts of adequate reserves and a balanced budget. The Self-Study indicates that financial planning is integrated into the larger Strategic Master Plan and there is alignment with the college's mission and vision via the use of action plans.

The college indicates the District's Budget Oversight Committee is charged with providing budget recommendations to the administration to ensure optimum fiscal support for the goals identified in the District planning process.

A recent actuarial study of retiree health benefits indicated a liability of 13 million dollars. The district has set aside one million dollars in an irrevocable trust through the California Community College League Joint Powers Association for Retiree Health Benefit.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The processes are in place for all financial plans to be integrated with institutional planning. Action plans, which are an all-level inclusive planning tool, are designed to move sequentially through Levels One, Two, and the President's Advisory Council. In practice, the path of a given action plan is not clearly recorded and ultimate findings are not easily accessible. Action plans, however, are not archived for subsequent review and reference in a methodical, transparent manner (IIID.1.a).

Institutional planning reflects realistic assessment of financial resource availability. For example, in order for the District to accommodate this year's budget reductions, each area was given "target" reductions. Meetings were held with the Level One and Two groups to create the changes to balance the budget. The college experienced ten layoffs as a result of the budget reduction's impact (IIID.1.b).

The institution considers its long-range financial priorities to assure financial stability and clearly identifies and plans for payment of liabilities and

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obligations as evidenced by its current healthy financial reserves (IIID.1.c).

The budget development process as described earlier using the three-level action planning process ensures that all constituents have opportunity to participate in the development of plans and budgets (IIID.1.d).

Documents, such as budgets, audits, and financial plans, indicate that the district has sufficient financial resources to ensure fiscal stability. The documents and interviews with key financial personnel attest to the ability of the district to provide resources to meet the needs of educational programs and services (IIID.2.a).

To ensure fiscal integrity of all funds, the district's independent external auditors perform an annual financial and compliance audit. Audit findings have been responded to in a manner satisfactory to the audit firms (IIID.2.a).

The District Measure A bond funds are audited annually, and no financial or compliance findings have been noted since 2005. The Bond Oversight Committee meets regularly based on reviewed minutes, and there is a special page on the District's website that provides adequate information on the bond measure (IIID.2.a, IIID.2.b).

There are no liability issues unique to this college; the fiscal issues are the same as those faced by other public entities due to the recent economic downturn. The college maintains fiscal protection for its students and employees by monitoring cash flow, maintaining a 13 percent general fund reserve, projecting revenue conservatively, and providing appropriate levels of insurance for the college's visitors and students. The risks incurred by employment practices and civil rights liabilities are managed through training programs for staff (IIID.2.c).

The Business Office coordinates the completion of the annual audits in multiple areas including financial aid, grants, contracts, auxiliary organizations including the foundation, and institutional investments. Existing practices have been found to be adequate to ensure the effective oversight of finances. Any recommendations for improvement in practices are either implemented or evaluated for possible implementation (IIID.2.d).

Responsibility for ensuring that funding from auxiliary organizations, grants, and fund-raising is aligned with college planning and goals is assigned to specific administrators overseeing each type of fund. The check-and-balance system in place is that fund applications and fund distributions are reviewed by more than one office, such as by the grants and contract service office as

well as the college business office (IIID.2.e).

The institution's policies and practices regarding contractual agreements with external entities are aligned with the college's mission. Accountability processes are in place for proper oversight of contractual agreements. This monitoring is accomplished by the individual offices creating these contracts as well as by approval from the Board of Trustees (IIID.2.f).

Although COS has a well developed budget process in place; it does not currently have the capacity to systematically assess the effective use of financial resources or processes, and consequently can not use the results of those evaluations as a basis for improvement (IIID.2.g, IIID.3).

### **Conclusions**

COS mostly meets this standard. As noted above, the college is not regularly evaluating its financial management processes and does not systematically assess the effective use of financial resources. Future iterations of the strategic planning process must ensure that financial planning is linked to the college's short and long term financial needs.

### **Recommendations**

See Recommendation #1 (2010)

See Recommendation #7 (2010)

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## **STANDARD IV Leadership and Governance**

### **A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes**

#### **General Observations**

College of the Siskiyous has established the President's Advisory Council (PAC) and three principal Level Two Councils (Instruction Council, Student Services Council, Technology Council) as the primary shared governance mechanisms at the institution. Through a three-level planning process where all functional units on campus have input into planning decisions via the program review process, the institution is able to identify and clarify institutional goals, learn, and achieve those goals.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

Standard IV.A.1 calls upon institutional leaders to, among other things, ensure that "When ideas for improvement have policy or significant institution-wide implications, systematic participative processes are used to assure effective discussion, planning and implementation." A review of meeting minutes, a variety of college planning documents, staff and student survey findings, and interviews with college leaders and staff members confirmed that the leadership at COS is committed to an institutional atmosphere of what the Standard calls "empowerment, innovation and institutional excellence." There are broad, well-structured opportunities for participation in planning and decision-making. Of particular note are the bi-annual college-wide Planning Days, which all contract faculty and staff are required to attend. Each planning day has a single overarching theme (e.g., Mission Statement, Strategic Plan, Student Learning Outcomes). In recent years, most of the themes have been drawn directly from the 2004 accreditation Self Study and the recommendations of the 2004 comprehensive site visit report. The theme for the March 2010 Planning Day will be the proposed reorganization of the college's administrative structure, including the consolidation of the two current vice president positions (Student Services and Instruction) into one Vice President of Student Learning position, and the philosophical re-positioning of the college that the new position is intended to help bring about. The team reviewed and confirmed the evidence provided by the college that the rich dialogue during Planning Days contributes to improvements in program review and other areas prioritized by the college (IVA.1).

The team's interviews revealed a lively college-wide discussion over the president's recent proposal to administratively reorganize the college. The



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discussion is taking place within the college's regular planning structure, e.g., the President's Advisory Council, the Academic Senate, the Classified Senate; but the dialogue is also housed within an ad hoc group, the Reorganization Committee, established by the president, that is not directly or formally linked to the planning structure. Staff with whom the team spoke were not in agreement about the extent to which the Reorganization Committee provides information on its continuing discussions to the rest of the college, and there was likewise disagreement about the extent to which the reorganization should be driven by a planning-based analysis of the college's current strengths and weaknesses rather than by a vision of where the college needs to be in the future. The team encourages the college to clarify the lines of communication on this topic, set clear timelines for bringing the dialogue to a conclusion, and ensure that all college staff have clear and timely information on the discussions that are taking place (IVA.1).

The Board has a clear policy (BP 2510) that outlines the district commitment to participatory governance and the respective role of students, staff, faculty and the Board itself in that governance. Team interviews with individuals from each of these groups and with Board members, survey results, and a review of selected governance committee minutes (including Board of Trustee meetings) confirmed that the policy is implemented and that it is generally seen as effective in promoting participation. The college itself has identified a need to ensure, on an on-going basis, that all COS staff and students have easier access to information about the governance process (IVA.2.a).

The same Board policy (BP 2510) establishes the role of the faculty and faculty-related structures or committees in shaping student learning programs and services. The team's review of Board minutes, Curriculum Committee minutes, and interviews with instructional faculty and administrators confirmed that for the most part the policy is being carried out as written and is seen as effective. As above, the college has identified a need to better ensure that information on these discussions and decisions is more easily accessible to staff and faculty (IVA.2.b).

The college's overall three-level planning structure (or four levels, counting the president and Board as a separate level) provides for wide participation of staff, faculty, students, and administrators in shaping the direction of COS, and it demonstrates satisfactorily that COS constituent groups work together for the good of the institution. Interviews and survey results, along with a review of selected committee minutes, confirmed the breadth and positive nature of participation. The college's Self Study notes that communication within the planning structure is good, but the distribution of the communication through posting of agendas, minutes or notes, decisions

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taken needs to be improved (IVA.3).

The team confirmed through a review of correspondence, reports submitted by the college, and interviews with college leaders that COS complies with WASC/ACCJC requirements and demonstrates honesty and integrity with the variety of other institutions with which it works (e.g., Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges, the Golden Valley Conference [intercollegiate athletics], Siskiyou County, a variety of public agencies, four-year transfer institutions, etc.) (IVA.4).

In recent years the evaluation of the college's governance mechanisms – the Board's self-evaluation (BP 2745), the evaluation of senior administrators, and the evaluation of college-level governance mechanisms – has been unevenly implemented. Further, as the Self Study honestly notes, the results of these various evaluations have not been widely communicated on campus or systematically used for institutional improvement. Beginning in early 2009, the college focused attention on these gaps, using a variety of survey instruments and committee-based analysis and discussions to develop specific improvements. One of those mechanisms was a college-wide survey of staff and faculty regarding the college's planning, participatory governance, and program review processes. The survey results were generally positive but some weaknesses were also noted. The results were discussed at several President Advisory Council (PAC) meetings in late spring and early summer 2009, along with a proposed plan for annually assessing these three key processes and using that information in making improvements in the processes. There was also a discussion in the PAC about a planned survey of level-two planning groups and a survey of the PAC members to evaluate the PAC itself. Minutes of the PAC subsequent to August 2009 do not indicate whether the level-two and PAC surveys were conducted, or what their findings were. It was also not clear to the visiting team, in its interviews with college staff, whether the results of the original survey related to participatory governance, planning, and program review were actually used for process improvement or the proposed annual assessment plan was ever implemented (IV.A.5).

## **Conclusions**

College of the Siskiyous has made substantial progress in the development and implementation of its shared governance processes since its last accreditation site visit. It has created a planning and governance infrastructure that is robust and has the potential to enable the institution to set and achieve goals, to learn, and to improve. The team members agreed that the participatory governance processes could be enhanced by adopting regular, systematic evaluations of those processes and by using the results

of those evaluations to make improvements.

**Recommendations**

See Recommendation #3 (2010)

**Commendations**

See Commendation #1 (2010)

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## **B. Board and Administrative Organization**

### **General Observations**

The team's review of Board policies (e.g., BP 2200 and BP 2410), minutes of Board meetings, results of surveys conducted for the Self Study, and interviews with COS staff, faculty, administrators, and Board members, confirm that the elected Board of Trustees fairly and openly represents the public interest, defends the interests of the institution, oversees the financial stability of the college, establishes policies in line with the college Mission Statement, and provides sufficient resources to carry out its policies. Indeed, the Board's long-standing commitment to very careful allocation of resources has been central to the college's ability to "weather the storm" of the current California public fiscal crisis as well as it has. The Board adhered to its policy for selecting a chief executive officer for the college during the search process conducted in 2008.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The Board's size, duties, and operating procedures are outlined in BP 2010, and BP 2200 clearly designates the Board as having ultimate responsibility for the college's educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity. Interviews with a wide variety of COS staff and faculty confirmed that the Board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and, beginning in mid-2008, it established a process for periodically reviewing and revising those policies and procedures. However, at the time of the site visit in March 2010, the revisions had yet to be completed. This was also a recommendation included in the college's 2004 accreditation evaluation report (IV.B.1.a, IVB.1.b, IVB.1.c, IVB.1.d IVB.1.e).

Board Policies 2010 and 2011 provide for staggered four-year terms for Board members and outline the process by which vacancies on the Board are filled. The Board of Trustees, though long active in attending statewide meetings and conferences related to district governance, has only recently (2009) and at the suggestion of the new president established a more formal, in-house means of board development and member orientation (BP 2740), consisting of monthly study sessions for itself preceding each Board meeting. Board members and the president agree on the topics to be discussed; these have included the state budget crisis, accreditation, and facilities, among others. Board members with whom the team spoke felt the study sessions were very valuable, especially to the new Board members. The Board has also had a retreat on strategic planning and the proposed administrative reorganization plan, and one on accreditation in preparation for the site visit in March 2010 (IVB.1.f).

Board Policy 2745 outlines the process by which the Board assesses its own performance on an annual basis. This is done through an annual retreat. The policy calls for the results of the evaluation to be presented and discussed at a Board meeting and for those results to serve as a basis for setting goals for the following year. This policy has been implemented, and the Board's goals for the coming academic year have been set (IVB.1.g).

The Board has a policy (BP 2715) that specifies a code of ethics for the Board, but as noted in the Self Study the policy does not address how the Board will address behavior that violates its own code. The Self Study states that the policy will be amended to include a specification of how such behavior will be dealt with. This appears not have been done by the time of the site visit, as the Policy available on the college website does not include reference to how behavior not in line with the policy will be dealt with. The Board of Trustees should address this gap at the earliest opportunity (IV.B.1.h).

Board Policy 3200 (Accreditation) was adopted by the Board in 2008. Interviews with Board members and college leaders, and a review of selected Board minutes, confirmed that the Board is informed about and involved in the accreditation process (IVB.1.i).

The Board of Trustees fulfills its responsibility to select and evaluate the institution's chief executive officer, the college president as outlined in its Board Policy 2431 and BP 2435. The COS board also appropriately delegates to the president the responsibility for administering the policies adopted by the Board without interference by the Board or individual Board members. Interviews with Board members and the college president confirmed that the policies are adhered to (IVB.1.j).

The team's interviews with a wide variety of COS staff and students, including the president, and its review of selected documents and meeting notes, confirm that the college president exercises the primary responsibility for the institution's planning and budgeting processes, the selection and development of personnel, and overall institution effectiveness. The president oversees and continues to shape an administrative structure for the college that is in line with its mission, its size and complexity and with its available resources. That structure is continuing to evolve under the leadership of the current president and with the support of the Board of Trustees. But as noted above, the gap between the planning model and the discussion of the current administrative reorganization highlights the need for the college to evaluate the planning and resource-allocation structure of the college much more thoroughly and on an on-going basis (IV4.B.2,

IVB.2.a).

The leadership role of the COS president in institutional planning and effectiveness is clear, whether through his direct actions or the tasks he delegates to the college administrators and/or to the participatory governance bodies. The college's strategic plan, adopted in 2005, will be updated in 2010 based in part on the recently completed Visioning process, led by the president, which resulted in a new, comprehensive Vision statement or philosophy. The president also assumes principal responsibility, through his direct involvement in the planning process and in his communications to the college community about that process, that educational planning is integrated with resource planning, and that both are based on student learning. But the evaluation of planning process, as noted above, is not consistent or on-going, nor have its occasional results been systematically applied to process improvement (IVB.2.b).

In the area of research, the president and the college have struggled to fill – and keep filled – the institution's full-time researcher position. The continuing vacancy in this key position has been addressed, with only sporadic success, by a team approach among several administrators and occasional consultants. There is a pressing need, however, to assign more time to research in order to successfully carry out the other elements of the college's planning process. The college has met some elements of this Standard, but has not yet successfully addressed the totality of the Standard (IVB.2.b).

The team's review of meeting notes, college-wide communications, and its interviews with the president and other college staff, confirm that the president does ensure that all statutes, regulations, and Board policies are implemented, and that institutional practices are consistent with the COS mission statement (IV4.B.2.c).

The team's review of Standard III.D and BP 6200, along with interviews with COS staff members and Board members, confirms that the president, personally and through the planning and budgeting process, controls the college's budget and expenditures. In fact, the college has done an excellent job of meeting the exceptional challenges inherent in its primary reliance on California state funding while continuing to provide quality instruction and support services throughout the college's vast service area. The college has been very successful in establishing partnerships with other agencies to share resources and in acquiring federal, state and foundation grants (IV4.B.2.d).

The breadth of the president's involvement in the COS service area's

communities is well documented, including membership or periodic participation in a wide variety of community and regional organizations and the inclusion of those communities in the recent Visioning process related to the college's Strategic Plan development. The effectiveness of the president's role in this regard is, appropriately, measured in the success of the partnerships forged between COS and local agencies, and the growth of the college Foundation (IVB.4.2.e).

## **Conclusions**

This standard is mostly met. College of the Siskiyous recognizes and utilizes the contributions of leadership throughout the organization for continuous improvement of the institution. This is evidenced by the numerous changes in organizational structures and processes since the last accreditation site visit that have allowed the institution to improve its effectiveness. Despite this, the school lacks critical functionality in the area of institutional research, which would allow it to meet or exceed the standards in those areas that require evaluation and assessment and distribution of those evaluations for the purposes of making informed decisions.

## **Recommendations**

See Recommendation #1 (2010)

### **9. Updated Board Policies and Procedures**

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends the college establish a timeline and specific responsibilities for completing the remaining Administrative Procedures that support the recently revised Board Policies (IVB.1.e).