

DEC 10 2010

# EVALUATION REPORT

COLLEGE OF MARIN  
835 College Avenue  
Kentfield, California 94904

A 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 Marin from October 25 through October 28, 2010.

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Visiting Team

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Monday, October 25-Thursday, October 28, 2010

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## SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

INSTITUTION: College of Marin

DATE OF VISIT: October 25-28, 2010

TEAM CHAIR: Dr. José M. Ortiz, Ed.D., Superintendent/President  
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An eleven (11) member accreditation team visited the College of Marin from October 25-28, 2010, for the purpose of evaluating how well the institution is meeting the commission standards to reaffirm accreditation. The College of Marin was opened in 1926 and is comprised of the main campus located in the Kentfield area of Marin County and a satellite campus in Novato, with combined credit enrollment in fall 2009 of 7,460 credit students.

Team members attended an all-day training session conducted by the ACCJC on September 14<sup>th</sup> in preparation for the visit. The team divided into four committees, one for each standard. The team carefully examined the college's self-study, reviewed the college's online evidence, read publications such as the catalog, and studied the midterm and annual progress reports submitted by the college in response to the 2004 accreditation team visit.

The evening before the visit began, team members gathered to review their draft evaluations and identify areas for further investigation. During the visit, the team met with numerous members of all college constituencies including students, members of the board, faculty, staff and administrators. A substantial amount of additional documentation and evidence was examined. Team members held open forum meetings at both the Kentfield and Novato campuses to allow for full participation from any campus community member. The exit meeting on the Kentfield campus was well-attended by the college community.

The team felt the self-study was well organized, and all college staff members were very accommodating and available for interviews. New planning processes, the appointment of a new superintendent/ president, and campus renovations contribute to an atmosphere of hope and renewal on the campus. The team was very impressed by the candor of college staff in acknowledging both areas of achievement and those where further progress may be needed.

## **Team Commendations for the College of Marin**

### **Commendation #1**

The team commends the college for the breadth, thoroughness, comprehensiveness and use of the mission statement in its guiding documents related to governance and integrated planning. (I.A.4.) (IV.A.2.)

### **Commendation #2**

The team commends the college for its excellent online enrollment management tool, which facilitates the development of “blueprints” for all courses, disciplines and programs. This in turn supports the college wide master scheduling process. (II.A.2.e)

### **Commendation #3**

The team commends the college academic senate for their effective student learning outcomes wiki (online collaborative site), which serves as a central repository for all SLOs and their assessments. This facilitates the development and implementation of learning outcomes. (II.A.2.f)

### **Commendation #4**

The team commends the college for their support of the recently implemented student athlete support program. (II.B.3.c)

### **Commendation #5**

The team commends the college for its foresight in providing mental health and family counseling services to its students. (II.B.3.c)

### **Commendation #6**

The team commends the college for its commitment to a sustainable environment by designing and using geothermal energy for the institution’s heating and cooling in the new Measure C capital projects. (III.B.1.a)

### **Commendation #7**

The team commends the college and the governing board for its commitment to revising board policies and administrative regulations and making them publicly available through the college website. (IV.B.1.e)

## Visiting Team 2010 Recommendations for the College of Marin

### **Recommendation #1**

In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college regularly update all institutional plans and systematically evaluate the effectiveness of all planning and resource allocation processes. The college should communicate to all college stakeholders the results of these assessment activities, and implement identified improvements on a continuous basis to support and improve student learning. Additionally, the team recommends that the college ensure that planning is linked to budgeting for the effective use of its resources. (I.B; I.B.6; I.B.7; III.D.1.a; III.D.3)

### **Recommendation #2**

In order to meet the Commission's fall 2012 deadline, the team recommends that the college accelerate its efforts to identify and assess measurable student learning outcomes for every instructional, library and student support program. The team further recommends that the college incorporate student learning outcome assessment results into program planning and resource allocation for the improvement of student learning. (II.A.1.a; II.A.1.c; II.A.2.f; II.A.3.a,b; II.B.4; II.C.2)

### **Recommendation #3**

In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college allocate resources to create a sustainable infrastructure to support a distance education program that can deliver high quality curricula and support student access and success. (II.A.1.b; II.A.2.d; II.B.3.a; III.C.1)

### **Recommendation #4**

In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college strengthen the role of research through a broad institutional dialogue and critical analysis of research data, especially in light of the changing student demographics. Institutional efforts should focus on providing information based on statistical data and communicating it widely to all appropriate constituencies in order to improve institutional effectiveness. ( I.A.1.; I.B.3)

### **Recommendation #5**

In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college remedy the lack of library services, learning resources and student support services for evening, Indian Valley Campus, and online students. (II.B.3.a; II.C.1.c, ER 14, ER 16)

**Recommendation #6**

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the college fully implement the self-identified planning agenda from 2003/04 regarding the academic success of underrepresented students; the Student Equity Plan of 2005; and the recommendations of the student climate taskforce of 2008. (II.B.3.d)

**Recommendation #7**

In order to meet standard, the team recommends that the college develop a facilities master plan to ensure the effective utilization and quality of physical resources which are necessary to support its programs and services. (III.B.2.b)

**Recommendation #8**

In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college establish and communicate a sustainable technology plan for the acquisition, maintenance and replacement of its infrastructure, equipment, support and training to meet institutional needs. The team further recommends regular evaluation of this plan for its effectiveness in prioritizing and funding current and projected long term technology needs. (III.C.1.a; IIIC.1.b; III.C.1.c; III.C.1.d)

**Recommendation #9**

In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the board focus on developing policies that support the quality, integrity and effectiveness of student learning programs and services. The board should deliberate with due diligence and make timely decisions that are in the best interests of the institution. The board should act as a whole and adhere to board policy once a decision has been made, and support the superintendent/president's authority in administering board policies and procedures. (IV.B.1; IV.B.1.a; IV.B.1.f; IV.B.1.j; IV.B.2; IV.B.2.c)

## **Certification of Continued Compliance with Eligibility Requirements**

The team found the College of Marin to be in compliance with all eligibility requirements established by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges except for numbers 14 and 16. These areas of non-compliance are cited below and in the team's recommendations.

### **1. Authority**

The College of Marin is authorized to operate as an educational institution and award degrees by the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. In addition, the college is regulated by the California Community Colleges Board of Governors and the locally elected Board of Trustees.

### **2. Mission**

The team confirmed that the College of Marin has a mission statement adopted by the Board of Trustees. The mission statement is linked to the college's integrated planning process and is published on the college website, in the catalog, and other college publications. The mission statement is reviewed annually in the spring using a process created by the Board of Trustees. The most recent revision was approved by the board on April 20, 2010.

### **3. Governing Board**

The College of Marin has a seven-member Board of Trustees who are elected at large in odd years for staggered terms to ensure continuity. The team confirmed that the board holds regular monthly meetings open to the public, makes policies for the district, and has oversight of its operations. Board members are precluded from participating in any action involving a possible conflict of interest.

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

The board of trustees selects the superintendent/president and holds her/him responsible for administering district policies and providing leadership to the institution. The College of Marin had an interim superintendent/president at the time of the team visit. Prior to that, the superintendent/president had been in place for six years. In both cases, their primary responsibility was to the institution. On September 21, 2010 the college announced the appointment of a new permanent superintendent/president.

## **5. Administrative Capacity**

The College of Marin has adequate administrative staff to support the college mission and goals. The college underwent administrative restructuring in 2005 and 2006 to ensure efficiency, and has been able to replace five interim administrators with permanent staff in 2009/10.

## **6. Operational Status**

The college enrolls over 7,400 students in credit programs and over 4,000 students in noncredit and community education offerings.

## **7. Degrees**

The majority of the College of Marin's programs lead to an associate in arts or sciences degree or university degree completion. In 2008/09, the college awarded 249 degrees and 41 career certificates.

## **8. Educational Programs**

The College of Marin's programs are aligned with its mission, based on recognized fields of study, and sufficient in content, length, quality and rigor. They are reviewed and approved by the Academic Senate and the Board of Trustees. All associate degree programs are two years in length.

## **9. Academic Credit**

The College of Marin awards college credit in compliance with California Education Code and Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations. The Curriculum Committee reviews all courses and the course outlines of record describe classroom hours, unit credits and student learning outcomes (SLOs).

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

The college identifies SLOs for courses, programs, certificates and degrees. The institution has adopted five college level learning outcomes. Academic departments utilize student achievement data in the development of program reviews.

## **11. General Education**

All degree programs at College of Marin require at least 19 units of general education plus a demonstration of math proficiency. The college's "Philosophy of General Education" is published in the catalog and Board Policy (BP4100) includes general education requirements for degrees and certificates.

## **12. Academic Freedom**

Faculty statements on professional standards and academic freedom are published in the United Professors of Marin/Marin Community College District Collective Bargaining Agreement. Board policies also support academic freedom.

## **13. Faculty**

The College of Marin has 108 tenured or tenure-track faculty and 343 adjunct faculty members as of spring 2010. The names and qualifications of full-time faculty and academic administrators are published in the catalog, and all meet minimum standards for their disciplines.

## **14. Student Services**

The team reviewed the size and scope of student services provided by the College of Marin and found them to be lacking in service to evening, online, and Indian Valley Campus students.

## **15. Admissions**

The college has adopted and adheres to admissions policies that are consistent with its mission and conform to all state laws and regulations. These policies are published in the catalog and class schedule.

## **16. Information and Learning Resources**

The team found the library and learning resources to be minimal for online students and those on Kentfield Campus. Furthermore, Indian Valley Campus students have no library or learning resources available to them.

## **17. Financial Resources**

College of Marin is a basic aid institution funded predominantly by local property taxes. Additional funds come from student fees, state categorical funds, and other sources. The college practices sound financial management, including a reasonable reserve fund for contingencies.

## **18. Financial Accountability**

An independent certified accounting firm audits the College of Marin on an annual basis. All audit reports are recorded by the Board of Trustees and transmitted to local and state educational authorities. External audits are conducted in accordance with CCC regulations.

### **19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation**

The college has initiated an Integrated Planning Manual and Planning and Resource Allocation Committee. Other major components of planning include the mission statement, the ten-year Educational Master Plan, the Strategic Plan, and program reviews. Planning involves all college governance bodies.

### **20. Public Information**

The College of Marin publishes a catalog annually containing accurate information regarding admissions, degrees and certificates, policies affecting students, fees, and all other information required by the Commission. A significant amount of this information is also available through the college website.

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

The college appears to have communicated thoroughly and honestly with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, based on team review of prior progress reports and other documents. College of Marin appears to have complied with all requests, directives, and decisions communicated to them by the Commission.

## RESPONSES TO PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation #1

**The team recommends that the college finalize immediately an effective governance structure that reinforces respectful dialog, defines shared commitment, and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all constituent groups for participation in informed decision-making processes. The processes must be designed to result in action with on-going assessment and evaluation of institutional effectiveness to improve student learning. (Standards IV.A.1, IV A.2, IV.A.3, IV.A.5)**

The college appears to have fully addressed this recommendation. By late spring 2005, the Board of Trustees had approved the Participatory Governance System (PGS). The system includes seven governance committees reporting directly to the College Council, which is the body that advises the college president. In addition to those eight committees, there are three committees reporting directly to the Academic Senate. Committee membership is defined in the PGS plan and includes faculty, staff, students, and administration.

Assessment and evaluation of the governance system is the responsibility of the Governance Review Committee (GRC). The GRC accepts proposals for changes in committee structure from the committees themselves. Following a review of a proposal, the GRC makes recommendations for changes to the College Council. In addition to this assessment process, the GRC conducts formal evaluations of the system every two years, which includes college wide participant satisfaction surveys. These processes have resulted in changes to the 2005 PGS Plan that included the creation of a Professional Development Committee in 2008. Recently, the former Budget Committee and Institutional Planning Committee were combined into the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC).

### Recommendation #2

**The team recommends that the college complete the reexamination of the college mission statement immediately to ensure it defines the purpose of the institution and addresses the emerging educational needs of the changing and diverse population of the district. The college must establish and adhere to a systematic and regular cycle for reviewing and updating the mission statement. (Standards I.A.1, I.A.3, I.A.4)**

The college has fully addressed this recommendation. A shared governance Mission Taskforce was formed after the team visit in 2004, and their recommendation for an updated mission statement was approved at the March 2005 Board of Trustees meeting. The Board of Trustees adopted a policy and developed a process to systematically review the mission statement on an

annual basis in the spring of 2005, with the first review in spring 2006. The current mission statement was approved by the Board at the April 2010 meeting.

### **Recommendation #3**

**The team recommends that the college implement by January 2006 an institutional planning process based on agreed upon institutional values, a redefined mission, and measurable outcomes that is strategic, systematic, data-driven, evidence based, focused on student learning and holds responsible parties accountable for actions and timelines. The planning process must integrate institutional effectiveness and program review processes to inform educational master planning, facilities master planning, technology planning, student learning and services programs development and revision, and resource allocation. To ensure effective and sustainable plans and informed decision-making, the college must assess its current organizational structure and use of resources to create and support a culture of evidence, research and data. (Standards I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.1.a, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.A.6.b, II.B.4, II.C.2)**

The College of Marin has worked diligently over the past six years to address recommendation #3. Efforts made by the college include a revised mission statement that is reviewed annually; completion and adoption of a ten year Educational Master Plan and three year Strategic Plan; a new six year Technology Plan; and an Integrated Planning Process Manual. In addition, the Budget and Planning Councils have been combined into the new, more effective Planning and Resource Allocation Council (PRAC). All departments have completed a program review, which is integrated into the planning process. In 2008-09, staff was trained on using TracDat, a web-based tracking and reporting tool. A new permanent institutional researcher was hired in the spring of 2010, has created a dashboard for statistical data, and is working to improve online access to research information. These efforts bring the institution to partial compliance of the recommendation, as evidenced by the 2010 visiting team recommendations on integrated planning.

#### **Recommendation #4**

**The team recommends that the college by January 2006 develop and implement a systematic, inclusive, on-going process that addresses student learning outcomes at the course, program and discipline level as well as for the general education program. The process must begin with a faculty-driven institutional dialog that leads to action, assessment and measurement of student learning resulting in institutional improvements. (Standards II.A.1.a, II.A.1.c., II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, II.C.2)**

The college appears to be at the developmental stage with regard to student learning outcomes (SLOs) for courses, programs, degrees and certificates. An institutional framework is evident, with appropriate resources allocated and leadership groups accepting responsibility. SLOs have been defined for 97 percent of all courses, 21 percent of programs, and the five general education/college learning outcomes. The team found the college has established practices to design, identify, approve, administer, deliver and evaluate courses and programs using SLOs, but has not yet fully implemented the evaluation segment.

The team noted that individual faculty members are utilizing SLOs within their own class sections, but evidence of widespread dialog regarding outcomes assessment results to improve student learning was not yet common practice. Although SLO assessment results were acknowledged as a planned future step for inclusion in the planning process by SLO coordinators, no evidence of public documentation, dissemination, or analysis of SLO assessments was available to the college community.

#### **Recommendation #5**

**The team recommends that the college complete an actuarial study by June 2005 to determine the college's unfunded retirement liability. Based on the findings, the college must then implement an action plan to fund future liability obligations. (Standards III.D.2.c, III.D.2.g)**

The College of Marin has adequately addressed this recommendation. The college contracted with Total Compensation Systems Inc. to conduct an actuarial study of the college's retiree health liabilities in 2005, 2007, and 2009. The findings of these three studies were reported to the Board of Trustees. In 2007, the Board approved participation in the Community College League of California (CCLC) Retire Health Benefit Program Joint Powers Agency with the transfer of one million dollars to the irrevocable trust established by this agency. Additional unspent funds have been added to this trust each year. Recently, due to market volatility, the Board put \$1.5 million into a restricted fund and is considering establishing its own irrevocable trust to invest in governmental securities rather than the CCLC's Joint Powers agency.

## STANDARD I

### Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

#### General Comments

The College of Marin's mission statement is very clear about the institution's educational purpose through describing five educational pathways. It defines its intended students through the term "our diverse community" which must be inferred. The mission statement does express a commitment to educational excellence and community needs. In general, the college has addressed the mission. The college has also made great progress on improving institutional effectiveness. They have developed a new Educational Master Plan, a Strategic Plan, an Integrated Planning Manual and program review. There has been much dialog through newly created committees. Although structures are in place, a survey in spring 2009 showed (p.118) that "only 39 percent of respondents believed that institutional planning decisions are based on data and research." The Faculty and Staff survey that spring also indicated that only 20 percent of faculty and staff overall agreed with the statement "college budget priorities are determined by systematic planning" with 42 percent disagreeing. It would be good to see if this has improved. The Participatory Governance System seems to have been successful in generating broad-based engagement. Just this past year, the college has been able to link planning and resource allocation through merging the planning and budget committees. A plan to communicate the allocations based on planning is to be done this fall. The college uses its website to communicate documented assessment results to constituencies. The first full assessment of the new integrated planning process will be in April 2011. Instructional program review has been assessed a couple of times and revised. However, student service and administrative program reviews have yet to be assessed and revised. The self study does not address Standard I.B.7 as it did not describe or assess its evaluation mechanisms.

#### Findings and Evidence

##### **Standard IA – Mission**

The college is clear in stating its educational purposes. The intended students are described as "all members of our diverse community." However, one may question the specific demographics of the community for program and enrollment planning purposes. The description of the student population served is vague. The five educational pathways described in Standard I.A.1. (p. 105), infer a diverse student population in terms of educational programs, but for general planning purposes, a well-defined, intended student population is missing. The mission statement does not really address the question: Who are the college's intended students? In that case, how does the institution determine its intended population? Is the identified population a

reasonable match for the institution's location, resources, and role in higher education? Furthermore, there is no detailed breakdown of student demographic data for the Indian Valley campus. Career and technical education programs are the current focus for IVC. However, the college does plan to offer courses toward general education program next year. With the desire to grow the general education program at IVC, student demographic projections would be important. Enrollment management in general is in question. An enrollment management plan was developed a couple of years ago ("Enrollment Activities Update", 2007). The visiting team found no evidence of a continued effort related to student demographics or enrollment management. (I.A.4)

The college mission statement does align its purposes and student population well with programs and services as evidenced by course offerings and surveys. Discussions have been held regarding the mission statement as evidenced through review of meeting notes. The mission statement has just recently been reviewed and approved by the College Council and Board of Trustees and appears to have been done on a regular basis during the past three years. The institution has just started a three-year cycle for reviewing the mission college-wide with the next review scheduled for 2011. A review of the integrated planning manual evidenced a structure process for the mission statement to drive the other planning activities. The planning manual is relatively new and has not been evaluated for its effectiveness. There does appear to be a lack of understanding about this by faculty and staff as evidenced in the spring 2009 faculty and staff survey.(I.A.1; I.A.2; I.A.3)

### **Standard IB - Improving Institutional Effectiveness**

The self study indicates that while dialogue on student learning and institutional effectiveness is represented by all constituencies, participation is lacking. The self study states that, "Much of this dialog has taken place in governance committees..." (p. 114). There is little evidence that this discussion is reaching the faculty and staff in general. Some of the collegial dialog about improving student learning, however, is occurring at the department and discipline level through the process of completing program reviews. (I.B.1)

The college has set five specific recommendations in the Educational Master Plan (2009-2019) and has identified college priorities and strategic objectives in the Strategic Plan (COM Strategic Plan 2009-2012). These are all stated in measurable terms. The planning manual outlines a reasonable process to implement and measure the goals. However, it is worthy of note that the data in both plans does not provide separate demographics for each campus. It would seem reasonable to gather student demographic data and projections by campus in order to plan at each

site. As stated above, the Strategic Plan was developed and an initial assessment of progress on the college priorities is planned. There is an initial institutional effectiveness report dated August 24, 2010, which shows measurement of the progress on some of the strategic initiatives in the Strategic Plan. A more comprehensive assessment of progress on the college priorities and objectives is needed. Some plans have not been developed as of yet: there is no current equity, facilities, staffing, enrollment management or professional development plans. A Technology plan was just completed in fall 2010, albeit the plan lacks details for the sustainability of future technology needs. (I.B.2)

The college has several integrated planning and evaluation processes as evidenced by a review of its *Educational Master Plan*, the *Strategic Plan*, and the *Integrated Planning Manual*. The college mission statement is the touchstone, guiding the development of the 10-year *Educational Master Plan*, which sets the direction for three-year strategic plans. Program reviews for all instructional programs, student support services, and administrative areas are conducted annually in order to inform budgeting decisions. However, according to a spring 2009 faculty and staff survey, “not all members of the college perceive that planning is based on research and data.” Planning processes rely upon representatives from constituent groups and in this way are described as “broad based”. The visiting team learned that as recent as fiscal year 2009-2010, resource allocations were not based on the planning process. It wasn’t until fall 2009 that the planning and budget committees were merged into what is now the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC). It has only been with the development of the Integrated Planning Model that budget allocations are more directly based on planning processes which were not formalized until May 2010. (I.B.3,I.B.4)

The college uses its Web site as the fundamental means of communication with the campus community and the general public. Assessment results are placed on the college website as a means to communicate quality assurance. The college is planning to communicate how resources are allocated to support planning processes to the college community. The results of the first Institutional Effectiveness report “will be distributed college-wide and to the Board of Trustees.” The self study states that assessment results on the Web site are easily accessible, but there does not appear to be a clear link on the main web site to “assessment results.” It is not clear how well this is working. There is no mention of assessing this means of communication. (I.B.5)

A full assessment of the integrated planning process has not taken place either. This is planned for May 2011. On page 125, the report indicates that “PRAC conducted an informal assessment of institutional effectiveness in May 2010 and will conduct a formal, campus-wide assessment of the integrated planning process in 2011.” The Integrated Planning Manual has assessment described as part of the process. Surveys have been completed, but the results showing only 20

percent of faculty and staff overall agreed and 42 percent disagreed with the statement “college budget priorities are determined by systematic planning” (Spring 2009). This is not surprising since the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee was not created until fall 2009. Program review has assessed and refined to some extent. Minutes for the PRAC have shown assessment of various planning processes and documents. The self study describes its program review for programs and services but does not really address “the institution assesses its evaluation mechanisms through systematic review of their effectiveness in improving programs and services.” The program review process is described as annual, but 2009 are the last dated entries on the program review site. The new cycle of program review starts in October and ends in February. Nonetheless, there is no evidence of assessment of the college’s evaluation processes or instruments. (I.B.6)

After reviewing the minutes of the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC) and attending a PRAC meeting, the team ascertained that this committee has been assessing parts of the various planning processes and templates and revising them as necessary. The minutes go back to May 2010, a further indication that the planning processes are new (as is PRAC) and the evaluation for effectiveness is a recent development. In any case, this was not included in the self study. The self study referenced a “rubric to rate program reviews,” but it turned out to be a “Rating Rubric for Instructional Equipment Requests in Program Review.” (I.B.7)

## **Conclusion**

College of Marin has put forth considerable effort to respond to previous recommendations and address the criteria in Standard I. The mission statement is widely understood and guides planning and decision making. The mission statement is aligned with program and services and is approved by the governing board. The mission statement is reviewed on a regular basis. The college notes in the self study that it is developing a timeline for systematic review of the mission statement. The visiting team suggests that the mission statement should clearly describe the intended student population and especially the projected population for the next 5-10 years to drive planning processes. The utilization of disaggregated data for the Indian Valley Campus and Kentfield campus would be valuable in implementing the educational master plan and the strategic plans.

The mission statement is a good foundation for the new integrated planning model and accompanying manual. Detailed documentation explaining the planning process and the link to budgeting is available to all college employees, though the team did find some inconsistency between the manual and practice, as well as a general lack of understanding regarding the decision making process. Furthermore, the college needs to regularly update all plans including equity, enrollment management, facilities, staffing, and professional development.

The college has made great strides in creating a model for ongoing and systematic evaluation, planning, resource allocation, and implementation. However, the model is very recent, and there has not been an assessment of the processes and their effectiveness. Thus, there is no evidence that the institution has ongoing systematic evaluation of planning processes used to improve student learning. Dialogue about institutional effectiveness is not yet ongoing, robust, or pervasive.

The institution fully meets Standard 1A. The institution only partially meets Standard 1B, specifically, 1B.6 and 1B.7.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Recommendation 1:**

In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college regularly update all institutional plans and systematically evaluate the effectiveness of all planning and resource allocation processes. The college should communicate to all college stakeholders the results of these assessment activities, and implement identified improvements on a continuous basis to support and improve student learning. Additionally, the team recommends that the college ensure that planning is linked to budgeting for the effective use of its resources. (I.B; I.B.6; I.B.7; III.D.1.a; III.D.3)

#### **Recommendation 4:**

In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college strengthen the role of research through a broad institutional dialogue and critical analysis of research data, especially in light of the changing student demographics. Institutional efforts should focus on providing information based on statistical data and communicating it widely to all appropriate constituencies in order to improve institutional effectiveness. (I.A.1; I.B.3)

## Standard II

### Student Learning Programs and Services

#### Standard II.A - Instructional Programs

##### General Comments

College of Marin is a comprehensive community college offering a wide variety of general education, career technical, basic skills, and transfer courses. The college has a long tradition in the county of Marin and offers programs at two campuses, the original campus in Kentfield and the Indian Valley Campus in Novato. The Indian Valley Campus offers primarily career technical programs and is currently increasing the number of general educational offerings.

The college provides excellent educational opportunities through a variety of programs: degree and certificate programs in lower division arts and sciences and in vocational and occupational fields; developmental and basic skills instruction; English as a Second Language instruction; adult noncredit education; and community services courses and programs. The scope and appropriateness of the college's programs are reviewed every ten years as part of the *Educational Master Plan* development process.

The college is committed to excellence in teaching and learning and has demonstrated substantive efforts over the past two years to improve student learning through a new Educational Master Plan and the integration of program review results into a new planning process. The Educational Master Plan establishes five student cohort pathways that align with the college's mission. These pathways are basic skills, workforce development, cultural enrichment, lifelong learning and transfer.

##### Findings and Evidence

The team verified that the college offers high quality instructional programs in recognized fields of study that lead to degrees, certificates, employment, or transfer to other higher education institutions or programs consistent with its mission. The college programs reflected both breadth and depth typical for a comprehensive community college of its size and complexity. The college offers instructional programs at two sites, the college's original campus in Kentfield and the Indian Valley campus in Novato. The majority of career and technical education programs along with a core of transfer courses and community education courses are offered at the Indian Valley campus.

The college's mission statement emphasizes the commitment to educational excellence through five pathways as defined in the Educational Master Plan: preparation for transfer, workforce education, basic skills improvement, lifelong learning and cultural enrichment. Programs are systematically reviewed for alignment with the college's mission, currency, improvement of teaching and learning through the newly implemented program review process. Each instructional program, regardless of location or means of delivery, is required to complete a section of the program review template entitled Program Definition. This section is designed to "outline the unique qualities" that define the importance of the program, as well as the varied educational needs of the students within a given program. Although a substantial amount of information is available regarding student enrollment, retention and success rates, and demographics at the program level in program review documents, dialogue regarding course, program, and college level analysis of student learning outcomes is not evident. Without an institutionalized process of documentation, assessment, and collegial dialogue and analysis regarding assessment results, there is a lack of evidence to determine to what extent student needs are being met by the particular programs and courses offered by the institution. (II.A.1.a)

The college has a variety of instructional delivery systems (i.e., online learning, which has remained stable at about 30 courses per semester) televised and web-enhanced courses and diverse teaching methodologies such as learning communities, Emeritus College for lifelong learning, and the Transfer Prep Academy. The self study notes that although the number of online offerings has changed little over the past five years, enrollment has increased by 33 percent. With this growth in online enrollment, the college recently provided support for a 20 percent faculty position assigned on a semester-to-semester basis to provide instructional technology training. While additional support is a positive step and critical to ensure sustained staff and student success in an online modality, interviews with support faculty and an administrator revealed their need for on-going institutional support to ensure high quality distance education offerings. (II.A.2)

The interviews also indicated that the identification of online course offerings has been primarily in response to faculty interest in collaboration with the dean. There was an expressed interest in increasing the number of online course offerings; however, the team suggests the development of a comprehensive distance education plan prior to the allocation of any additional resources. The plan should align with the college's strategic plan objective to "...make changes to increase the number of credit hours offered through distance education," objectives of the curriculum, and needs of the students at both the Kentfield and Indian Valley campuses. The team concurs with a faculty statement that, [we're] "just starting to embrace distance education" and the college's statement in the self study report that "...the college needs a stronger direction and leadership in this area." (II.A.1.b, II.A.2.d)

The college is at a developmental stage with regard to student learning outcomes for courses, programs, degrees and certificates. An institutional framework is evident, with appropriate resources allocated and leadership groups (i.e. academic senate, curriculum committee, and administration) accepting responsibility. The team found that SLOs have been identified for approximately 97 percent of all courses, 21 percent of programs and the five General Education/College Learning Outcomes. SLOs for courses and programs are listed in the Course Outline of Record and program review wiki, respectively.

At the time of the accreditation visit, the team noted that individual faculty members are utilizing SLOs within their own class sections but evidence of widespread interdepartmental dialogue regarding outcomes assessment results to improve student learning was not yet common practice. Although SLO assessment results were acknowledged as a planned future step for inclusion in the planning process by the SLO Coordinators, no evidence of public documentation, dissemination, or analysis of SLO assessments was available to the college community. The team noted, however, that a few isolated departments voluntarily utilized outcomes assessment results in their program review to support resource requests, but this practice was not the norm.

To reach the ACCJC defined level of Proficiency by 2012 for Student Learning Outcomes as defined on the Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness, all programs must identify and analyze authentic assessment strategies. In addition, the college must demonstrate the allocation of resources in support of those assessments. Given the extent to which assessments, their analysis and the subsequent improvements to courses and programs based on these assessments have been implemented, the completion of the SLO cycle will not be accomplished in the near term. While the college's planning agendas state intention to "develop and implement a formal assessment of student achievement of all of the College Learning Outcomes" and "ensure all programs use the results of their assessments," mechanisms are not currently in place to achieve Proficiency by 2012 and accomplish this objective. (II.A.1.c, II.A.2.f)

The team found that the college had established practices to design, identify, approve, administer, deliver, and evaluate courses and programs using learning outcomes, but had not yet fully implemented the evaluation segment. The college lacks a clear connection between the assessment of student learning outcomes and the improvement of instructional courses and programs. The central role of its faculty for establishing quality and improving instructional courses and programs, however, is clear. Procedures established by the Academic Senate and its Curriculum Committee ensure appropriate depth, rigor, currency, sequencing, and transferability of courses. (II.A.2.a)

Regarding the role of advisory committees in identifying competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, and vocational education programs, the team found evidence of Administrative Procedure 4102 which clearly prescribes the role of advisory committees. Review of meeting minutes for the Automotive Technician Advisory Committee from May 2010 indicated that the advisory committee provided meaningful input in the form of ideas and creative responses to strategies to improve student success and increase enrollment. There was little evidence provided by the college as to the role of other CTE program advisory committees in assisting with the determination of competency levels or outcomes.

At the request of the team, a spreadsheet showing the number of certificates of achievement annually awarded by program was provided by the Office of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness. These data indicate that of the 57 programs listed on the spreadsheet, 41 conferred no certificates between 2005/06 and 2009/10; and only four programs conferred more than 10 certificates over this five-year period. Although these data cast strong doubt concerning the viability of the college's vocational certificate programs, there is no evidence to suggest that in-depth analyses of either these trends or any significant programmatic changes based on such analyses have taken place. The 18 percent decline in Certificates of Achievement awarded by the college between 2005/06 and 2009/10 is a matter of concern. (II.A.2.b)

Program review is the primary means cited in the college self study report for ensuring high quality instruction. It is designed to enable each program to "reflect on its effectiveness and examine student access and success and success trends using data." Beginning in 2007, the institution updated and repeatedly revised the program review template and integrated the results into a new planning process. This new process and the new program review template are now widely accepted and have been institutionalized, with current program reviews on file for all instructional, student services and administrative programs.

Data are provided with each program review to assist faculty in ascertaining whether the course and program offerings represent an appropriate breadth, depth, rigor, sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning. A new enrollment management strategy developed in collaboration with the Academic Senate for analyzing course sequencing patterns is of particular note. This new technology-based approach provides the ability to view, semester by semester, all course offerings coded by discipline. A task force analyzed a two-year span of courses, semester by semester, adjusting and modifying course offering patterns to ensure robust day, evening, and weekend classes and timely completion of a students' educational goal.

While aggregate data show stable to slightly increasing credit student head-count from 2005/06 to 2008/09, degree completion experienced a 27 percent decline and transfers to four-year institutions a 19 percent decline over the same period. The reason for the decline was not

addressed in the self study, nor was evidence presented during the team visit regarding potential causal factors. While the performance of transferring students at four-year institutions is above the system wide average during this period, the decline in the number of degrees and certificates awarded brings into question program effectiveness. Without the utilization of student learning outcomes to assess the synthesis of learning, insufficient mechanisms are in place to facilitate differentiation between effective and ineffective programs. The planning agenda contained in the self study report fails to address this deficiency. (II.A.2.c, II.A.6.a)

The college has conducted program review for all instructional, student services and administrative programs within the last three years. All instructional programs were reviewed annually for the first three years, but workload issues have dictated a transition to every three years, with career technical programs evaluated every two years. The program review template does not, however, require identification and measurement of program level student learning outcomes. Finally, evidence provided by the college indicates that program review results are fully integrated into the new integrated planning and budgeting cycle, with resource allocations heavily dependent upon program review reports. Therefore, it can be concluded that the college engages in an ongoing, systematic review of program relevance, appropriateness, currency, and future needs and plans. Since the college shared plans to fulfill the remaining deficiency relative to this standard, that is, the assessment of student learning outcomes and use of the assessment results, the college partially meets the standard. (II.A.2.e, f)

The team did not find evidence supporting the use of departmental or program examinations to evaluate learning, with the exception of select career technical programs such as nursing, dental assisting, emergency medical technician and phlebotomy. Consequently, the college does not comply with the commission standard, which calls for validation of the effectiveness of such instruments in measuring student learning and minimizing test biases. Units and credits awarded are consistent with established norms in regionally accredited institutions. (II A.2.g,h)

Because the institution has not clearly identified or assessed student learning outcomes for all programs, it cannot be determined whether credit is being awarded and degrees and certificates conferred based on actual student learning. The self study report indicates that the college follows the generally accepted norms or equivalencies in higher education in its determination of the units of credit awarded to each course and units of credit required to fulfill degrees and certificates. The planning agenda section calls for the college to develop a systematic assessment and regular reports of the achievement of SLOs in the Five Pathways at the program, degree, certificate and college level. The team noted that very little appears to have been accomplished regarding progress on this standard. (II.A.2.h, i)

The college's philosophy of general education is clearly stated in its catalog. The institution has developed nine areas which include humanities and fine arts, natural sciences, and social sciences. As verified through interviews with faculty and students, this core was developed through faculty discussion and discourse and has been successfully integrated with skills and relevance to the student's major. Courses are reviewed for appropriateness and inclusion in one of the nine areas by the college's Curriculum Committee, a standing committee of the Academic Senate.

The college has recently adopted a set of five College Learning Outcomes which also reflect the goals of General Education. These outcomes include written, oral and visual communication, information competency, scientific and quantitative reasoning, problem solving and critical thinking. As conceded in the self study and evident in the general education course list provided in the catalog, the skill of computer literacy is not definitively addressed in the general education curriculum. The development of rubrics to assess the first three college-level outcomes was under development during the team visit. The self study states that the college "has a plan for assessing students' achievement" of the outcomes, but the institution has not begun to engage systematically in assessment of these identified outcomes. (II.A.3.a, b)

The self study states that the institution ensures the recognition of what it means to be an ethical human being and effective citizen through the integration of cross-cultural studies and social and behavioral sciences requirements into the college's General Education requirements. The team expresses concern that none of the five college level outcomes specifically addresses a recognition of what it means to be an ethical human being and effective citizen. Therefore, it is suggested that the college continue to monitor and evaluate the efficacy of the general education area B and G options as the college progresses with the development of new degrees. (II.A.3.c)

The team reviewed the college catalog and other college documents related to degree programs. Based on the program descriptions contained in the course catalog, the team concludes that all degree programs include focused study in at least one area of inquiry has been met. (II.A.4.)

Data pertaining to pass rates on licensure examinations were provided in the team evidence room for a small number of career education programs with external certification requirements such as nursing, registered dental assistant, and emergency medical technician. These data support the conclusion that students completing vocational and occupational certificates and degrees demonstrate technical and professional competencies that meet employment and other applicable standards. Based on the limited amount of data made available to the team, this determination cannot be made for all of the programs offered by the college that have such requirements.

The college self-evaluation notes that the Workforce Development Division intends to develop monitoring for success rates over four to six year periods for career students. The planning agenda, however, does not call for the establishment of such a system. (II.A.5)

The institution assures that students and prospective students receive clear and accurate information about educational courses and programs, expected student learning outcomes, and transfer policies. The course catalog contains a brief description of each career and certificate program offered by the college. Additionally, the college includes information regarding career options students might enter after completing any given educational program. Evidence presented at the request of the team suggests that students may receive inconsistent information regarding expected student learning outcomes. Of the three syllabi reviewed for the same fall 2010 course, each differed substantively relative to their approach for stating student learning outcomes. The team concurs with the planning agendas to ensure all syllabi reflect the approved course SLOs and the college continue to provide support and training to faculty to facilitate the electronic posting of syllabi. (II.A.6.a)

Evidence reviewed by the team and interviews with staff members confirmed that the college has a clearly delineated procedure, BP 4021, Program Revitalization and Discontinuance. The football program has been discontinued and the Computer Science program was undergoing the process of revitalization during the team visit. The college is to be recognized for their focus on student access and success during their deliberations regarding the ultimate decision to discontinue the football program. (II.6.b)

A review of college catalogs, statements, and publications, including those presented in electronic form, indicates that the college appears to be representing itself clearly, accurately, and consistently to prospective and current students, the public, and its personnel through its catalogs, statements, and publications. (II.A.6.c)

Discussions with staff and document review identified a strong tradition and institutional support for academic freedom, integrity of the teaching-learning process and objectivity on the part of faculty. In addition, academic honesty policies, consequences for dishonesty and academic freedom policies are clearly indicated in both student and faculty publications. Interviews with students and faculty confirmed these policies are in place and are enforced. (II.A.7.a,b,c)

The team confirmed that the college does not currently conform to specific codes of conduct or offer courses or programs in foreign locations to students other than U.S. nationals. (II.A.7.c, 8)

## Conclusion

The team verified that the college offers high-quality instructional programs. Its programs and services appear to reflect both a breadth and depth appropriate for an institution of its size. The college is in the beginning stages of being able to implement a variety of instructional delivery systems and diverse teaching methodologies at both campuses.

The college has made significant progress with regard to the development of a robust program review process and determination of student learning outcomes at the course and college level. However, only limited progress is evident of outcomes at the program level. Evidence of assessment at the both course and program levels and the utilization of assessment results to improve student learning is essentially nonexistent at the time of the team visit. To meet the ACCJC requirement of Proficiency by 2012, the college will need to accelerate their efforts in identifying measurable student learning outcomes for every instructional and student support program and incorporating outcome assessments result into the planning process to improve student learning.

The college is in a very early stage of development relative to a fully integrated distance education program. The college has recently increased its support for distance education, but courses are currently identified for an online modality strictly through faculty interest and are not part of a long range plan for educational delivery.

## Recommendations

### **Recommendation 2:**

In order to meet the Commission's fall 2012 deadline, the team recommends that the college accelerate its efforts to identify and assess measurable student learning outcomes for every instructional, library and student support program. The team further recommends that the college incorporate student learning outcomes assessment results into program planning and resource allocation for the improvement of student learning. (II.A.1.a; II.A.1.c; II.A.2.f; II.A.3.a,b; II.B.4; II.C.2)

### **Recommendation 3:**

In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college allocate resources to create a sustainable infrastructure to support a distance education program that can deliver a high quality curricula and support student access and success. (II.A.1.b; II.A.2.d; II.B.3.a; III.C.1)

## Standard II B - Student Support Services

### General Comments

College of Marin offers a wide variety of student support services designed to assist students in meeting their educational and personal goals. Students' academic needs and learning styles are assessed through a matrix of instruments (assessments such as the math and English Placement tests, the ESL placement test, and others), orientation information, and counselor interviews. Referrals are made in the context of the mandated student educational plans and counseling appointments. A variety of workshops are regularly presented for faculty and staff covering transfer opportunities, career options with a major, and accommodations for the disabled. According to the self-study, student service programs are assessed through the program review process annually, and regular student surveys provide both evidence of quality and feedback on areas that need improvement. The vice president of student learning clarified that program reviews actually occur every three years, most recently in 2008.

The faculty and staff in the division are experienced and long serving. Student interviews indicate that students are happy with their educational experience and the support services they receive. One student said that she preferred College of Marin to the two previous community college she attended saying "students here are more serious and I always receive help when I ask for it." The college's self study indicates that in the 2009 survey of faculty and staff, a clear majority (78 percent) believe that student support services make significant contribution to students' success including improving retention, success, and transfers (p. 220).

Although the self study states that the student support services are required to prepare and submit annual program review documents, the Vice President of Student Learning clarified that the process is only done every three years, with the last review in 2008. The current program review includes the following: program objective and goals, program descriptions, student demographics, student learning outcomes, and program evaluations. There is no requirement to develop a plan for improvement based on the review.

### Findings and Evidence

The visiting team did ascertain that the college determines students' needs and assesses its student services programs through program review, student surveys, and reports required for programs monitored by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. These reports and assessments are used for program planning. Student services programs have participated in college wide program review, beginning in 2007-08, when program review became part of the college's ongoing integrated planning cycle. Before this process was initiated, the various

student services programs conducted regular reviews and self-assessments for each area. At a minimum, the current Student Services program review looks at program objectives and goals, program descriptions, student demographics, student learning outcomes, and program evaluations. Findings are used to measure progress toward the achievement of established departmental/program objectives and goals, identify student needs, develop solutions to challenges discovered, and to set new departmental/program goals, if needed. In addition to program review, regular student surveys are used to assess the progress of each department/program. The bi-annual college wide Student Satisfaction Survey provides feedback on a variety of student services. Each area also periodically conducts surveys to assess student satisfaction and to assess student needs. There are also several forums for departmental and college wide discussions regarding how to best support student access, progress, learning, and success at the college. (II.B.1)

In the most recent reviews, all units (except Testing) listed student learning outcomes for their units. However, these SLO's appear to be listed like objectives, i.e. headcount, rather than true learning outcomes. In addition, many appear difficult to assess. The assessment plans for these outcomes are rarely stated, and few units reported any assessment of their outcomes. One student service faculty member said that, "We need help with the assessment aspect of SLOs." (II.B.4)

The college publishes a catalog yearly which covers general information about the college, information on admission requirements, residency requirements, student fees and information about degrees, certificates, transfer requirements and graduation requirements. The visiting team found the information to be accurate and current. The catalog is available in both print and online, and past catalogs are available online back to 06-07. The latest student satisfaction survey (2009) revealed that some students found the online catalog somewhat difficult to navigate. The college also publishes a Student Handbook which provides students with general information and various college policies. This publication is not available online. (II.B.2)

College of Marin offers a wide range of student support services. However, access to these services is not conveniently available to all students. Although a large percentage of class sections are offered in the evening, 41 percent at IVC and between 28-31 percent at Kentfield, a comparable level of service is not available during evening hours. At the Kentfield campus, Admissions and Counseling are open in the evening several days a week, but a number of other offices, including Testing, Cal Works, DSPS, EOPS, Financial Aid, Health Services, and Job Placement are not opened after 4:30 p.m. Tutoring is open in the evenings at the Kentfield campus during the fall semester only on Tuesdays, until 7 p.m.

Students at IVC also have very limited access to services. Admissions, Financial Aid, and Counseling all have a permanent presence there. However, DSPS, EOPS, student government,

outreach/student ambassadors, and the library have no presence. Testing is available on a very limited basis. No testing sessions were offered in October, and only two sessions were scheduled in November 2010. Health services are available six hours per week, and tutoring is available only in two subjects. Student services administrators and the campus dean agree that services at IVC are “spotty” and more needs to be done. There are plans to increase services when the “new building” comes on board.

Although students now have 24/7 access to information through the college’s web portal, very few services are offered online. There is no online option for advising or general tutoring. The student opinion survey conducted in 2009 found that students rated “availability of my advisor” the lowest of all academic services. Despite the fact that access is the number one priority in the strategic plan for 2009-12, access to services is sorely needed for a large portion of students. (II.B.3.a)

The visiting team verified that students at the College of Marin have a number of avenues for extracurricular engagement. A variety of art, drama, and music coursework and opportunities for public artistic performance is offered. The music department typically presents twelve concerts per semester, the drama department presents three plays per year, and the art department hosts nine exhibits throughout the academic year. The Associated Student Government offers 43 club options for students. These clubs are not all active every semester, but all have been active at one time or another in the last several semesters. The college sponsors a student newspaper, *The Echo Times*, which is published every two weeks. The College of Marin *Mariners* field eleven intercollegiate athletic teams. A significant increase in women’s participation has occurred during the last three years; currently 63 women participate in athletics, up from just 9 three years ago. A student leadership class is also offered.

Despite these opportunities, the student satisfaction survey indicates that, “only 24 percent of students were satisfied with the opportunity for personal involvement in college activities” (p. 192), and “...more could be done to promote, support and communicate the opportunities for student development through campus activities” (p. 192). Currently there is no service learning program at the college. In the 2009 survey, cultural programs and activities were in the top five in terms of satisfaction. However, only 11.1 percent of the students had participated in cultural programs and activities, but those that did expressed high satisfaction with these activities.

College of Marin students recently passed approval for the inclusion of a student activity fee each semester. The \$8/semester fee takes effect in spring 2011, which will provide for more activity at Indian Valley Center. Currently very little student government or student activity opportunities are provide at the IVC, and according to the current AS president, no students

voted at the IVC in the last election. The college plans is to create a separate, but related, associate student government at the IVC at in future. (II.B.3.b)

The college's counseling department offers counseling services to all prospective, new and returning students, supporting students through their academic/transfer, personal, and career decision-making processes. All counselors are trained to provide these services to students, and all counselors are hired based on their experiences in these areas. Counseling services is also a core component of specialized programs, such as EOPS, DSPS and the Puente Project. Counseling also takes place in a number of different departments around the campus. As a result of the most recent program review, every third Thursday of the month is now scheduled for a joint in-service for all units providing counseling. Some of the topics have included: UC and CSU transfer, transcript evaluation, distance education, student conduct and suicide prevention.

The general counseling department also offers a number of specialized services. A full-time licensed Marriage and Family Therapist specializes in mental health counseling and may see students for up to 10 sessions. This individual also does academic advising and is now supervising an MFT intern which allows for additional mental health services. The college should be recognized for providing this level of support to the needs of the student community.

In 2007, the college committed to participate in the Puente Project, a University of California initiative that targets Latino students for academic success and transfer to four-year institutions. A full-time counselor is assigned 50 percent to this endeavor, and the other 50 percent is focused on working with basic skills students and is supported with state Basic Skills Initiative (BSI) funds. This counselor also teaches in the learning communities designed for BSI students.

A portion of another full-time counselor's load is assigned to work with student athletes. The athlete is provided with a comprehensive handbook regarding athletic eligibility and student conduct. Study hall and grade checks are provided and supervised by the athletic department. Athletes at College of Marin are fortunate to receive first priority registration.

The college Transfer Center offers a large number of workshops to explain the transfer agreement guarantee (TAG), and prepare students to apply to the CSU and UC systems. Counselors also make classroom visits targeting English and math courses early in the fall semester to enlighten students about upcoming events including TAG, UC/CSU workshops, and transfer day. All counseling courses are transferable. This semester five classes are offered at Kentfield, two classes at IVC, none are online, and none are offered in the evening. (II.B.3.c)

The visiting team made considerable effort to determine the college's commitment to diversity by examining its programs and services designed to promote and enhance diversity and the appropriate support to a diverse student body. Evidence was provided by the Student Services

Department that confirmed culturally sensitive services to students on a regular basis. The College of Marin has a linguistically and culturally diverse staff who provide services to a diverse student body. Informational materials and resources from different student service departments are made available to students in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. Student and employee satisfaction surveys, student services program reviews, assessment of numerous programs and student services departments and self studies, and the ongoing evaluation of programs and services, document that students are provided with effective services.

In 2008, the college formed a Campus Climate Taskforce in response to several racially insensitive incidents. The Task Force made recommendations to the superintendent/president and developed a planning matrix for major activities, including a speaker series. Thus far, few of the recommendations have been fulfilled. The self study recognizes the value of these recommendations by asserting, "Implementing the recommendations...could strengthen the college's efforts in this area" (p. 196).

The most recent student equity plan was completed in April 2005. Interviews conducted with many faculty revealed that they were unaware that a plan existed. Furthermore, many of the goals of the equity plan have not been addressed or achieved. The goal to increase ethnic minorities enrollment over three year period by increasing awareness of COM's offerings and support services was not met for American Indians or African-Americans, enrollment of Asian students improved by a mere .5 percent, and a Hispanic enrollment increased .6 percent. Nevertheless, the Puente Program is an example of meeting the plan's goal to increase awareness of transfer opportunities for historically underrepresented groups. The addition of the Student Ambassador program in 2007 also addressed the goal of increasing awareness of transfer opportunities in the high schools by outreaching to historically underrepresented groups. The goal to promote the value of the certificate and the associate degree was not achieved as awards of these decreased over the past five years.

The team's further analysis of the Student Opinion Survey revealed levels of satisfaction declining between 2007 and 2009 regarding racial harmony, going from 66 percent satisfaction to 51 percent. The significant number of students who were dissatisfied should prompt the college to reflect on its ramifications.

According to the 2009 Faculty and Staff survey, 60 percent of faculty and staff believe that "the college provides programs and services that enhance understanding and appreciation of diversity on campus." While this is a strong endorsement (according to the Self Study, p. 196), the institution recognizes that diversity sensitivity could be stronger. Implementing the recommendations of the Task Force on Campus Climate, 2008, including a full speakers series, could strengthen the college's efforts in this area. It is disappointing that only eight full time

faculty members took advantage of the cultural sensitivity training offering through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teaching Institute this past spring. (II.B.3.d)

The visiting team verified that the College of Marin adheres to the open admissions policy prescribed in California Education Code and Title 5 of the California Code of Education. Conversations with college staff indicated that the college evaluates the effectiveness of its admissions instruments by conducting student satisfaction surveys, and by maintaining a close working relationship with other California community colleges in implementing best practices. A direct result of this evaluation process was the implementation of CCC Apply online admissions processing in the spring of 2009 and the review and revision of the noncredit admissions application.

The college adopted Accuplacer® in 2007, an instrument approved by the Chancellor's office, which tests both math and English. Validation studies were conducted by the college in 2008 and some adjustments were made to cut scores. (II.B.3.e)

The team confirmed the college's use of Banner® for maintaining its student academic records within the institution's administrative computing system. The Information Technology (IT) Department has implemented adequate security and has provided for backup recovery in case of emergencies. The dean of enrollment management is responsible for approving access to student records. Access to levels of student record information is authorized and monitored by an employee's individual admittance password and computer entry code. Backup copies of student data are kept offsite in a secure location.

The college's current policy 4.0021, Students' Rights of Privacy, is currently being updated and reviewed for approval. The proposed new Board Policy (BP 5040) Student Records and Directory Information, ensures compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Students are no longer required to use their social security numbers as their primary student identification number because a computer generated student identification number is now assigned to all students. The student's social security number continues to be identified on the official academic transcript since college and universities continue to track transfers by this number (Self Study, p. 198).

The college complies with FERPA regulations. The Admissions and Records staff attend conferences to keep abreast of the latest updates on FERPA. Faculty and staff are updated on FERPA through updates from the Dean of Enrollment Services on the portal. In addition, flex workshops regarding FERPA regulations are presented every two years. (II.B.3.f)

### **Conclusion**

The college partially meets the standard.

## **Recommendations**

**See Recommendation #2**

**See Recommendation #3**

### **Recommendation #5**

In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college remedy the lack of library services, learning resources and student support services for evening, Indian Valley Campus, and online students. (II.B.3.a; II.C.1.c, ER 14, ER 16)

### **Recommendation #6**

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the college fully implement the self-identified planning agenda from 2003/04 regarding the academic success of underrepresented students; the Student Equity Plan of 2005; and the recommendations of the student climate taskforce of 2008. (II.B.3.d)

## Standard II C - Library and Learning Support Services

### General Comments

The visiting team observed library materials to consist of books, periodicals, and electronic databases. The library at the Kentfield campus incorporates nearly 17,000 square feet in the Learning Resources Center. The space is used to house books, study and reading areas, and individual computer stations. A “smart” classroom, with 22 computers was opened in fall 2009 and is used for the Library 110 one-credit course and orientations. (II.C.1.a, II.C.1.b)

Also located in the Learning Resources Center on the Kentfield campus are the Media Center, Media Services department, the Distance Education Support Center (DESC), and the Language and Culture Lab. The Media Center offers a computer lab, group viewing of media, and storage for VHS and DVD films. The Media Center provides support for distance education through liaison with distance education faculty members, broadcasting videos and maintenance of the Distance Education website. Media Services provides and maintains instructional media equipment for both campuses. (II.C.1.a)

The DESC provides training in online course management for faculty members interested in developing online courses, make-up testing services for distance education students, learning skills support for distance education students, and is staffed by a .20 faculty trainer. (II.C.1.a)

Library instruction for credit consists of Library 110, a one-credit, self-directed, six-week course in research skills. Library instruction also occurs through the offering of course-specific orientations and working one-on-one with students in the library. Demand by faculty for course-specific orientations in the use of library resources and information literacy at the Kentfield facility is strong. There appears to be reasonably strong demand for information literacy training and, in response, ongoing instruction for users of the library on the Kentfield campus is available. Approximately 50 orientations were given between the beginning of the fall semester and the end of October 2010. (II.C.1.b)

Tutoring services for students are available on the Kentfield campus through the English Writing Lab. Free online writing assistance for all students is available in addition to one-on-one assistance for students taking developmental courses. Other disciplines provide tutoring in their discipline-specific labs such as math and business. A large portion of student tutoring is provided by the Tutoring and Learning Center program which provides services, in various subjects, to all students. (II.C.1.b)

The library at the Indian Valley campus was closed in 2006. Following its closure the only direct learning support services for the Indian Valley campus consisted of orientation meetings that were provided until about fall 2009 when library faculty were reduced to two fulltime and one halftime librarian. (II.C.1.b, II.C.1.c)

A security contract with 3M® is in place for the building that houses the library, Media Center and Media Services on the Kentfield campus. Additional contracts with outside companies provide maintenance and repair for library copying equipment. Until the fall of 2010 there was an agreement with Dominican University for a shared subscription for the Millennium Cataloging system. (II.C.1.d, II.C.1.e)

The college surveys students regarding the effectiveness of its services and reports that, in recent surveys, about three out of four students are satisfied with tutoring, library services, and other support services in the Learning Resources Center. In addition, student learning outcomes (SLOs) have been identified for information literacy instruction provided by the librarians. (II.C.2)

### **Findings and Evidence**

The Indian Valley campus library was closed in 2006. Further, since the fall of 2009, no orientations or other in-person services by qualified librarians have been available to students at the Indian Valley campus. If a student at the Indian Valley campus wishes to use the library, reference services are available via telephone or email. Access to electronic databases can only occur once a student has gone to the Kentfield campus to obtain a library card with a barcode and/or obtains a password by phone or email from library staff on the Kentfield campus. (II.C.1.a, II.C.1.b, II.C.1.c)

The college plans to establish a virtual information resource library at the Indian Valley campus in the new main building that is expected to be completed in the spring of 2011. The purpose and function of this virtual library is unclear to existing librarians who were not involved in the planning or decision-making process of this resource or in the design of the new facility at the Indian Valley campus. Staffing for this new facility is also uncertain, as the vacant librarian position has not yet been filled. (II.C.1.a, II.C.1.b, II.C.1.c)

The loss of a full-time librarian in the fall of 2009 has resulted in decreased offerings of Library 110 and library orientations. The two full-time and one half-time librarians on the Kentfield campus maintain the day-to-day staffing of the reference desk and instruction of students, but have little time for collaboration with other discipline faculty and involvement with general library planning for the development of skills in information competency. (II.C.1.b)

The SLOs for the one-credit course (18 hours) are identical to those identified for the orientations (1-2 hours) and individual student consultations (variable duration). There is no evidence that these are formally assessed. Occasionally, students will tell librarians about their learning, and these comments suggest that some of these SLOs are achieved for some of the students. Student surveys ask whether students are satisfied with their learning and library services. In the spring 2010 online student satisfaction survey, 87 percent stated they would recommend library services to others. However, student comments also emphasized the need for more access, with 78 percent either very or somewhat likely to use weekend services if they were available. (II.C.2)

### **Conclusion**

While the Kentfield campus provides its students with a physical library and access to qualified librarians, no such facility, equipment, resources, or staffing have been available at the Indian Valley campus since 2006. (II.C.1.a)

No library instruction or class orientations have been provided to the students on the Indian Valley campus since the fall of 2009. No reference services, physical facility or books have been available at the Indian Valley campus since 2006. Evidence regarding the effectiveness of services is not provided. SLOs have been identified but not assessed objectively. ( II.C.1.b; II.C.1.c; II.C.1.d; II.C.1.e; II.C.2)

The college partially meets standard IIC.

### **Recommendations**

**See Recommendation #2**

**See Recommendation #5**

## **Standard III Resources**

### **A. Human Resources**

#### **General Comments**

The College of Marin has a well-established recruitment and hiring process that is systematic, equitable and transparent. Staff are well qualified and properly credentialed in accordance with all applicable regulations. College of Marin is currently struggling with vacancies caused by faculty and other staff retirements due to the statewide budget shortage. This has been a cause of particular concern for full-time faculty, who have a formula for replacement of instructors in their collective bargaining agreement. Evaluation processes are well-defined and scheduled regularly, but administered unevenly across various employee groups. Student learning outcomes are addressed both in individual evaluations and through the program review process. Written codes of professional ethics are upheld for all groups including the Board of Trustees. The staff development program has reorganized with a recent focus on technology training, and diversity training is handled through flex week activities. The college has only a draft Equal Employment Opportunity Plan in place. The college includes human resources in their integrated planning, and in spring 2010, the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC) included staffing in their recommendations to the superintendent/president.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

Processes are in place to ensure that personnel employed by the college are qualified and have the appropriate credentials to provide and support the integrity of the college's mission, programs and services. Faculty and administrator degrees are issued from educational institutions accredited in the United States or where equivalencies have been established. (Standard III.A.1; III.A.1.a)

The College of Marin has processes to assure effectiveness by evaluating all employees in a regular and systematic manner, in accordance with BP 7150. Faculty evaluations are up to date; management and classified evaluations have been inconsistent. There is a planning agenda item to address this, including the development of a more comprehensive district wide evaluation tracking system and more training on performance appraisal for managers. All personnel files are stored securely in the human resources department, and confidentiality of files is addressed in district policy 5.0012 (III.A.1.b; III.A.3.b)

Tenured faculty are expected to include student learning outcomes on their syllabi, and their evaluation process includes the instructor's expectations and goals for each course, as well as student evaluations on how clearly these were met. Assessment information of SLOs is reported only in aggregate form. (Standard III.A.1.c)

The College of Marin has adopted a written institutional code of ethics that applies to all employees of the college, and a board policy that addresses ethical standards for the Board of Trustees. In addition, the Unified Professors of Marin (UPM), CSEA and SEIU contracts all include professional ethics. (Standard III.A.1.d)

The number of full-time faculty at College of Marin has remained fairly constant over the past five years, with a full-time/part-time ratio that is the same as the state wide average of 55/45. While only 13 percent of staff and faculty agreed that "effective processes are used to determine staffing needs," this may reflect the shift to a participatory governance model for determining needs and away from a contractual model. The number of staff and administrators has also remained constant, resulting in an increased workload in correlation with higher enrollments. (Standard III.A.2)

Policy and the process for the selection of personnel are clearly stated in BP 7120 and the related administrative procedures, as well as a number of published district policies. The district is currently reviewing and rewriting some of these for purposes of streamlining, assurance of candidate qualifications, and meeting legal requirements. (Standards III.A.3; III.A.3.a)

College of Marin's mission statement includes a core value of respect for a diverse community. BP 7100 states the district's commitment to staff diversity and equal opportunity. There is a draft Equal Employment Opportunity Plan. Marin county and the employees of College of Marin are 75 percent white, but the student population is 35 percent minority and 60 percent white. The college needs to continue to monitor its effort to maintain a diverse workforce that is reflective of the changing student demographics. The college treats all constituencies as equitably as possible in applying policies and procedures and in handling complaints swiftly and through proper channels. The college keeps appropriate statistics and records on ethnic, gender and other demographic information, and reports it to the Chancellor's Office twice per year. (Standards II.A.4; III.A.4.a; III.A.4.b; III.A.4.c)

The oversight of staff development has been revised recently, with two former committees discontinued and a new professional development committee (PDC) created within the division

of planning research and institutional effectiveness (PRIE) in 2009. The PDC is charged with developing training based on the college mission and Educational Master Plan, as well as assessment of workshops and training programs. In the 2009 Faculty and Staff Survey, only 36 percent of employees believed they were provided with sufficient training opportunities. (Standard III.A.5; III.A.5.a; II.A.5.b)

In spring 2010, the PRAC committee was able to forward staffing recommendations to the district as part of institutional planning. This was not approved due to budget constraints, and there is concern that the district will not be able to fund additional maintenance/custodial staff needed for the new campus building projects.

(Standard III.A.6)

### **Conclusion**

The College of Marin has integrated human resources planning into overall institutional planning. Evidence shows a changing student demographic that the college needs to monitor in its effort to maintain a diverse workforce reflective of the student population.

The college meets the standard.

### **Recommendations**

None

## **B. Physical Resources**

### **General Comments**

The College of Marin, founded in 1926, has a main campus in Kentfield and the Indian Valley Campus (IVC) in Novato. There is also a marine laboratory site in Bolinas, which has been closed due to safety concerns since 2007. Both the Kentfield and IVC sites are full-service campuses, with the exception of no library facility or services at IVC. The original Kentfield site has 33 permanent and modular buildings; IVC, with 25 buildings, was built in 1975 on 333 acres of land in anticipation of enrollment growth that never materialized. The district has an excess of buildings resulting in a high capacity to load ratio that that has made the college ineligible for state capital funding. Until the passage of bond Measure C in 2004, the district did not have any funding for major capital improvements.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The Measure C modernization program is revitalizing a number of aging buildings and replacing others. This is much needed according to the results of student surveys in 2007 and 2009, which placed the condition of classrooms, facilities and grounds near the bottom of 44 items listed. A detailed facilities assessment was conducted by consultants in 2005, including extensive input from faculty, staff and various committees on facilities improvements that would enhance educational programs and services. As a result, a Bond Implementation Spending Plan (BISP) was developed in 2006. This comprehensive document includes modernization, demolition and construction of facilities including design principles and space planning. The College of Marin is committed to sustainable buildings and has compliance with Title 24, Green Building Council, and LEED requirements as a goal. There has been completion of two major renovations and several infrastructure projects, plus a main building complex slated to open at IVC in December 2010 and a new fine arts building at Kentfield due in spring 2011. There is a concern regarding ongoing maintenance at new facilities, and the college has a planning agenda for the PRAC committee to do an analysis of long-term facilities costs, which will be forwarded to the superintendent/president as part of integrated planning and resource allocation.

(III.B.1; III.B.1.a)

The college has board policies in place addressing various health and safety issues, as well as a Health and Safety Committee and Accessibility Work Group. Regular safety inspections and trainings are performed, and College of Marin complies with all local, state and federal regulations. There is minimal crime on the two campuses, and statistics are available on the campus website. (III.B.1.b)

There are a number of planning documents in place for facilities and safety, including the Educational Master Plan, the Strategic Plan, the BISP, the Emergency Management Plan, and the Integrated Waste Management plan. Requests for capital needs and equipment are made through the program review process, and are considered by appropriate governance subcommittees. They are then forwarded to PRAC for prioritization and funding. However, the last Facilities Master Plan was completed in 2004; a new one needs to be developed to complement the recently completed 10 year Educational Master Plan. (III.B.2; III.B.2.a; III.B.2.b)

### **Conclusion**

The passage of Bond Measure C has given College of Marin the opportunity to provide improved facilities support for student learning and programs. The BISP has been well-vetted and accepted by all constituencies. The college now has a well-defined link between facilities planning and resource allocation, which should be helpful in determining long term maintenance costs and how to provide for them. The next step is to develop an updated Facilities Master Plan.

The college partially meets the standard.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Recommendation #7**

In order to meet standard, the team recommends that the college develop a facilities master plan to ensure the effective utilization and quality of physical resources which are necessary to support its programs and services. (III.B.2.b)

## C. Technology Resources

### General Comments

In the last six years, the College of Marin has upgraded many of its technology resources and added additional resources and services to serve the technological needs of the college community. Training in the use of the various new technology systems has been made available to staff. The college has a new six year Technology Plan that deals with the acquisition, maintenance, and replacement of technological resources and equipment.

### Findings and Evidence

College of Marin has been ambitious in the technology projects launched since 2004, including the replacement of its Enterprise Resource Program with Banner, purchase of WebCT/Blackboard, and introduction of wireless connectivity. These and other systems are adequate to support student learning programs and services, and assist the college in making institutional decisions. However, the college recognizes the need to upgrade the wireless infrastructure, implement unused software products, and establish a distance education help desk to assist students, faculty and staff. In March of 2010, the college hired a permanent director of information technology who should provide leadership in the implementation of the college's technology plan.

(III.C.1; III.C.1.a)

A training consultant was hired to develop materials and conduct training sessions for various departments in the use of the new college systems. In addition, college staff worked directly with developers to design end-user training and manuals. College of Marin maintains a staff development webpage that includes training manuals and a link to a calendar of training workshops. Staff is also encouraged to take advantage of in-house sessions on Microsoft Office programs, as well as @One sessions offered through the CCC Chancellor's Office.

(III.C.1.b)

In addition to the Technology Plan, the Strategic Plan prioritizes technology planning and training. Technology needs are identified at the department level, and requests are considered and prioritized through the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee for consideration by the superintendent/president. However, specifics of certain needs are not specified in the plans and seem immediate. For example, 81 percent of the college's network switches are over eight years old, a fifth of the desktop PCs are over seven years old, and the college is unable to respond to virus/security threats in real time. The Measure C Bond funding can only be used to

upgrade network infrastructure in new buildings. Yet, a high priority for the college is the expansion of its distance learning program. There is a need for a more formal, collaborative and comprehensive program for the collection of data to aid in institutional decisions. The self study states that the college needs to develop “an ongoing implementation plan for the rollout of new software and upgrades to software that is already in use: At present there is no plan in place” (pg. 290). College of Marin also needs a centralized policy that outlines a common process and options for the approval, acquisition, and replacement that can be followed by all departments at the institution.

(III.C.1.c; III.C.1.d; III.C.2)

### **Conclusion**

Given the reality of budget limitations, the College of Marin needs a plan for a sustainable process that is systematic in the planning, acquisition, maintenance and replacement of its existing and new technology infrastructure. The college needs to establish and clearly communicate a process for prioritizing and funding both short and long-term technology needs to ensure it will have adequate technological resources.

The college partially meets the standard.

### **Recommendations**

**See Recommendation #3**

#### **Recommendation #8**

In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college establish and communicate a sustainable technology plan for the acquisition, maintenance and replacement of its infrastructure, equipment, support and training to meet institutional needs. The team further recommends regular evaluation of this plan for its effectiveness in prioritizing and funding current and projected long term technology needs. (III.C.1.a; III.C.1.b; III.C.1.c; III.C.1.d)

## **D. Financial Resources**

### **General Comments**

The College of Marin is one of the few basic aid or self-supporting districts in the CCC system. Instead of state apportionment, the college receives a fixed percentage of Marin County's property tax revenue, which for 2010-11 is 13.3 million dollars more than it would receive through apportionment. However, due to declining property values, the basic aid increment has decreased during the past two years. The college continues to manage its budget soundly and has adequate reserves. The new Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC) links campus planning with budget recommendations. Early indications are that this process has been embraced by the college community and is working well.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The central institution wide documents for budget planning at COM are the Educational Master Plan, Integrated Planning Manual, and the Strategic Plan. Planning and resource needs at the individual program level are reflected in program reviews. All these documents guide the decisions of the PRAC committee, which then forwards resource allocation recommendations to the superintendent/president. This process, which is inclusive and transparent, is also new to the college. In the 2009 Faculty and Staff Survey, only 14 percent of faculty and 17 percent of classified staff agreed that appropriate and timely budget information was provided regularly to the college community. There should be improvement as the new planning and budget allocation process matures and becomes established. (III.D.1; III.D.1.a; III.D.1.d)

Tentative and adoption budgets are developed based on discussions with the Marin County Treasurer's Office to determine anticipated tax revenues. Also considered are the priorities of the Board of Trustees, maintenance of a specified reserve level, state budget issues, unfunded liabilities, and other factors which will have a fiscal impact. Budget development is vetted through the participatory governance structure, and the budget is available on the website. The college participates in various partnerships and special projects with the business and workforce community. There is an Educational Excellence and Innovation Fund established by the former superintendent/president which funds faculty and staff innovation in four categories. An example of this was the E-car program at IVC which converted a conventional utility cart to solar power. (III.D.1.b)

To ensure long term fiscal stability, the Board of Trustees has established a minimum reserve level of 7.6 percent, with a goal to increase to a 17.5 percent reserve. To assist in managing long-

term costs and liabilities for retiree health benefits, College of Marin commissioned an actuarial study in 2008. Over the past few years, the college has set aside \$2 million dollars to meet the mandated compliance of GASB 45. The total liability is \$7.3 million. To address its insurance and liability exposure, the college participates in the joint powers self-insured Statewide Association of Community Colleges program. (III.D.1.c)

Financial documents are available online at the college for monitoring and review. Internal access to online information for funds and programs varies based on security status. All budgets, audits and quarterly financial reports are public. The Banner Financial system has recently been implemented. The college engages in an annual external audit by Perry-Smith, LLP. For the past three years, the auditor stated that the financial statements fairly represent the financial condition of the college, which has not received any qualified or adverse opinions. All findings and recommendations have been corrected within a year except for one internal control regarding the payroll system, which the new Banner system will correct. The annual audit is reviewed by the Board of Trustees. (III.D.2; III.D.2.a; III.D.2.b)

The college has done a good job at managing its budget and has sufficient cash flow and reserves. In recent years, the reserve has remained over 11 percent, which is more than double the state recommended minimum. The college receives about 73 percent of its cash flow from property taxes, and participates in a tax revenue anticipation note program (TRANS) when needed. The Board of Trustees does not include supplemental property taxes in budget spending, which helps offset potential declines in revenue. When there is no decline, those funds go towards the goal of a 17.5 percent reserve. (III.D.2.c)

The college monitors auxiliary funds through a separate accounting system, which is audited annually. There have been no findings. There is a Citizens' Oversight Committee that reviews spending on capital improvements funded by the Measure C bond. There have been no findings when the Measure C program has been audited. Grants are in compliance with all state and federal regulations. Grant proposals are approved through the superintendent/president's cabinet to make sure they align with institutional priorities. All contracts go through review processes to ensure compliance with regulations, as well as cost and benefit to the college. Agreements are reviewed at cabinet level and also may be reviewed by the district's legal counsel. (III.D.2.d; III.D.2.e; III.D.2.f)

The college is still in the process of developing a methodology for assessing the effective use of its finances. A new asset management process is currently being implemented, as well as launching the finance component of Banner. Review of external audits and other documentation

affords some evaluation, but a shared governance process needs to be developed and implemented as the basis for future budgetary decisions. (III.D.2.g; III.D.3)

### **Conclusion**

The College of Marin is financially sound with sufficient resources to support the college mission and student learning programs and services. The college has made significant progress in linking planning and budgeting, including the establishment of the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee. The new Banner finance system and asset management program should assist the college in designing an effective financial management evaluation process. The probable continued loss of property taxes will be critical in the next few years, creating more demands for basic aid increment. COM continues to build a healthy reserve and has done an excellent job in managing its cash flow and fiscal resources.

The college meets the standard.

### **Recommendations**

**See Recommendation #1**

## STANDARD IV Leadership and Governance

### General Comments

Prior to the fall 2004 comprehensive site visit, the College of Marin faculty and staff recognized the need to reinvigorate its participatory governance policies, processes, and procedures. Following the visit, the team concluded that the college had correctly anticipated a mandate from the Accrediting Commission to do so. The Governance Review Council (GRC) was tasked with this project, and by May 2005, the Board of Trustees adopted the governance policy that resulted from the GRC's creation of the College of Marin Participatory Governance System (PGS) plan. This revitalized participatory governance system is evaluated annually by the GRC. Suggested improvements to the system are forwarded to the College Council for action and recommendation to the superintendent/president.

With the technical assistance of the Community College League of California, the Board of Trustees has been reviewing and revising all board policies including those enumerated in the Accrediting Commission standards. As the policies are revised and approved by the governing board, they are made available on the college website through an active link. Despite the focus on continuous improvement activities throughout the college including this thorough review and revision of board policies, relationships among board members and between the board and college constituencies have been problematic in the last two years. At least five board retreats have been designed to address the friction, but their success has been hampered because of some board members' absence for part or all of those retreats.

The superintendent/president who was in office during the preparation of the self study guided the college through a tumultuous period. Despite the difficulties, progress was made in improving the college's fiscal health, participatory governance processes, the integration of planning and budget, and the physical condition of the plant due to passage of a \$249.5 million general obligation bond program. This superintendent/president retired during the summer of 2010. A new superintendent/president was selected and announced by the Board of Trustees on September 21, 2010.

## Findings and Evidence

### **Standard IV.A—Decision Making Roles and Processes**

The visiting team reviewed documentation dating back to spring 2004, whereby the college revitalized its Governance Review Council (GRC) and charged it with the responsibility of modernizing and updating the college's participatory governance system. This resulted in the creation of the College of Marin Participatory Governance System (PGS) plan. On May 10, 2005, the Board of Trustees approved the governance policy that resulted from the PGS plan. At its June 14, 2005 meeting, the board approved new governance processes and procedures. As part of its regular evaluation processes, the GRC conducts surveys to determine the faculty and staff perceptions of the effectiveness of governance. The results of the October 2009 survey indicate that while 41 percent of staff and 88 percent of administrators agree that the college's governance process is an effective means of channeling faculty ideas regarding institutional decision making, only 25 percent of faculty respondents agreed with that statement. Similar percentages of faculty and staff agree that the governance process is an effective means of channeling staff ideas; however, just 69 percent of administrators agree with this statement. The college should address these negative perceptions by seeking to understand why the majority of faculty members do not feel as positively about their access to effective participatory governance as the other constituencies, and why administrators perceive staff access as so much lower than faculty access. (IV.A.1; IV.A.2.a)

The PGS plan defines the membership, roles, and responsibilities of all college constituent groups. In addition to the plan, Board Policy 3260 titled Participation in Local Decision Making includes specific discussion of the roles of the Academic Senate, staff and students in collegial consultation. Furthermore, the policy states that "Except for unforeseeable circumstances and compelling reasons, the Board shall not take any action on matters subject to this policy until the appropriate constituent group or groups have been provided the opportunity to participate." (IV.A.2.a)

The faculty role in curriculum and student learning services and programs is defined in Board Policy 4020 and Administrative Regulation 4020. The self study notes that the Curriculum Committee is the most important of the Academic Senate's three subcommittees. Administrative Regulation 4020 codifies the Curriculum Committees as a standing committee of the Academic Senate established through mutual agreement between the district and the senate. Further, the regulation states that the purpose of this committee is to "maintain the quality and integrity of the educational programs. Courses and programs will be evaluated for their educational content and appropriateness and value to the students served." However, the visiting team observed that while there is every indication that the college relies on the curriculum committee for

recommendations regarding curriculum, as demonstrated by the inclusion of course-level student learning outcomes in the college's approved course outlines, the number of vacant positions on the curriculum committee is striking. According to the committee's website and generally confirmed by the faculty curriculum committee chair, vacant positions include voting members from Behavioral Science, Communications, DS&PS, Fine Arts, Health Science, Library, Physical Education & Health, Physical Science, Social Sciences, and a student representative (voting in the case of a tie); that is, ten of twenty-one positions—*half* of the academic departments—are vacant. The college should be concerned about how these vacancies compromise the integrity of the Curriculum Committee. (IV.A.2.b)

Constituency roles and responsibilities are well defined in policy, procedure, and practice. According to the self study, among the nine participatory governance committees, there are 19 student seats, 38 faculty seats, 21 classified staff seats, and 20 seats for administrators. Recommendations made through the governance process move forward to the superintendent/president through the College Council and the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC). The superintendent/president takes recommendations to the Board of Trustees. (IV.A.3)

The college responds honestly and with integrity to all external agencies including: the Commission on Dental Accreditation, National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, Board of Registered Nursing, the California Institute of Nursing and Health Care, and the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). Following the fall 2004 visit, the college had five significant recommendations, and it was required to submit six progress reports and a focused midterm report. All documents were submitted on a timely basis and accurately reflected the progress of the college on addressing progress on the recommendations at the time of the report. (IV.A.4)

Through the GRC, the college's participatory governance system is evaluated on an annual basis at a minimum. More frequent evaluation can take place at the request of the faculty and classified senates or by the Board of Trustees. As a part of this review process, the GRC conducts an annual governance participant survey, which shows improvement in perceptions of the governance system. According to the self study, through this annual review process the GRC recommended the merger of the Institutional Planning Committee and the Budget Committee into the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC) in September 2009, to address gaps identified during the evaluation process. The college conducts these evaluation processes regularly, takes the evaluation process seriously, and makes and implements recommendations for improvement. However, gaps still exist; some committee members indicated a lack of clear

meeting goals and tasks, as well as a lack of sufficient information and data to support their work. (IV.A.5)

#### **Standard IV.B—Board and Administrative Organization**

As defined in Board Policy 2100, the governing board is an independent body consisting of seven members elected at large in November of odd numbered years. Trustees are elected to serve for four years; the terms are staggered so that approximately half of the members are elected every two years. The board's responsibility to act as a whole and in the best interests of the college is defined under their code of ethics in Board Policy 2715.

While board policies set the standard for appropriate collegial behavior for board members, concern is expressed in the self study regarding their ability to work together collegially and to speak with one voice on behalf of the college once a decision has been made. Attempts to restore collegiality and unify the board have not had the desired results because board members' attendance at special retreats has been inconsistent. (IV.B.1.a)

A review of Board Policy 1200 confirms the college mission and the process for annual review of the institutional mission. Quality and integrity are addressed in Board Policy 2200. Improvement of student learning programs and services are addressed in Board Policies 4020 and 4021. Allocation of resources necessary to support student learning programs and services is covered in Board Policy 6200. (IV.B.1.b)

Board Policy 2200 specifies the governing board's duties and responsibilities on behalf of the district's citizens including its responsibility for the legal and fiscal welfare of the district. Academic matters are addressed in twenty-six policy statements presented in chapter four of the Board Policies. The governing board's responsibility for the district's fiscal health is covered in Board Policies 6200, 6250, and 6300. (IV.B.1.c)

Board Policy 2010 defines the governing board's size as seven elected members and a non-voting student member. The student trustee's election process is explained in Board Policy 2105. Board Policy 2200 specifies the governing board's duties and responsibilities on behalf of the district's citizens. The board's structure is defined in Board Policy 2100, which describes the annual organizational meeting for the selection of board officers, and Board Policy 2210 outlines the board officers' responsibilities. Board policies 2310, 2315, 2320, 2330, 2340, 2345, 2350, 2355, 2360, and 2365 describe the governing board's operating procedures. (IV.B.1.d)

With the assistance of the Community College League of California (CCLC), the College of Marin board began reviewing and revising all of its policies in 2007. The majority of the policies referenced above are accessible and downloadable on the College of Marin website. Exceptions to that website availability are Board Policy 2330, titled Quorum and Voting and Board Policy 2360, titled Minutes. (IV.B.1.e)

The policy for continuing governing board development is found in Board Policy 2470 titled Board Education. In this policy, the board states that it will “engage in study sessions, provide access to reading materials, and support conference attendance, *training*, and other activities that foster Board member education” (emphasis in the original). (IV.B.1.f)

Board Policy 2475 details the annual process employed by the governing board to assess its performance, collect data, and report the results of the self evaluation. According to the policy, at the annual organization meeting in December, a board subcommittee is appointed to lead the evaluation process. The subcommittee prepares and recommends an evaluation instrument to the full board for approval. All governing board members must complete the adopted self evaluation; completed evaluations are submitted to the subcommittee for summary. The summary results are reported at a regular board meeting where accomplishments and areas for improvement are identified, and goals and objectives for the subsequent year are established. In addition to this annual formal process, the board conducts an informal evaluation at the conclusion of each board meeting to identify what worked and what areas of communication should be improved. (IV.B.1.g)

The governing board’s code of ethics is stated in Board Policy 2715 and conflicts of interest are defined in Board Policy 2710. Board Policy 2715 discusses the roles and responsibilities of board members as individuals while emphasizing that their only legal authority exists in their actions as a group. The policy addresses the consequences for violations of this code of ethics, which may result in a recommendation to censure the board member. (IV.B.1.h)

The governing board is well informed about and involved in the accreditation process. There is a standing item on all board meeting agendas for accreditation. Board Policy 3200 defines the superintendent/president’s responsibilities for keeping the board informed about the college’s accredited status as well as ensuring that the board is involved with accreditation processes as required by any accrediting agency. (IV.B.1.i)

Board Policy 2431 covers the process for the selection of the superintendent/president. The board’s annual evaluation process of the superintendent/president is outlined in Board Policy 2435 and discussed in Board Policy 2430. Delegation of authority to the superintendent/president is explained in Board Policies 2430, 6100, and 7110. In addition to delegating authority to the superintendent/president, Board Policy 2430 empowers the superintendent/president to

reasonably interpret board policy and, in the absence of board direction, to act with such actions subject to board review. The policy allows the superintendent/president to delegate his or her authority to others, but she or he is still responsible to the board for the execution of those powers and duties. (IV.B.1.j)

From 2004-2010, the superintendent/president increased the college ending balance from 3.7 percent to a high of 12 percent; led the college through its revitalization of its governance system; facilitated the development and implementation of college wide program review, the creation of a ten-year educational plan and a three-year strategic plan, and the implementation of integrated planning and resource allocation process; and guided the board through the review and revision of the majority of board policies and administrative regulations. In November 2004, she successfully led the district in passing a \$249.5 million dollar bond measure. (IV.B.2)

During her tenure, the superintendent/president evaluated the structure of the administrative staff undertaking two administrative reorganizations in 2005 and 2006. This reorganization resulted in a reduction of administrative staff from twenty-five to twenty-three administrators. At least five interim positions were filled with permanent administrators over the last six years. The superintendent/president is entrusted with delegating authority to achieve institutional goals and objectives through Board Policy 2430. (IV.B.2.a)

The superintendent/president ensured that the college developed and implemented program review throughout the institution. A ten-year educational master plan and the development of three rolling strategic plans were facilitated and supported during her tenure. A new process for integrating planning and resource allocation were approved and implemented during the last academic year. According to the self study, now that there is a formal link established between planning and budget, the college is prepared to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of implementing college goals, objectives, and priorities. Since the college has only recently achieved this integration in budget and planning, there is no evaluation data to support the success of this process. The college has not achieved true sustainability in linking planning and budget and evaluating its effectiveness. (IV.B.2.b)

The superintendent/president is responsible for ensuring the implementation of all statutes, regulations and governing board policies as outlined in Board Policies 2430, 6100, and 7100. (IV.B.2.c)

During her tenure, the superintendent/president increased the college ending balance from 3.7 percent to a high of 12 percent. Prior to her tenure, the college had been on the state fiscal watch list for two consecutive years. Shortly after being hired, the superintendent/president was charged with supporting the passage of a general obligation bond, which the Board of Trustees had elected to undertake prior to her arrival. The district's efforts were successful, and in

November 2004 the voters approved a \$249.5 million dollars in general obligation bonds. These bonds have been used to improve the physical plant and infrastructure in the district. (IV.B.2.d)

According to the self study, the former superintendent/president interfaced effectively with the community in a number of ways. She was active in local service organizations such as Rotary International and she served on the local Chamber of Commerce. The superintendent/president was active with surrounding educational institutions including: San Francisco State University, Sonoma State University, and Dominican University. (IV.B.2.e)

### **Conclusion**

The college has made significant progress in restoring a functioning participatory governance system since 2004. Committee membership, roles, and responsibilities are defined in the Participatory Governance System (PGS). The Governance Review Council (GRC) evaluates the effectiveness of this system on an annual basis and makes recommendations for its improvement.

A project to review and revise all board policies was undertaken in 2007. The process is ongoing with a plan for the governing board to revise and adopt all of its policies. Once a revised policy is formally adopted by the board, it is made available to the public through an active link accessible on the college website.

Board relationships and effectiveness continue to be a concern for the college community. Despite continued efforts to establish mutual respect among board members and to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities, individual trustees do not fully participate in board development activities, or in regular and special meetings.

The superintendent/president who was in office at the time the self study was completed had been an effective leader during the six years of her tenure with the institution. She was selected shortly before the college went through its prior comprehensive accreditation visit in fall 2004. She successfully guided the college through five progress reports and evaluation visits and a focused midterm report and visit in response to the college's accredited status, which had the college on warning in three successive years followed by a year of probation.

The college has successfully addressed the prior recommendations but still does not appear to have achieved sustainability in the area of linking budget and planning. Evaluation of effectiveness of the college's adopted process is just being undertaken this fall. The college should move forward with these processes and procedures in order to achieve sustainability and meet accreditation standards.

The college partially meets this standard.

### **Recommendation**

#### **Recommendation #9**

In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the board focus on developing policies that support the quality, integrity and effectiveness of student learning programs and services. The board should deliberate with due diligence and make timely decisions that are in the best interests of the institution. The board should act as a whole and adhere to board policy once a decision has been made, and support the superintendent/president's authority in administering board policies and procedures. (IV.B.1; IV.B.1.a; IV.B.1.f; IV.B.1.j; IV.B.2; IV.B.2.c)