

EVALUATION REPORT

SAN DIEGO MESA COLLEGE

7250 Mesa College Drive
San Diego, California 92111

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

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited
San Diego Mesa College on October 4-7, 2004

Dr. Victoria P. Morrow, Team Chair

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SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

INSTITUTION: San Diego Mesa College

DATE OF VISIT: October 5-7, 2004

TEAM CHAIR: Dr. Victoria P. Morrow
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Summary

Mesa College is in compliance with most of the eligibility requirements. It is encouraged to further develop its structures and processes for institutional assessment, planning and evaluation. The college's responses to the recommendations of the prior visiting team report are largely complete and current, and in most cases represent fulfillment of the recommendations. The exception concerns the support for the research function at the college.

Based on the self study, resource documents and interviews with Mesa College personnel, it is clear that the college is in compliance with standard I.A and portions of I.B. The college has recently revised its mission statement to affirm its commitment to student success. There is evidence that the college considers the mission in its planning and decision making. With respect to institutional effectiveness, new student learning outcomes (SLOs) emerged from constructive college-wide dialogue. The college has new academic and student services program review cycles and procedures. However, college assessment, planning, and evaluation processes need to be improved, expanded and integrated.

Overall, the team found that the college meets or exceeds the expectations of Standard II. The college has an impressively broad array of outstanding instructional programs whose faculty approach the assurance of quality with a palpable avidity and deep sense of purpose. In the specific areas of student services and library and learning support services, the college deserves special recognition, and overall, the college should be strongly commended as being a student-centered institution.

An evaluation of human, physical, financial, and technological resources relative to Standard III shows that the college intends to connect the deployment of its resources to the accomplishment of its mission. The process of strategic planning is not stated as clearly as might have been appropriate. New facilities are being constructed thanks to the passage of a bond measure; after a multi-year time of hiring freezes, additional faculty have been hired to meet the needs of a steadily growing student population and a strategic plan for future faculty hiring has been developed; new technologies are appearing throughout campus; in a time of statewide fiscal problems, the college and district appear to be poised to prevent a major financial catastrophe. The college has provided evidence that it meets or exceeds most of the

elements of the standard, with a few exceptions.

Relative to Standard IV, scrutiny of on-site records and interviews of staff indicated that the college is in compliance with most of the standards in this chapter and is making specific efforts to address the rest.

There are two key changes in progress relative to leadership and governance. The former president of Mesa College was recently appointed as the new Chancellor for the district. An Interim President of Mesa College has been appointed. The search process is under way and the plan is to have a permanent president by July 1, 2005. There are also two interim instructional deans and there are plans for making a permanent appointment for the Dean of Social/ Behavioral Sciences and Multicultural Studies in summer 2005. The Dean of Business, Computer Studies and Technologies at Mesa is currently serving as the Interim Assistant Chancellor of Instructional Services at the district office. He will return to Mesa College once the Assistant Chancellor position has been filled, which is expected by July 1, 2005.

Commendations

The college and the district are to be commended for the following:

- The entire college is a clear example of an institution where students and their success clearly come first; this is truly a student-centered institution.
- The college has undertaken an extensive process of internal dialogue and self-discovery in regard to the issue of student learning outcomes, demonstrating a notable professionalism in undertaking a difficult task that was not initially attractive to at least some if not many members of the community.
- The college makes effective learning resources support a clear priority, and the learning support staff provide what is clearly outstanding support for the learning process.
- The college has focused on student learning and community as it has begun the new construction. Students clearly appreciate the new facilities and are utilizing them heavily.
- The college has established financial integrity, uses its resources responsibly and provides detailed financial information throughout the college community.
- The college leadership provides strong support of shared governance structures, processes and practices.
- The institutional leaders have facilitated an environment that supports both best practices and continuous improvement of the institution.
- There is a district-wide curriculum and schedule that provide exceptional access for students and facilitate their ability to obtain the education they want and need.

- The board of trustees is committed to avoiding the divisiveness of prior boards and working together with faculty, staff, the community, and each other to ensure a strong and purposeful organization even in the face of severe budgetary challenges.
- The new chancellor is building upon the fine traditions of the San Diego Community College District by strengthening district-wide communication and coordination, and by taking steps to ensure that the district uses its resources as effectively as possible to support the educational programs of the colleges.

Recommendations

- 1.1 The college should implement a more fully integrated process for planning and resource allocation, grounded in data from program reviews (which should include data on student learning outcomes) and student learning outcomes assessment. This process and its outcomes should be widely communicated. The college should evaluate the process regularly to assess its impact on institutional effectiveness. (I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.2.f).
- 1.2 The college should strengthen its dialogue about student learning by articulating specific goals with respect to the educational effectiveness of the college, and stating the goals (and supporting objectives) in measurable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be determined, widely discussed and planning for improvement can take place (I.B.1, I.B.2).
- 1.3 The college should develop and implement a plan to meet current and future needs for institutional research that is accurate, timely and actionable. Toward this end, the college should carefully consider how institutional research is positioned in the college so that it may support the entire institution from a fair, unbiased and informed stance, thereby strengthening various planning and institutional improvement efforts (I.B).
- 1.4 In order to build upon their efforts to strengthen institutional effectiveness and to foster a “culture of evidence” throughout the district, the district office and the colleges should cooperate in the development of an enhanced research function with both strong district and strong college components. (I.B.3, I.B.6, IV.B.2.b.)
- 1.5 In order to coordinate and assist the master planning efforts already established at the colleges, the district should continue its work to formulate an overall strategic plan that will provide a vision for the future development of the district, based upon extensive dialogue among faculty and staff, students, college and district leaders, board members, and the community. (I.B.3., I.B.4., I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.2.f, IV.B.1, IV.B.3).
- 3.1 The college should complete the work on student learning outcomes which it has begun so effectively in the areas of instruction and student services and ensure that work on student learning outcomes is undertaken in all of the areas of the college in

which the standards call for it. (III.A.1.c, III.B.2.b)

- 3.2 The district, in cooperation with the colleges, should explore new efforts and initiatives to identify and address the barriers that limit the diversity of their workforce and to ensure that faculty and staff reflect the rich diversity of their student body. (III.A.4.b)
- 4.1 The college should identify and implement measures to increase the level of student involvement in participatory governance so that they are able to work together with the other constituents within the college. (IV.A.3).
- 4.2 The district should build upon its efforts to clearly delineate the functions of the district and the colleges and to communicate more effectively with faculty and staff throughout the district, paying additional attention to coordinating and integrating services and activities within the district office and regularly evaluating the effectiveness of the delineation and the quality of services provided to the college. (IV.B.3.a, IV.B.3.b, IV.B.3.g)

INTRODUCTION

An eleven-member accreditation team visited San Diego Mesa College on October 5-7, 2004 for the purpose of evaluating the institution's request for reaffirmation of accreditation. Mesa College is part of the three-college San Diego Community College District in San Diego, California. The district also includes the Educational Cultural Complex (ECC) providing adult non-credit instruction and fee-based courses, and the Employment Training Institute (ETI) providing customized contract education to San Diego employers. Mesa College is the largest of the three, serves a diverse student body in a wide array of transfer and occupational programs and supports those students through a full and well-designed program of student support services.

The college staff prepared thoroughly for the visit. The college assisted the team with a pre-visit to make arrangements for the full team, and then provided excellent support to the team during the visit. The team room was comfortable and included a well-organized and detailed set of documents. The staff and students were friendly and helpful throughout the visit.

The self study document was quite detailed. It is generally well written in terms of clarity and thoroughness. It is, however, extremely redundant and includes a good deal of material which is not germane to the standards at hand in particular chapters. In some sections, there is a confusing mix of description and appraisal. Throughout, it is difficult to link the text to the standards because there is no apparent order to the topics addressed, neither an order paralleling that of the standards, nor some other internal logic. It is clear, however, that the college has been quite candid in its response, and was the same on site in the interviews. As a result, the team felt that it was able to glean quite a complete and accurate picture of the institution and its adherence to the standards for accreditation.

There has been a recent change relative to leadership and governance with the appointment of the former Mesa College President to Chancellor of the district on July 1, 2004, and appointment of an Interim President for Mesa College. It is clear that the institution continues on an even keel, but it remains to be seen whether the current effective practices in the institution will continue once a new permanent president is hired. The search for the permanent president is under way and the new president is expected to take office by July 1, 2005.

Mesa College's 104 acre campus opened in the fall of 1964 with 1900 students in 25 programs. It now serves 16,000 full-time equivalent students and a student headcount of between 21,000 and 23,000. The college offers associate degrees and certificates in 45 programs.

The most recent accreditation visit was in 1998 when the college received reaffirmation of its accreditation.

Responses to the Previous Team’s Recommendations

Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

2.1 The team recommends that the college conduct an institutional discussion related to academic honesty to establish a commonly understood definition of the term, which can be included in college publications and syllabi (2.5).

The college has undertaken such a discussion and district policy (3100, “Code of Conduct”). It makes violators subject to the “Student Disciplinary Procedures 3100.2” and entitled to utilize the “Student Grievance Procedures 3100.1.” The Academic Senate and the President’s Cabinet have approved the use of the definition of academic honesty contained in this policy and the term is now clearly presented in college publications and in course syllabi. The recommendation has been fully addressed.

3.1 The team recommends that the colleges in the district, along with the central office, establish a well-coordinated and effective process for conducting research at the institutional and district level (3A.1, 3A.2).

Institutional research is conducted at the district level by the district Office of Institutional Research and Planning. Examples of research conducted by that office include electronic fact books, research briefs, college profiles, and information about students from feeder high schools. Much of this research is made available to the college via a website.

In response to this recommendation, personnel with additional responsibilities and roles (e.g., Dean of Instructional Services and Economic Development, and members of the Research Committee) are charged with coordinating the research needs of the college. There are no full-time, designated institutional research personnel at the college.

The self study report summarizes the status of progress in this area as follows: “Significant progress continues to be made in addressing this recommendation; the College will continue to seek an on-campus research position, pending funding capability” (pg. xxxiii). Given that many other community colleges in the region established or expanded institutional research offices during the past six years, and that the college established other new positions (e.g., associate deans), the availability of funding seems an inadequate rationale for lack of progress in this area.

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

Despite some budget limitations, the dialogue and energy that have marked the college’s efforts to address the recommendations are noteworthy. Overall, the recommendations have been successfully addressed.

4.2 The team recommends that the college, in cooperation with the district, review the general education program to assure that the requirements are appropriate.

The college has reviewed its general education program and has assured to its satisfaction that the general education requirements are appropriate. The district has created a group to formulate recommendations regarding GE requirement issues, and the college has made changes to its catalog to incorporate GE learning outcomes. The evidence for these statements came primarily from interviews with instructional administrators.

5.1 The team recommends that the college build on the strides it has made in the development of an Enrollment Management Plan by expanding outreach, retention and persistence efforts to sustain future growth (5.1, 5.6, 5.7, 5.10).

The college has continued its development in this area and has successfully addressed the recommendation. The evidence for this was found in documents in the team room.

5.2 The college has made impressive progress in the diversification of its student body and employees and should continue efforts to ensure that these groups mirror the diversity of the community (5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.7, 5.6, 7D.1, and 7D.2).

The college has continued to address this area, attested to by documents in the team room. Its success has been recognized from outside the institution, and in their interviews with the team, members of the college community reflect pride in the achievements in this area.

Standard III: Resources

4.1 The team recommends that a careful examination be made of the management reorganization and its impact on college student services and instructional programs (4A.1, 4A.4).

The response is current and complete. The College has reviewed the reorganization and has made some additional organizational changes, including filling new positions that have had an impact on the instructional programs. The College recognizes that additional work needs to be done in this area. The evidence for this statement came from interviews with staff and examination of documents in the team room.

7.1 The team recommends that the college examine utilization of present staff and management in relation to support needed for academic programs and services (7.A.1, 6.5, 7.D.2, 10B.3).

The response is current and complete. The College has made some organization changes that appear to have improved the situation, but there is still work to be done. The budget challenges have no doubt made it difficult for the college to completely address this recommendation.

7.2 The team recommends that the college analyze the hiring process for adjunct faculty (7A.2).

The response is current and complete. The College has successfully addressed this recommendation.

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

10.1 The team recommends that the board establish clearly defined policies on the duties, responsibilities of Board members and the ethical conduct requirements as well as the process for annually assessing its own performance (10B.5, 10B.9, 10B)

After the 1998 evaluation visit, the San Diego Community College District Board of Trustees conducted a review of its Ethical Policy and updated it (2004). The Board is in the initial stages of discussing the process they plan to use to in reviewing, revising, and updating all of their board policies.

The Board employed a consultant to assist them in improving board interactions with each other. The response in the Self study indicates there has been an improvement in the tenor and civility of Board relations due to board training. New board members have been elected to the SDCCD Board of Trustees, which has changed the board makeup and improved interactions among board members.

In 2004, the trustees supported a Board Evaluation survey that included specific questions regarding the board's performance. The survey was sent to the leadership (approximately 75 people) that included the Academic Senate Officers, Classified Senate Officers, Union Officers and Management. The Board recently received the results of the survey and is planning to discuss it at their October 14, 2004 board meeting. The trustees plan to use the results in assessing their performance. The team interviewed four of the five board members and they expressed great enthusiasm for this process.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. AUTHORITY

Mesa College is authorized by the State of California to operate as an educational institution and to award degrees.

2. MISSION

Mesa College has a clearly defined educational mission which has been adopted and published by its governing board consistent with its legal authorization. The mission is appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education and to the constituency the college seeks to serve. The mission statement defines the college's commitment to achieving student learning.

3. GOVERNING BOARD

The governing board for Mesa College is the Board of Trustees for the San Diego Community College District. It is responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of Mesa College and for ensuring that the college's mission is being carried out. It is also responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the college are used to provide a sound educational program. Its five-person membership is sufficient in size and composition to fulfill all board responsibilities. The governing board is an independent policy-making body capable of reflecting constituent and public interest in board activities and decisions. None of the board members have employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. The board adheres to a conflict of interest policy that assures that those interests are disclosed and that they do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the college.

4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Mesa College has a chief executive officer appointed by the governing board, an individual who is serving in an interim capacity for the year in the wake of the appointment of the former Mesa College President to the role of Chancellor for the district. The Interim President's full-time responsibility is to the college, and she, in combination with the district chancellor, possesses the requisite authority to administer board policies. Neither the president nor the chancellor serves as a member of the governing board.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY

Mesa College generally has sufficient staff, with appropriate preparation and experience to provide the administrative services necessary to support its mission and purpose.

6. OPERATIONAL STATUS

Mesa College is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs.

7. DEGREES

A substantial portion of Mesa College's educational offerings is programs that lead to degrees, and a significant proportion of its students are enrolled in them.

8. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Mesa College's principal degree programs are congruent with its mission, are based on recognized higher education fields of study, are of sufficient content and length, are conducted at levels of quality and rigor appropriate to the degrees offered, and culminate in identified student outcomes. Many of the college's degree programs are of two academic years in length.

9. ACADEMIC CREDIT

Mesa College awards academic credits based on generally accepted practices in degree-granting institutions of higher education.

10. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

Mesa College defines and publishes for the associate degree the expected student learning and achievement outcomes and it defines and publishes student learning outcomes for its student services. The college is engaged in the process of establishing student learning outcomes at the program and course level. It is also developing its program of regular and systematic assessment designed to demonstrate that students who complete programs, no matter where or how they are offered, achieve these outcomes.

11. GENERAL EDUCATION

Mesa College defines and incorporates into all of its degree programs a substantial component of general education designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry. The general education component includes demonstrated competence in writing and computational skills and an introduction to some of the major areas of knowledge. General education has comprehensive learning outcomes for the students who complete it. Degree credit for general education programs is consistent with levels of quality and rigor appropriate to higher education.

12. ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Mesa College faculty and students are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as judged by the academic/educational community in general. Mesa College maintains an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom and

independence exist.

13. FACULTY

Mesa College has a substantial core of qualified faculty with full-time responsibility to the institution. The core is sufficient in size and experience to support all of the institution's educational programs. A clear statement of faculty responsibilities exists which includes development and review of curriculum as well as assessment of learning.

14. STUDENT SERVICES

Mesa College provides for all of its students appropriate student services that support student learning and development within the context of the institutional mission.

15. ADMISSIONS

Mesa College has adopted and adheres to admission policies consistent with its mission that specify the qualifications of students appropriate for its programs.

16. INFORMATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES

Mesa College provides, through ownership or contractual agreement, specific long-term access to sufficient information and learning resources and services to support its mission and instructional programs in whatever format and wherever they are offered.

17. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Mesa College documents a funding base, financial resources, and plans for financial development adequate to support student learning programs and services, to improve institutional effectiveness, and to assure financial stability.

18. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Mesa College annually undergoes and makes available an external financial audit by a certified public accountant or an audit by an appropriate public agency.

19. INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Mesa College has some institutional planning and evaluation under way to indicate how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes, including assessment of student learning outcomes. It is encouraged to further develop those structures and processes, and to document them. Mesa College provides some evidence of planning for improvement of institutional structures and processes, student achievement of educational goals, and student learning. The institution does some assessment of progress toward achieving its stated goals. It should increase the degree to which it makes decisions regarding improvement through an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation,

implementation, and re-evaluation.

20. PUBLIC INFORMATION

Mesa College provides a catalog for its constituencies with precise, accurate, and current information that includes all of the requisite elements.

21. RELATIONS WITH THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION

Mesa College provides assurance that it adheres to the eligibility requirements and accreditation standards and policies of the Commission, describes itself in identical terms to all its accrediting agencies, communicates any changes in its accredited status, and agrees to disclose information required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities.

Evaluation of Mesa College Using 2002 ACCJC Standards

Standard I

General Observations

The college's response to this standard was generally complete and clear. The college has a new mission statement which is taken into account in planning and decision-making, and it has done some important work in the area of student learning outcomes. However, there are some critical gaps in the college's planning and evaluation processes.

Findings and Evidence

A. Mission

Consistent with its mission, Mesa College offers over 2,000 class sections in 150 programs, which are designed to meet the needs of students with various backgrounds, interests, and educational goals. Courses are offered in general education, lower-division transfer programs, occupational and developmental education. The student population reflects the ethnic diversity of southern California; less than half the student population is white. (I.A.1)

The current mission statement appears in the college catalog and on its website; it was approved by the SDCCD Board of Trustees on May 21, 2003. (I.A.2)

Mesa College recently revised its mission statement. A standing committee of the Academic Senate, the Academic Affairs Committee, was charged with reviewing and revising the mission statement in 2002-03. In turn, a subcommittee of the Academic Affairs Committee (chaired by the Vice President of Instruction) recommended changes to the mission statement, which were forwarded for review by the campus and ultimately approved by the President's Cabinet in spring 2003. The Academic Affairs Committee also instituted new procedures in fall 2003 to periodically review important documents and "position papers" so that they reflect current student and community demands. A document entitled *Position Paper #1 – Review of the College's Mission Statement* (revised November 17, 2003) states that the mission statement will be reviewed every two years by a subcommittee of Academic Affairs; it also lists criteria which should be considered by the subcommittee when proposing changes. (I.A.3)

A recent accreditation survey found that more than 86 percent of faculty and staff respondents felt that "College programs, services, and planning are consistent with the mission statement." During campus interviews, members of the college stated that they "refer to the mission statement" when making decisions, but it is not clear whether the mission really drives college planning and decisions. One of the five criteria to be considered when revising the mission statement (listed in *Position Paper #1 – Review of the College's Mission Statement*) is that the mission statement should "support planning and decision-making." (I.A.4)

B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

Commendable evidence of constructive campus dialogue is reflected in the set of degree-level student learning outcomes (completed in spring 2004) and the policy for their use. Mesa College is engaged in an ongoing dialogue about student learning and institutional processes, and this dialogue takes various forms. The academic and student services program review processes each ask participants to reflect upon how well the program or department supports student learning. The program review process needs to incorporate assessment of learning and then planning for improvement of learning outcomes. Additional efforts to broaden and deepen the nature of dialogue on campus and to enrich the program review process would serve to improve institutional effectiveness. (I.B.1)

The team concluded from the self study report, interviews, and supporting documents that the college does not fully meet standard I.B.2. At Mesa College, the President's Cabinet establishes college goals during annual retreats. The President's Cabinet sets annual college goals during annual spring retreats. At that time, participants also reflect upon the extent to which goals for the previous academic year were accomplished. (I.B.2)

Clearly articulated goals and measurable objectives help institutions establish and sustain a culture of evidence. The extent to which Mesa College does this is unclear. The 1998 Evaluation Report by the previous team notes that "some of the objectives could be strengthened if they were stated in terms of measurable outcomes" (pg. 9). While the Mesa College Annual Report 2003-2004 highlights many important accomplishments of the institution, it does not report the status of college goals relative to their desired outcomes.

The team found evidence that the college meets most of standard I.B.3. The college has a 5-year cycle of academic program review that uses qualitative and quantitative data. Faculty meet with their dean and a representative from the Research Committee to review the data, consider implications, and confer about what the data imply for the program. Some examples of data provided for program review are: student enrollment demographics, degrees and/or certificates conferred by the program, and full-time equivalent faculty (FTEF). There are no data concerning grades or successful course completion. Programs may also exercise the option to include additional data (e.g., student or employer survey results, and retention rates). The bulk of the academic program review process, however, is comprised of qualitative information, reflected in observations and interpretations from faculty members. (I.B.3)

The self study report and interviews reveal that academic program reviews have resulted in recommendations to hire faculty, procure equipment, and expand or enhance facilities. The report states that academic program review has also helped the college identify the need for curricular development and revision, as well as faculty development and training needs. (I.B.3) However, the notable gaps in the data and in SLOs at the course and program level hamper the dialogue about student achievement and learning and thus the capacity of the college to promote improvement in student learning outcomes. The absence of a strong research function on campus restricts the ability of the college to improve the data resources and the resultant dialogue.

The college also has a new three year cycle of student services program review. When the current V.P. of Student Services started his tenure at Mesa College, he initiated a program review of the division's 15 major programs, based on a model offered by Orange Coast College. This model features program review as self study and influenced the design of Mesa College's Self Study/Program Review Instrument. The body that oversees the program review process is referred to as the "Student Services Program Review Validation Committee" and it is designed to be diverse, representative, and capable of making informed and impartial evaluations. Each program has developed student learning outcomes pertinent to its specific area. These SLOs were presented at a Student Services Student Learning Outcomes Retreat on July 9, 2004. (I.B.3)

From college documents and interviews, the team found evidence that the college establishes broad goals on an annual basis. The college also develops and uses more specific plans, such as a student services master plan, a plan for prioritizing faculty hiring, and a facilities master plan. According to a document entitled Overview of Strategic and Long-Range Planning (undated), these plans are integrated; a diagram within the document suggests some linkage of plans prior to a final budget phase. However, the exact nature of the relationship between the various campus plans is unclear. The team examined every available document, requested additional documents and conducted interviews relative to this issue. The team was left with many lingering questions and little evidence that the college in fact has and uses a fully integrated approach to planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation. (I.B.3)

The college clearly invests significant effort and energy toward meeting this standard. In order to fully meet the standard, the college should review and use effectiveness data about college courses and departments (e.g., student retention, success and completion) and academic programs such as Puente and Honors (e.g., data about persistence to program and/or student goals). The college should also develop and apply mechanisms that clearly and directly integrate a more data-driven program review process with planning and budgeting at the college level. (I.B.3)

It appears that the college partially meets standard I.B.4. The President's Cabinet serves as the final planning and budget-allocation authority of the college. The report describes the membership of the President's Cabinet, which is a constituency-based, shared governance committee. Proposals or requests are approved by consensus, or they go back out to constituencies for modification or further review. Campus interviews revealed that non-voting managers regularly attend President's Cabinet meetings so that they may answer questions immediately, which helps expedite the decision-making process. (I.B.4)

The team found evidence that the college compiles various data and information about enrollment, student outcomes and survey results at the institutional and program level. The report cites a range of material systematically distributed to internal and external audiences; examples include the President's Cabinet Update, the Mesa News, the Annual Report, and the college and district websites. (I.B.5)

The team found no documentation that the college meets standard I.B.6, which requires a systematic review and modification of all parts of the cycle for planning and resource allocation, including research efforts. College staff report that the President's Cabinet discusses the review and modification of planning and resource allocation processes. However, this does not constitute a systematic review. (I.B.6)

The self study report states, and interviews confirm, that the academic and student services program review processes have been reviewed and evaluated by the Academic Affairs Committee. The academic program review process was changed from a 3-year cycle to a 5-year cycle. The student services review is a 3-year cycle. Members of the Academic Program Review Committee now also serve as liaisons to the lead writers for the program reviews. The process includes annual updates which are status reports on goals and objectives developed during the full review period. The college has developed training opportunities and handbooks to enhance the quality of the program reviews. Interviews further suggest that at least some members of the college (i.e., the Research Committee) anticipate that additional modifications to program review elements and processes will evolve, as the college increases its capacity to assess student learning outcomes. It will be important that the processes include more frequent examination of current evidence (in addition to the status reports on goals and objectives) in addition to the 5-year or 3-year full review. (I.B.7)

Conclusions

Based on the self study, resource documents and interviews with Mesa College personnel, the team concluded that the college is in compliance with standard I.A and portions of I.B. The college has recently revised its mission statement to affirm its commitment to student success. There is evidence that the college considers the mission in its planning and decision-making. With respect to institutional effectiveness, new student learning outcomes emerged from constructive college-wide dialogue. The college has new academic and student services program review cycles and procedures. However, its planning and evaluation processes need to be improved, expanded and integrated.

Recommendations for Standard I

- 1.1 The college should implement a more fully integrated process for program review, planning and resource allocation, grounded in data from program reviews (which should include data on student learning outcomes) and student learning outcomes assessment. This process and its outcomes should be widely communicated. The college should evaluate the process regularly to assess its impact on institutional effectiveness. (I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.2.f).
- 1.2 The college should strengthen its dialogue about student learning by articulating specific goals with respect to the educational effectiveness of the college, and stating the goals (and supporting objectives) in measurable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be determined, widely discussed and planning for improvement can take place (I.B.1, I.B.2).

- 1.3 The college should develop and implement a plan to meet current and future needs for institutional research that is accurate, timely and actionable. Toward this end, the college should carefully consider how institutional research is positioned in the college so that it may support the entire institution from a fair, unbiased and informed stance, thereby strengthening various planning and institutional improvement efforts (I.B).
- 1.4 In order to build upon their efforts to strengthen institutional effectiveness and to foster a “culture of evidence” throughout the district, the district office and the colleges should cooperate in the development of an enhanced research function with both strong district and strong college components. (I.B.3, I.B.6, IV.B.2.b.)
- 1.5 In order to coordinate and assist the master planning efforts already established at the colleges, the district should continue its work to formulate an overall strategic plan that will provide a vision for the future development of the district, based upon extensive conversations among faculty and staff, students, college and district leaders, board members, and the community. (I.B.3., I.B.4., I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.2.f, IV.B.1, IV.B.3).

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

General Observations

While the extremely fine detail in both the description and analysis sections of Standard II in the self study sometimes made tracking the connection between the discrete Standards and the college's response difficult, the overall response is generally thorough and reflects the pride that the college community members feel in their institution's quality of service. Although the recent budget difficulties set a drab backdrop to many of the college's activities, the recent dialogue about student learning outcomes points a very bright light at the college staff's clearly passionate interest in assuring the best education possible for their students, and indicates that no matter how large, stable and assured the college is, the institution can move in a new direction with a notable agility and remarkably little hesitation.

Findings and Evidence

Overall, the team found that with few exceptions, the college meets or exceeds the expectations of Standard II. The college has an impressively broad array of outstanding instructional programs whose faculty approach the assurance of quality with a palpable avidity and deep sense of purpose. In the specific areas of student services and library and learning support services, the college deserves special recognition, and overall, the college should be strongly commended as being a student-centered institution.

A. Instructional Programs

Overall Finding in II.A: The college has high-quality programs that meet almost every element of this sub-standard. The college deserves special commendation for its institutional dialogue on student learning outcomes. What at first was the interest of a small band of champions has now become the focus of considerable discussion and action, supported by a remarkable energy in developing the understanding of the entire college community through trainings and workshops. However, the college lacks an effective educational master plan which would reflect input from program reviews and learning outcome assessment and would project program needs in the future and thus assist in the relevance of the rest of the college's planning array. In addition, there appears to be no written procedure outlining the steps involved in program discontinuance, and the college would be advised to develop and make clear to the whole college community the steps involved in determining the conditions that warrant program discontinuance and the process that will be followed in effecting such discontinuance.

As determined by interviews with staff and team room documents, all of the instructional programs appear to address and meet the mission of the Institution. All new curriculum goes through the process of development not only on this campus but at the district level as well to ensure its feasibility, academic performance, its SLO's, and adherence to the mission statement. (II.A.1)

All new first time students receive assessment upon arrival at the college. Once these tests are assessed, students are placed in the appropriate math and English courses. According to the college's Office of Matriculation, these assessment tests have been validated and normed. The last test to be normed was math, and this was completed in summer 2004. Accuplacer is used for the English and math assessments—the college is looking into the pencil and paper Accuplacer Companion. Since the District researcher assigned to the college and his replacement both left, this alternative (pencil & paper) will have to be completed in the future. The ESL assessment consists of multiple measures which includes a holistically, validated graded essay that has been normed previously by the district researcher assigned to Mesa. In addition to the placement, students are provided with various support areas which enable them to be successful in their college career. These support areas include a rich LRC, Tutorials, and the Writing Center which works with low income firsts generation students. (San Diego Mesa College Matriculation Plan, April 30, 2004) The college is in the process of establishing Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for each instructional and student services program. (II.A.1.a)

As determined by interviews and site visits with staff, faculty and students at the college, much of the instruction at Mesa lends itself to different learning styles and students of diverse backgrounds. Students receive the state-of-the-art, accessible technology in the LRC, which provides support and accommodation for both academic and diverse needs. Another example of placing priority on the students rather than faculty is exemplified by a quote from one of the Health Education instructors who designs on-line courses: "Students have first priority for access to good technology." Another instructor, winner of several awards in her field, is working on the acquisition of a computer program that will better enable her to "see and touch the shoulder" of her students while they are online. Many instructors are writing (and receiving) VTEA grants to help them assess their efforts to make sure that their students are not only learning but will have the best advantage to obtain a job at completion of their courses. In the dental assistant area, dental chairs, X-rays, and new digital equipment are available because of grants. (II.A.1.b)

Instructors are attempting to address the SLOs. This effort appears to be driven by faculty and administrative guidance. This past summer at least two full-day workshops were provided on SLO's through the Research Committee. One workshop sought to clarify SLO's by means of a strong visual PowerPoint presentation. Another presentation was made at a July 2004 Student learning outcomes Retreat. The document presented at this retreat is available to all faculty and staff. Once student learning outcomes are understood by faculty and incorporated in all class outlines and syllabi, the outcomes will be assessed and will provide a basis for improvement of instruction. Standard II.A.1.c has been partially met. (II.A.1.c)

As determined by examination of team room documents and interviews with college staff and students, it seems that in most respects Mesa College is working to assure the quality and improvement of its offerings of all types, delivery modes and locations. However, its full effectiveness in this area will not be achieved until both student learning outcomes and the research resources needed to assure that they are effectively measured are fully developed features of the assessment and planning loop in the college. (II.A.2)

The establishment of student learning outcomes is in the nascent stage. Flex activities; President's Cabinet Update, May 2004; The Mesa News, July 2004; Matriculation Handbook, April 2004; and Student Services Student Learning Outcomes Retreat, July 9, 2004, Phase II Group all contain information on the development of SLO's for all courses and all areas of the community college campus. These SLO's are appearing throughout curriculum already in the English, Social Sciences, and other courses. In other areas, they have not yet been developed, and should appear in the context of the upcoming Program Review, the writing of new curriculum, and the rewriting of old course outlines. (II.A.2.a)

Mesa College supports its faculty in acting professionally and with expertise to identify competency levels. Faculty and administrators engage the assistance of the District researcher to help them identify measurable SLOs. Again, the newness of the SLOs could explain the lack of this application in all areas of instruction at this time. (II.A.2.b)

As determined by examination of the college documents, interviews with staff and students and classroom visits, the college has a commendably broad array of very high-quality programs. (II.A.2.c)

Examination of the college documents and interviews with staff, and classroom faculty indicate that Mesa College faculty hold flex activities and workshops for its fellow faculty members in order to provide guidance in being successful educators to its diverse student body in all of its courses. (II.A.2.d)

Program Review is in place. The college will need to adapt its newly revised program review instruments to take student learning outcomes into account, and continue to work to help faculty embrace the practice of program review and all that it entails. (II.A.2.e)

As determined by examination of the college documents and interviews with staff, the college does not have an up-to-date Educational Master Plan that reflects and projects educational needs in the community and the achievement of learning outcomes, and that connects or relates to other institutional planning in a vital way. This strikes the team as a serious gap in educational planning that must negatively affect overall college planning. (II.A.2.f)

As determined by interviews with staff, large scale course placement tests in the English Department are validated with the assistance of the District researcher. Other tests, especially in certification programs, aim to prepare students for State and/or Nationally normed exams. (II.A.2.g)

As determined by examination of the college catalog and interviews with staff, the college is in the process of achieving completion of sub-standard II.A.2.h in the sense that student learning outcomes are in the process of being developed at both the course and program level. They have already been developed at the associate degree level. The college has benefited from a commendable process of internal dialogue and self-discovery in regard to the issue of student learning outcomes, demonstrating a notable professionalism in undertaking a difficult task that was not initially attractive to at least some if not many

members of the community. (II.A.2.h)

The same is true of Standard II.A.2.i. As stated above, student learning outcomes have been developed for the associate degree, and SLOs at the course level are in the process of development. (II.A.2.i)

Overall, the college has met the requirements of Standard II.A.3, and the evidence for the attainment of the sub-standard was found in the college catalog and class outlines of record in the team room. General education has comprehensive learning outcomes for the students who complete it, including the following: “An understanding of the basic content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge: areas include the humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences.” The college has met the requirements of Standards II.A.3.a through II.A.3.c concerning general education, and the evidence for the attainment of these sub-standards was found in the college catalog and class outlines of record in the team room. (II.A.3 and II.A.3.a through II.A.3.f)

The college has met the requirements concerning focused study in at least one area of inquiry or interdisciplinary core. The evidence for the attainment of the sub-standard was found in the college catalog and in interviews with college staff. (II.A.4)

Mesa College meets the standard concerning the competencies of students completing vocational and occupation degrees and certificates. This was confirmed by interviews with staff and by documents in the team room. A good example would be the Dental Assisting Program. According to the faculty in the Dental Assisting Program, Mesa College graduates rank within the top four colleges in the state in their performance on State Board Exams. Mesa College dental assisting students also must pass both national and state certification exams. (II.A.5)

The college catalog provides accurate information about courses, programs and transfer policies. The catalog is available online also. Mesa College is in the process of addressing the expected student learning outcomes for degrees and certificates. District Policy 3100 mandates that students receive a syllabus at the first class meeting. There is a Syllabus Handbook available to faculty to aid them in preparing the syllabus for their classes complete with a list of required elements and examples of syllabi. The Handbook does not yet require that syllabi include SLOs, and should be further updated to reflect the new accreditation requirements. (II.A.6)

Transfer of credit policies are clearly stated in the college catalog. Articulation numbers are indicated in parenthesis for every course that transfers to the UC or CSU systems. The transfer center assists students by providing on-line resources, written reference materials and guides, as evidenced by transfer center materials. The catalog also specifies various other ways in which credit may be accepted by the college: Advanced Placement, College-Level Examination Program, Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support, International Baccalaureate, credit by exam, and credit for non-college credit vocational courses. As supported by interviews with staff, the evaluations office determines the processes and procedures for granting credit for the above listed methods. (II.A.6.a)

Two examples provided by the vice president of instruction appear to confirm that effective provision has been made for program discontinuance. The self study mentions discontinuation of Urban Forestry certification and an associate degree and certificate of achievement in Water/Wastewater Technology (students already in the program were able to finish; the program moved to Cuyamaca College). A Physical Therapy program was evaluated; then changes were made, and the program was reinstated. However, there appears to be no written procedure outlining the steps involved in program discontinuance. The college should develop and make clear to the whole college community the steps involved in determining the conditions that warrant program discontinuance and the process that will be followed in effecting such discontinuance. (II.A.6.b)

Chairs, faculty and administrators review the catalog and electronic publications regularly. The use of CurricUNET assures that course information is maintained in an electronic form. The Public Information Officer is the college liaison to the community and is responsible for the activities of the Communication Services Staff. The Public Information Officer reports directly to the president of the college. (II.A.6.c)

Academic freedom is protected by Article XII of the Collective Bargaining Agreement and is referenced in the Faculty and Staff Handbook. The policy on student academic honesty is clearly stated on the website, the catalog, and class schedule. In addition, it is required that every course syllabus include academic integrity information and requirements. (II.A.7)

Students at Mesa College are guaranteed freedom to pursue their own interpretation of the truth in Section 1.5 of Board Policy 3100. In the 2003 Accreditation Survey 92.5 percent of the students of Mesa College agreed that faculty are fair and objective in the presentation of information. In addition, the regular evaluation of faculty provides a review process on this matter. (II.A.7.a)

Mesa College partially meets standard II.A.7.b. The student code of conduct is clearly stated on the website, in the catalog and class schedule. However, according to the self study, the disciplinary procedures were listed in the student handbook that has not been published since 2003. (II.A.7.b)

Standard II.A.7.c and II.A.8 are not applicable to this college.

B. Student Support Services

Overall Finding in II.B: The college meets or exceeds every Standard in II.B. The college has a broad array of well-developed and integrated services, and the faculty and staff serving in the student support services area are to be especially commended for their vision of and rapid acceptance of student services student learning outcomes.

As reflected in documents in the team room and through interviews with staff, all Student Support Units participate in the Student Services Program Review process on a three-year cycle. In addition, some programs such as EOPS, Financial Aid and DSPS undergo review by outside agencies. (II.B.1)

The college catalog includes all of the requisite elements. (II.B.2)

As reflected in documents in the team room and through interviews conducted with staff, appropriate services are provided to students. Student Services units utilize surveys as a means of assessing student satisfaction. The Vice President of Student Services and each Student Services unit developed annual goals that are included in the 2003-2004 Strategic Plan and Goals. (II.B.3.a)

As was determined through interviews with staff, using the six college-wide Student learning outcomes, Student Services units developed outcomes respective to their own area. Some units are in the process of assessment while others have assessed SLOs, analyzed the data and have made changes based on their analysis. (II.B.3.b)

It was determined through interviews with staff and college documents that permanent and adjunct counseling faculty are routinely evaluated by their peers. The department's teaching faculty also meet to discuss relevant issues related to Personal Growth classes. The department also participates in the on-going cycle of Program Review. (II.B.3.c)

As determined by interviews with college staff, the Counseling department assigns counselors to the 7-8 local feeder high schools for 4 hours per week. In addition, Financial Aid participates in recruitment fairs specifically targeting middle school and high school low income, under represented populations. The college also provided multicultural awareness through the MESA Academy, Puente program and other campus activities for students. (II.B.3.d)

The College presently uses Accuplacer (on-line version, which is proctored in the testing center) for English placement. The instrument is presently validated. MDTP (Math placement) is presently in the process of validation for the on-line version and is expected to be operational for the spring 2005 semester. (II.B.3.e)

The Admissions and Records Office has a process for student access to records. Students are required to present a current photo I.D. Transcripts from other institutions are kept on-site in a vault. Transcripts and related records from the college are maintained in District database that is updated nightly. (II.B.3.f)

Standard II.B.4 has been met or exceeded. As was indicated by interviews with staff and college documents, the Student Support Services units participate in Program review. In addition, SLOs have been developed and are being assessed. Some units have already made appropriate changes in delivery of services based on their assessments. (II.B.4)

C. Library and Learning Support Services

Overall Finding in 2.C: As determined by examination of documents in the team room and many interviews conducted by members of the team, the college meets and in many ways exceeds the expectations of this element of Standard II. In particular the college should be commended for making effective learning resources support a clear priority, and the learning support staff for providing what is clearly outstanding support for the learning process.

Mesa College Librarians work as a team and with faculty to select and maintain library materials. The present collection includes 108,000 books, almost 10,000 e-books, about 268 print periodical subscriptions, and 20 electronic databases. Within the LRC there are over 300 computers for student use. Computers in the Reference area all have internet access but no application software. To use applications and courseware students go to the CIL labs on the fourth floor. There are also multiple mediated study rooms on that level and an additional 29 study rooms located on the second and third floors. CIL staff work with faculty to make course-specific programs and materials available to students outside regularly scheduled classes and labs. (II.C.1.a)

The Library regularly schedules classes in its classroom to orient students to library use and research. There are three types of classes: one-time sessions scheduled with instructors, drop-in sessions offered twice weekly, and an ongoing library skills and research class. Classes are available at all hours, year-round, including summers and Saturdays. The instruction classroom is well utilized. On Tuesday there were 7 classes presented in the library instruction classroom. The CIL open computer labs are staffed by Instructional Associates and by adjunct and overload faculty librarians who can work with students on a one-to-one basis. (II.C.1.b)

The Library is open from 7 am until 9 pm, Monday through Thursday, Fridays 7 am to 5 pm and Saturdays 8 am to 3 pm. Librarians and student surveys indicate that students would like additional hours especially on Saturday. E-books and electronic databases are available from off-campus locations but students must go into the library to get passwords. (II.C.1.c)

As reflected by interview with college staff, the design of the building necessitates that all areas must be open and staffed whenever the building is open. There is some concern in the last program review (LRC academic Program Review, 2000-2002) that the security gates are not in a very effective location. College staff report that there is no way to resolve the problem other than via a substantial redesign of the LRC. There were also comments on the library's survey (Mesa College LRC Survey) and on suggestion cards that there is a noticeable ventilation problem in the lobby restrooms. Library personnel are working with facilities staff to resolve this issue.(II.C.1.d)

As reflected in interviews with staff and college documents, the Library has had a contractual agreement with Woodbury College that placed a small architecture collection in the Mesa LRC. During the summer that collection was moved to Woodbury's downtown campus. Woodbury students may still use the Mesa Library. Borrowing privileges are also granted to Middle College Students and to Kearny and Madison High School faculty and staff. The Library participates in OCLC for cataloging and interlibrary loan purposes. Network infrastructure is maintained in the building, as it is throughout the campus and district, by SCT personnel. (II.C.1.e)

The last library program review was done in 2000. At that time the LRC facility had only been in place for two years and there were still staffing issues, some of which has since been resolved. During the self study process the LRC participated in the Student Satisfaction Survey (Fall 2003) and also conducted a survey, the Mesa College LRC Survey Spring 2003. Newer evaluative documents include the Strategic Plan for New Faculty Hires and the Instructional Technology Master Plan. (II.C.1.f)

As reflected in college documents and interviews with college staff by team members, although there were significant staffing increases after the library opened its new facility in 1998, there are still needs for additional staff as outlined in the LRC portion of the Strategic Plan for Faculty Hiring. No position is requested for this year; the request for 2005-6 is for an Online Services Librarian to provide expanded service to distance learning and other e-learners. Other increases are targeted for the CIL student and staff labs in the form of Contract Instructional Technologists. LRC Staff worked collaboratively to develop this strategic plan. (II.C.2)

IV. Conclusions

Overall Finding in II.A: The college has high-quality programs that meet almost every element of this sub-standard. The college deserves special commendation for its institutional dialogue on student learning outcomes. What at first was the interest of a small band of champions has now become the focus of considerable discussion and action, supported by a remarkable energy in developing the understanding of the entire college community through trainings and workshops. However, the college lacks an effective educational master plan which would reflect input from program reviews and learning outcome assessment and would project program needs in the future and thus assist in the relevance of the rest of the college's planning array.

Overall Finding in II.B: The college meets or exceeds every Standard in II.B. The college has a broad array of well-developed and integrated services, and the faculty and staff serving in the student support services area are to be especially commended for their vision of and rapid acceptance of student services student learning outcomes.

Overall Finding in II.C: As determined by examination of documents in the team room and many interviews conducted by members of the team, the college meets and in many ways exceeds the expectations of this element of Standard II. In particular the college should be commended for making effective learning resources support a clear priority, and the learning support staff for providing what is clearly outstanding support for the learning process.

Commendations

- The entire college is a clear example of an institution where students and their success clearly come first; this is truly a student-centered institution.
- The college has undertaken an extensive process of internal dialogue and self-discovery in regard to the issue of student learning outcomes, demonstrating a notable professionalism in undertaking a difficult task that was not initially attractive to at least some if not many members of the community.
- The college makes effective learning resources support a clear priority, and the learning support staff provide what is clearly outstanding support for the learning process.

Recommendations

See Recommendation 1.1 and 1.5.

Standard Three

General Observations

An evaluation of human, physical, financial, and technological resources shows that the college intends to connect the deployment of its resources to the accomplishment of its mission. The process of strategic planning is not stated as clearly as might have been appropriate. New facilities are being constructed thanks to the passage of a bond measure; after a multi-year time of hiring freezes, additional faculty have been hired to meet the needs of a steadily growing student population and a strategic plan for future faculty hiring has been developed; new technologies are appearing throughout campus; in a time of statewide fiscal problems, the college and district appear to be poised to prevent a major financial catastrophe.

Findings and Evidence

A. Human Resources

The hiring process adheres to district wide policy, ensures job announcements are widely disseminated, stipulates minimum qualifications and requires that applicants possess job related skills. College faculty members actively participate in the determination of criteria required to meet subject matter competencies and are represented on the screening committee. Further college and district personnel complete a transcript review process prior to hire to ensure degrees listed are from U.S. accredited institutions and where necessary equivalences are completed for non-U.S. accredited institutions. This assertion has been validated based upon interviews at the college and evidence utilized to prepare the self study. (III.A.1.a.)

All district personnel are evaluated systematically and at regular intervals dependent upon personnel classification. A written criteria for evaluation is established for each personnel classification to assess the performance of duties and is kept in the personnel file of employees. The 2002 Employee Opinion Survey indicated an overall average of 78.1 percent of indicated that their supervisors conducted appraisals/reviews on time. This assertion has been validated based upon interviews and a review of a random sample of evaluations. (III.A.1.b)

Standard III.A.1.c. is not met. While the college has embarked upon incorporating student learning outcomes into the instructional program, faculty and others directly responsible for student learning outcomes are not being evaluated based upon those student learning outcomes. The Academic Senate President cautioned that faculty did not believe it was appropriate to evaluate their performance based upon student learning outcomes, but felt another criteria should be designed to more accurately measure their work. Based upon interviews this is viewed at the college as a collective bargaining issue. It was not part of the most recently negotiated multi year contract nor does the administration expect resolution within the current contract. (III.A.1.c)

District policies and procedures, employee handbooks, and collective bargaining agreements all contain sections related to ethics and serve as a written code of professional ethics for all personnel. (III.A.1d)

Standard III.A.2 is partially met. While the college strives to meet a goal of 75 percent of courses taught by full time faculty, the fiscal situation of the last two years resulted in the college achieving only 58 percent of courses taught by full time faculty. The college recently adopted the “Strategic Plan for Faculty Hiring” which projects attainment of 75 percent of courses taught by full time faculty in 2008-09. Further, the start of the 2004-05 fiscal year witnessed an improvement in the level of resources provided and the college anticipates adding roughly 20 faculty positions. (III.A.2)

The appropriate level of classified staffing was raised in interviews related to insufficient personnel support in registration and articulation activities. The district is currently engaged in a district wide classified staffing review to determine the optimal position level and distribution among the colleges. The college identified 22 classified positions left vacant at Mesa due to the recent budget reductions. Dependent upon the results of the review and the improvement of resources, district staff indicated 50 percent of the vacant positions located at each college would be replaced and the remaining 50 percent positions would be filled dependent upon the prioritized results of the classified staffing review. (III.A.2)

Fairness in employment procedures is addressed in all contractual agreements and stipulated in various District Policy documents related to Personnel Employment. (III.A.3.a)

The personnel records are maintained in the appropriate area of the college, dependent upon the type of personnel classification. Guidelines developed by the district outline policies and procedures which stipulate the proper filing, warehousing and disposition of records. Personnel files are maintained in a confidential and secure manner by the college and the district and each employee has the ability to review their file. (III.A.3.b)

Mesa College has policies and procedures in place to ensure that the goals for equity and diversity are adhered to during the hiring process as well as in the programs and services on campus. (Diversity resolution 630.2, District policies 0003 and 4100.) (III.A.4)

At the district level, there is an EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) manager and on each college site there is an EEO Compliance Officer charged with training the EEO representatives who serve on all college hiring committees. The Site Compliance Officer handles discrimination complaints of many kinds from students, faculty and staff. In March 2003, a memo on sexual harassment complaints, containing specific guidelines, was unanimously endorsed by the President’s Cabinet. (III.A.4.a)

Mesa College Fact Book, fall 2002, provides the faculty and staff demographics based on ethnicity. Although most ethnic categories are well represented among the employees, they are not in total alignment with the diversity within the San Diego community. This is particularly true of the Latino representation. The 2000 census counts the Latino population as 26.7 percent of the total population (this number has since increased) whereas Mesa College Hispano/Latino employees count for only 11 percent of the total workforce. The

Mesa College self-study recommends that this should be taken into consideration when hiring takes place. (III.A.4.b)

Overall, the employees at Mesa College indicate satisfaction with their workplace. (Employee Opinion Survey 2002.) (III.A.5)

A component of professional development is included in each bargaining unit contract or in the employee handbook for “meet and confer” groups. Despite the fact the funding provided for Faculty Staff development was eliminated several years ago the college has continued to commit resources redirected from the President’s office. The district coordinates 15 days of flex training programs for all faculty. In addition the college regularly offers more job specific training to college personnel. (III.A.5.a)

District personnel are responsive to the creation of staff development opportunities. The college recognized the difficulty for adjunct faculty to attend training provided on campus and created online courses to allow remote access to fulfill flex day activities. In addition the college responded to requests to provide courses to assist faculty in preparation of course syllabus. (III.A.5.b)

The regularly scheduled academic program review process is one of several factors that drive new faculty hires (along with the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty, course demand and other factors). The college maintains a “Strategic Plan for Faculty Hiring” which outlines 10 principles the college will adhere to as it increases the number of full time faculty. (III.A.6)

B. Physical Resources

Overall Findings: As determined by examination of documents in the team room and many interviews conducted by members of the team, the college meets the expectations of this element of Standard III with the few minor exceptions as noted.

In 2002 the district successfully passed a ballot measure funding new construction and is now preparing a multi year, multiphase project that will significantly change and shape the college environment. Architectural drawings of the various phases to be constructed and of the successive plans to complete the campus are in place and have been distributed. The decision processes that led to the choices as to which facilities to build are clearly documented, beginning with the Facilities Master Plan of 1999. In preparation for the possibility of going to the voters for a bond measure, a consultant was hired to conduct a feasibility study. While the decision on which buildings were included in the ballot measure did not follow in exact priority order, all buildings from the master Plan are still on the master construction list when funding does become available. The college should ensure that it maintains existing buildings in a high quality fashion while living through this time of construction. (II.B.1.a.)

Standard III.B.1.b., concerning the access, security, and safety of campus buildings, and the presence of a healthful learning and working environment, is not met as clearly. As is noted in the self study, student and staff surveys indicate dissatisfaction with the cleanliness of classrooms and restrooms in particular. Team observations validate that some areas are

indeed not kept up as well as others, and that certain restrooms were dirty and others quite crowded. As in other areas, custodial services staff positions have been frozen. Parking is severely constrained. Based on the team's observations of students attempting to navigate the busy streets around the campus seeking parking places or simply walking some distance to get to class, there are cases of unsafe conditions for drivers and pedestrians. Though it is been addressed early in the construction, it continues to be a problem at present. The District Police provides extensive statistics regarding crime on campus. The major area of concern has been auto thefts, not crimes against individuals. (III.B.1.b.)

The work done on facilities planning leading up to the successful bond issue was based on institutional goals. The total cost of ownership of the new construction has been addressed from various angles. The resolution ordering a general obligation bond election in 2002 included funds for equipping as well as constructing new buildings and included a directive that the Chancellor identify sufficient financial resources to pay for ongoing maintenance needs. When the first series of bonds were issued in 2003 the Chancellor certified that funds were available for the buildings covered under that phase. (III.B.2.a.)

Physical resource planning is integrated with institutional planning. Interviews indicate that program reviews fed into the original facilities master plan that was produced at about the same time as the last complete Educational Master Plan. The order of building construction does not follow the priority list developed at that time but was revised based on recommendations of which buildings would be supported by area voters. Evaluations of the functionality of the two newer buildings on campus has led to decisions about including equipment in the measure and supporting a formula for building maintenance. However, as was noted in Standard I relative to the integration of planning with budgeting, the connections are not always clear, nor documented. (III.B.2.b.)

C. Technology Resources

Overall Findings: As determined by examination of documents in the team room and many interviews conducted by members of the team, the college meets and in many ways exceeds the expectations of this element of Standard III.

Based on the team's direct observation and interviews, technology services, support, facilities, hardware, and software are designed to enhance the operation and effectiveness of the institution. The Management and Information Technology (MIT) Committee consulted program review documents including yearly updates when they developed the Strategic Plan for Technology. (III.C.1.a.) Administrative and infrastructure services and support are covered under a contractual arrangement with SCT. Personnel are housed on site, in the data operations center at Miramar, and at the District. The SCT staff is responsible for the network, the data system, and staff desktop computers. A new integrated data system for the district has been selected, and although it is not an SCT product, the support services from SCT will remain. Instructional computing, including academic labs, faculty desktops, and the LRC labs are supported through LRC-based personnel. (III.C.1.)

Quality training is provided to students and staff. On the administrative side, the district provides some training for users of the data system. SCT keeps its staff current. The campus provides informal training on aspects of the system. Instructional training is especially strong. There are two instructional technologists who provide a wide range of types and formats of ongoing training to faculty. Computing needs are student-centered and there is a noticeable can-do attitude among the training and support personnel. (III.C.1.b.)

Systematic acquisitions, maintenance, upgrades, and replacements appear to meet institutional needs, given that there were no indications of concern in this area in the self-study or interviews. The college acquires and maintains desktop computers and network infrastructure in accordance with stated needs. The college has a comprehensive inventory of equipment and a plan that replaces academic lab computers first and then reroutes machines to faculty. The District is moving its data system to a new product in order to enhance and integrate all elements of data, such as human resources, financial reporting, and student records. This will be a multi-year project; historically, such projects have brought with them a period of learning and disruption. In the interim before the new system is in place, there remains a need for technological solutions to provide timely, first-hand data and statistics on student records, human resources and financial information. These data would assist campus leaders in decision-making processes on enrollment management, staffing and resource allocation. Some members of the campus mentioned a forthcoming Decision Support System that would provide enrollment management information. The team encourages the college to continue developing and implementing such a system. (III.C.1.c.)

Distribution of technology supports programs and services. As evidence of the student-centered approach to technology, the newest computers are placed in student labs, either the CIL labs in the Learning Resource Center or the various academic labs throughout campus. The Director of Administrative Services keeps an up-to-date inventory and whenever new computers are placed there, the older ones still under warranty are transferred to areas with less sophisticated demand. Most faculty desktop computers have originally been in a lab. (III.C.1.d.)

The college has recently completed the initial phase of a strategic plan for instructional technology. At this point the report consists primarily of an extensive list of goals. The next phase will be to assign point of contact persons to every goal and to prioritize completion of them. According to some interviews, this plan emerged collaboratively and as a result of program reviews completed by academic and support areas. Other staff indicated that the plan emerged from college goals and strategic directions. In any case, there appears to be a good connection here between program review and planning. (III.C.2.)

D. Financial Resources

Overall findings: the college is generally in compliance with the standards of this section.

Mesa College strives to use its mission and goals as a basis for its planning efforts on strategic goals and objectives that are driven primarily by the academic program review. As noted earlier, the linkages are only partially documented. (III.D.1)

While it meets the standard, the College can improve regarding the integration of institutional planning and resource allocation. The planning documents reviewed during the visit reveal a set of strategic planning directions for 2003-2005 as well as a detailed list of institutional goals for 2004-2005. Additional documents utilized in the planning process include the Strategic Plan for Faculty Hiring and the Information Technology Strategic plan. Interviews at the College confirm that these documents are used in some fashion but the linkage between the documents and the process needs to be made clearer. (III.D.1.)

The College's institutional planning reflects a realistic assessment of financial resource availability. Mesa receives its share of the state funding based on a formula-driven process at the district level. A review of the district allocation model discloses that most important factor in the formula as FTES. Significantly, the College is required to reduce this calculation by \$2,913,546 for 2004-2005 due to state budget cuts. Given this reality, Mesa is realistic and pragmatic about what it is able to fund. The shortfall is dealt with principally by not filling open positions. The ultimate allocation of the available funds rests with the President's cabinet serving as the budget committee. (III. D.1.b.)

The college considers long range plans when making short-range plans. A substantial portion of the College's long-range financial priorities has been addressed with the passage of Proposition S \$685 million bond measure. Mesa's share of this bond measure (\$160 to \$180 million) will enable construction of a much-needed Parking structure, Technology Building, Social and Behavioral Science & Fitness Center and Sciences and Math Building. Additionally, \$20 million of the proceeds were used to pay off long term Certificates of Participation related to the construction of the new Humanities, Languages, and Multicultural Building. (III.D.1.c.)

The College clearly defines and follows its guidelines for financial planning and budget development. Interviews at the College reveal that the financial planning and budget development process appears to be well understood and followed by the college community. There are a number of committees that can have input into the budget development process. According to the Director of Administrative Services, the President's Cabinet has representation from all the major constituencies and this body makes the final decisions on the allocation of funds. (III.D.1.d.)

The college exhibits financial integrity and the responsible use of its financial resources, and in certain areas the College should be commended. This assessment is based on a review of prior year budgets, departmental reports, external audits and interviews with College personnel. (III.D.2.)

A review of the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 budgets for the college revealed appropriate use of financial resources to support student centered learning programs and services. The district audit report for 2004 contained a clean audit opinion and the accompanying management letter on the district's system of internal control contained one exception related to a segregation of duties in the human resources area. The district has responded timely to this comment and undertaken corrective action. (III.D.2.a.)

The college exceeds the standard regarding providing financial information throughout the institution. The Director of Administrative Services prepares a detailed budget (85 pages) for the College and provides this to the managers and department chairs as well as any college employee interested in having a copy. The team reviewed a sample of the monthly budgets that managers receive. The Director of Administrative Services also indicated that he provides a classified hourly report and a stock room report on a monthly basis, allowing managers to review their expenditures to date for these controllable costs. This is excellent practice for sound fiscal management. (III.D.2.b.)

The college has sufficient cash flow and reserves to achieve stability. Based on the final allocation from the district, each year the College prepares a balanced budget. In 2003-2004, Mesa College operated at a surplus of \$783,608. The new chancellor established the practice in the current year whereby 50 percent of the surplus would be returned to the College; therefore, Mesa has reserves in the 2004-2005 of \$346,854. A review of the 2004-2005 budget indicates that these reserves were not used in the budget and are thus available for financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences. There is strong focus at the College on staying within the budget. Additionally, at the district level, financial reserves exist which presumably are available for such items. A review of the district level budget for 2004-2005 reveals that there are adequate reserves for areas where the College self-insures (e.g., liability and worker's compensation). (III.D.2.c)

The institution practices effective oversight of finances and the financial resources are being used with integrity. The College prepares monthly financial statements that are compared to budget and great emphasis is placed on staying within budget. The audits for the district indicate that there are sound financial practices in place. Additionally, the Mesa College Foundation is subjected to an annual external audit, which the team reviewed, and the use of the funds was consistent with the mission and goals of the College. The Director of Administrative Services serves as the Treasurer for the foundation. (III.D.2.d, III.D.2.e.)

The district purchasing department oversees contractual agreements with external entities. Interviews with the district personnel reveal that written policies exist to maintain the integrity of the college's financial operations. (III.D.2.e.)

Conclusions

The college has provided evidence that they meet or exceed most of the elements of Standard Three with the exceptions noted above.

Commendations

- The college has focused on student learning and community as it has begun the new construction. Students clearly appreciate the new facilities and are utilizing them heavily.
- The college has established financial integrity, uses its resources responsibly and

provides detailed financial information throughout the college community.

Recommendations

See Recommendation 1.1.

- 3.1 The college should complete the work on student learning outcomes which it has begun so effectively in the areas of instruction and student services and ensure that work on student learning outcomes is undertaken in all of the areas of the college in which the standards call for it. (III.A.1.c, III.B.2.b)
- 3.2 The district, in cooperation with the colleges, should explore new efforts and initiatives to identify and address the barriers that limit the diversity of their workforce and to ensure that faculty and staff reflect the rich diversity of their student body. (III.A.4.b)

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

General Observations

The college is in the process of change in two areas relative to leadership and governance. The former president of Mesa College was recently appointed as the new Chancellor for the district. An Interim President of Mesa College has been appointed. The search process is under way and the plan is to have a permanent president by July 1, 2005. There are also two interim instructional deans and there are plans for making a permanent appointment for the Dean of Social/ Behavioral Sciences and Multicultural Studies in spring 2005. The Dean of Business, Computer Studies and Technologies at Mesa is currently serving as the Interim Assistant Chancellor of Instructional Services at the district office. He will return to Mesa College once the Assistant Chancellor position has been filled, which is expected by July 1, 2005.

Findings and Evidence

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

Based on the descriptions of the governance environment at the college, the inclusiveness of it, and the routes of input to decision-making, the institutional leaders have created an environment for empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence. The accreditation survey results reported that 83.9 percent of the faculty and 77.2 percent of the staff expressed a positive view of the governance process. On-site interviews of faculty, staff, students and administrators and examination of documents such as the district's participatory governance policy confirm that view. The President's Cabinet retreat provides the opportunity for shared dialogue in setting college goals and strategic planning. The retreat also provides the opportunity for the college representatives to evaluate the college's strengths and weaknesses. Evaluation of the governance structure and function is also reported to occur at the weekly proceedings of the President's Cabinet and at the retreat. The employee survey (2002) cited ratings of 74 percent in favor of the college leadership. (IV.A.1)

The college has established and implemented "a written policy providing for faculty, staff, administrator, and student participation in decision-making processes." The Mesa Guide to Governance document clearly articulates the college's commitment to shared governance. The guide supports the district level policy in place that is based on California regulation (title 5) concerning participatory governance and district board policy 0003. On-site interviews have confirmed the good practice. (IV.A.2)

The other parts of Standard IV.A.2 appear to be met. The evidence from the self study, examination of documents on site, and interviews includes:

- Membership of the President's Cabinet and the inclusion of all parties;
- Description of the meetings as open and well-publicized;
- Description of the work of the Cabinet (establishment of goals, considering and acting upon recommendations of the college constituencies and committees, acting as the Budget Committee for the college);

- Description of the role of the academic senate;
- Description of the faculty hiring sub-committee;
- Description of the specific roles of administrators, staff and students in the governance process;
- Employee survey data indicating satisfaction with the President’s Cabinet. (IV.A.2)

The institution’s governance structure encourages participation, independent and critical thinking, questioning and research protocols. All vested groups or individuals have the opportunity “to voice opinions.” Decisions are based on the college’s governance-established criteria (IV.A.2.a). The college believes the process they use is self-evaluative and if a group is absent from the decision making process, “their voice is encouraged to be conspicuous at future meetings...that augments an inclusive nature.” Dialogue appears to take place at the President’s Council and at their retreat.

Both the accreditation survey results and campus interviews have confirmed there are established governance structures, processes and practices working at the college. (IV.A.3)

Evidence concerning the assertion that the institution “advocates and demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies” and with the ACCJC was confirmed by the historical documents provided to the team chair. (IV.A.4)

Standard IV.A.5 is partially met in that the college’s governance and decision-making structures are evaluated but not regularly and somewhat indirectly. They are described as “self-evaluative”, a “work in progress”, and surveys are referenced along with discussions in President’ Cabinet and President’s Retreat. In addition, the survey results indicate a lower level of agreement with the statement concerning the regular evaluation of decision-making structures and processes. There is also a sharp contrast in the self study between views of the President’s Cabinet and of the Chancellor’s Cabinet. There is no indication that results of these informal evaluations are communicated throughout the college. The self study states that “some assessment may be needed to determine how well leadership roles, structures and functions are working and this information needs to be communicated to the college.” This section includes discussion of the issue of administrator evaluation and it appears That the issue is not resolved as yet. (IV.A.5)

B. Board and Administrative Organization

Most parts of this standard have been met. The evidence provided in the self study includes the following:

- Description of the structure of the board, their terms, and meeting schedule;
- The web site for the code of ethics;
- Examples of the kinds of decisions the board makes, including approval of curriculum;
- Assertion of the role of the board in evaluation of the Chancellor and the presidents;
- Descriptions of board member behavior;
- A good deal of data from the special board meeting in October 2003, at which board members were interviewed in detail by representatives from the colleges;
- Data from the Employee Opinion survey.

All of these are consistent with interview data and documents examined at the college. (IV.B.1.a, b, and c).

The board has established bylaws and policies specifying the board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures. (IV.B.1.d)

The board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. However, thorough review and updates of board policy have not taken place. There is board policy that supports instruction and student programs ensuring their quality, integrity and effectiveness of programs and services. The board members indicated in interviews that they will begin the process of evaluating, revising and updating policies. (IV.B1.e)

Standard IV.B.2 concerns the president and most of it appears to be met. The evidence includes detailed description of the President's role and specific behavior with numerous illustrations. The self study does not address standard IV.B.2 a concerning the president's role in planning, overseeing and evaluating an administrative structure and delegating authority to administrators appropriately. However, interviews at the college confirmed that both the former president and the interim president have exercised this role. (IV.B.2)

Standard IV.B.3 concerning the district/system providing "primary leadership in setting and communicating expectations of educational excellence and integrity" and establishing "clearly defined roles of authority and responsibility between the colleges and the district/system" is not addressed in the self study. It appears from the "map" of organizational structure provided elsewhere in the document, and from the general lack of concern expressed about role clarity, that such clarity does exist. Standard IV.B.3.a is likewise not addressed. It focuses further on the role issue. (IV.B.3, IV.B.3.a)

The self study describes the services that the district provides to the colleges but makes no appraisal of them. Likewise there is no systematic method of assessment of those services in place; this was confirmed in interviews on site. (IV.B.3.b)

There is no statement in the self study about whether or not there is a "fair distribution of resources" (IV.B.3.c). Interviews on the campus indicated variation in the perception of whether there is a fair distribution of resources that is adequately supporting the college. For the most part people indicated they felt Mesa was being treated fairly. Other comments included the need for the district to re-look at the distribution of funds and support the college in funding it sufficiently, particularly in terms of the need for college positions.

It appears that the chancellor gives "full responsibility and authority to the president". Interviews with both the Mesa president and District chancellor confirmed this. (IV.B.3.e)

The standard concerning the district/system and colleges using effective methods of communication does not appear to be met, based on the survey data in which this issue is the lowest ranked area. Campus interviews confirmed both the lack of effective communication from the district and the perception by the campus that the senior district administrators lacked the understanding of what goes on at the colleges on a daily basis. An example was provided which dealt with the district

administrators calling meetings at the district during the first week of classes. The Deans needed to attend but found that extremely challenging at that time of the term. However, the new Chancellor has implemented several communication initiatives: two new publications, *The Board Report* and *The Chancellor's Cabinet Update*, and two new practices, Chancellor's Forums on Campus and Chancellor's Open Hours on Campus. (IV.B.3.f)

There is no mechanism in place for district/system regular evaluation of "district/system role delineation and governance and decision-making structures" and wide communication of the results of these evaluations. Interview of the new Chancellor confirmed this fact. (IV.B.3.g)

Conclusions

Overall, this appears to be a sound college, in compliance with most of the standards, based upon sound evidence.

Commendations

- The college leadership provides strong support of shared governance structures, processes and practices.
- The institutional leaders have facilitated an environment that supports both best practices and continuous improvement of the institution.
- The board of trustees is committed to avoiding the divisiveness of prior boards and working together with faculty, staff, the community, and each other to ensure a strong and purposeful organization even in the face of severe budgetary challenges.
- The new chancellor is building upon the fine traditions of the San Diego Community College District by strengthening district-wide communication and coordination, and by taking steps to ensure that the district uses its resources as effectively as possible to support the educational programs of the colleges.

Recommendations

See Recommendation 1.5.

- 4.1 The college should identify and implement measures to increase the level of student involvement in participatory governance so that they are able to work together with the other constituents within the college. (IV.A.3).
- 4.2 The district should build upon its efforts to clearly delineate the functions of the district and the colleges and to communicate more effectively with faculty and staff throughout the district, paying additional attention to coordinating and integrating services and activities within the district office and regularly evaluating the effectiveness of the delineation and the quality of services provided to the college. (IV.B.3.a, IV.B.3.b, IV.B.3.g)