

EVALUATION REPORT

LAKE TAHOE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

One College Drive
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

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
Lake Tahoe Community College from March 14 – 16, 2006

Homer L. Cissell, Ph.D.
Chair

LAKE TAHOE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**Visiting Team Members****March 14-16, 2006**

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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

INSTITUTION: Lake Tahoe Community College

DATE OF VISIT: March 14-16, 2006

TEAM CHAIR: Homer L. Cissell, Ph.D.
Superintendent/President, Lassen Community College

On February 2, 2006, the Lake Tahoe Evaluation Team members met in Oakland, California at the Oakland Airport Hilton hotel for the Team Training Workshop. It was at this first meeting that a member asked to be excused because of illness. It was determined through consultation between the team chair and assigned personnel from ACCJC that the team assistant would replace the excused member.

All members of the team were introduced to the ACCJC Team Evaluator Manual. All present were well educated to the process and procedures related to a properly executed evaluation team visit. All members of the team were introduced to topics such as preparing for a visit, the history and structure of ACCJC, standards of accreditation and their evolution, each of the current four standards, and themes. The team engaged in team exercises and scenario playing. The training also covered proper development and presentation of the Evaluation Report, writing recommendations, and the importance of maintaining professionalism and confidentiality.

Several weeks prior to arriving at the campus of Lake Tahoe Community College, each member of the team was encouraged to begin writing responses to the college's self study. Team members were instructed to make the assumption that all statements made in the Self Study were accurate and without bias. Once this exercise was completed, each member of the team was asked to develop a list of persons, documents and publications, which could be used to validate the statements made in the Self Study. This list established an evaluation plan for each member to follow to validate or refute written statements.

Two weeks before the visit each member of the team was asked to develop a list of persons or groups with which they wish to visit and question. These requests were formulated into a well organized event schedule by the college's administration and greatly facilitated the execution of an efficient and effective evaluation visit.

On March 13, 2006 an eight-member evaluation team met in South Lake Tahoe, California to perform an accreditation team visit from March 14 – 16, 2006 for Lake Tahoe Community College. Upon arrival, the team was transported to the campus for the purpose of spending a few hours evaluating and reviewing the evidence that had been selected, organized, and placed into appropriate locations based upon related Standards. During the pre-visit review of documentation and evidence, the first team meeting took

place. The primary topic of discussion was the purpose of the visit. It was well understood that each member of the team was to contribute to determining whether Lake Tahoe Community College continues to meet accreditation standards, evaluate the extent to which the college achieves its stated purposes, and substantiate documents statements made in the college's Self Study.

The evaluation team began with nine members and an assistant. However, because of serious illnesses, two members of the team asked that they be removed from the team prior to the accreditation visit. To accommodate this shortage of team members, the team assistant was asked if she would accept the assignment of becoming a member of the team. Following her acceptance, the team was still one member short, but the decision was made to go forward with the visit with its new composition. Assignments were rearranged to ensure at least one seasoned evaluator was involved during the evaluation and the writing of the report on each Standard.

By following the established event schedule, 53 individuals were interviewed, 3 classes were visited, 9 groups were addressed, and 3 campus-wide meetings were attended. Through this process the team met with over 86 college faculty, classified staff, students, administrators, and governing board members. The team stated many times how much they appreciated the openness and truthfulness of the employees and students.

The structure, format and information presented in the Self Study were of a high caliber. The information contained in the Self Study gave each team member a sound basis for beginning and executing a thorough review of needed documents and evidence. In general, the team found the college was prepared for an accreditation visit and was more than accommodating with regard to identifying and obtaining requested information. The only significant challenge to the team was the snowstorm that arrived the morning of March 14, 2006. The team acclimated rapidly to the changing environment, but transportation issues required minor adjustments to an established event schedule.

SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS

Commendation:

The college is to be commended for its positive and consistent integration of professional development activities campus-wide even in difficult financial times.

Commendation:

The visiting team was very impressed with the appearance, cleanliness, and maintenance of the college facilities and grounds particularly in times of budget constraints.

Commendation:

The team commends the college in its attempts to communicate budget and policy decisions to the campus. Particular recognition is given to the current chair of the College Council for her extraordinary efforts to disseminate information college-wide regarding that group's deliberations.

Commendations:

The College is commended for the integrity and openness with which it deals with and addresses the concerns of the Commission evidenced by the candor demonstrated in the preparation of the Self Study. The college is commended for the efficiency in the formal communication system for the dissemination of college wide shared governance proceedings and decisions. Of special note is the process used by the chair of the College Council to keep college staff informed.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following nine (9) recommendations were made as a result of the March 14 – 16, 2006 evaluation visit to Lake Tahoe Community College:

Recommendation for Standard I:

1. In order for the college to achieve substantial compliance with Standard I, the college must begin developing and implementing student learning outcomes (SLOs) for all of its courses, programs, degrees, and certificates. The team recommends that the college adhere to the October 2005 Academic Senate Resolution that mandates responsibility for the development and oversight of SLOs to the Academic Senate for all instructional units of the campus. The team further recommends the college develop mechanisms for measuring student learning outcomes and demonstrate how it uses these findings to improve student learning (I.B, I.B.2, I.B.3).

2. To obtain substantial compliance with Standard I, the visiting team recommends the institution revisit its established and published planning cycle and demonstrate the extent to which the planning process and cycle includes the establishment and measurement of SLOs and how these are linked to the mission statement, institutional research, planning, resource allocation and evaluation (I.A.4, I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7).

Recommendation for Standard II:

3. In order for the institution to demonstrate substantial compliance with Standard II, it is recommended the college develop SLOs and a systematic process for the assessment of those SLOs, at the course and program level, and use the outcomes of that process in course and program improvement. Furthermore, it is recommended greater emphasis be placed upon documenting dialogue taking place in all the other aspects of the campus and making it more readily accessible to internal and external constituencies (II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.c, II.A.2.f, II.A.3, II.A.5, II.A.6).

4. To ensure substantial compliance with Standard II, it is recommended Student Services develop and implement SLOs for all its component units, assess those measures, analyze the data, link the process to planning and budgeting, and use the results for continuous program improvement (II.B.4).

5. To ensure substantial compliance with Standard II, it is recommended the institution ensure, to the extent possible, that sufficiently trained and certificated human resources are made available during the times of library operation, to maximize the benefit of opportunities provided to students by library services (II.C.1.c).

Recommendation for Standard III:

6. In order that the institution represent itself as committed to the principles embodied in Standard III, it is recommended the college incorporate student learning outcomes in the process of evaluation of faculty and other staff as applicable (III.A.1.c).

7. To achieve substantial compliance with Standard III, it is recommended the institution adopt and publish a Board policy defining and delineating a code of ethics and conduct for faculty, staff, and administrators (III.A.1.d).

8. To achieve substantial compliance with Standard III, it is recommended, as soon as fiscally reasonable, the college address the issue of restoring and maintaining the Self Insured Retention (SIR) fund to a prudent level and to increase and maintain the General Fund Reserve to at least a minimum level as prescribed by and consistent with Board policy (III.D. 2. c).

Recommendation for Standard IV:

9. To achieve substantial compliance with Standard IV and to increase the effectiveness of the institution's commitment to college wide dialogue and consultation, the team recommends that an institutional commitment be established to the development of Student Learning Outcomes from the course level to the institutional level. The team recommends that the administration, as part of the institution's overall assessment of its own quality and effectiveness, provide the appropriate level of resources and support to accomplish this task in a timely manner (IV.A.2.b, IV.A.3, IV.B.1.b,c, IV.B.2.b).

ACCREDITATION EVALUATION REPORT FOR LAKE TAHOE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Comprehensive Evaluation Visit
March 14 – 16, 2006

INTRODUCTION

Lake Tahoe Community College is located on the southern shore of Lake Tahoe and in the community of South Lake Tahoe. This alpine community contains a population of approximately 23,000 residents and is geographically located at an altitude of 6,250 feet above sea level. The college provides direct service to an area of 196 square miles and is located in the very extreme eastern portion of El Dorado County. The community and college are both geographically isolated and the nearest larger city is two hours away. During the winter and early spring, the community is challenged to maintain safe driving conditions on surrounding highways, thus further compounding their geographical isolation.

The college was initially opened in a converted motel and utilized numerous sites throughout the city of South Lake Tahoe to meet the needs for library, classroom, and physical education facilities. The permanent campus opened in October 1988, with 55,000 square feet of space located on a 164 acre site acquired by the college in 1978. The second phase of construction was completed in 1996 and encompassed four computer laboratories and a fine arts complex. In 2002, the college occupied its first permanent physical education facility, which included a gymnasium large enough to support basketball, volleyball, indoor soccer, table tennis, and other related activities.

As of the date of the 2006 comprehensive accreditation visit, the campus possessed eleven general purpose classrooms and 22 specialized laboratories for art, biology, chemistry, computer sciences, culinary arts, photography, and physical education, to name a few. In July 2004, the college broke ground for a new Learning Resources Center. This 27,000 square foot building will house the college's library that includes six group study rooms, art gallery, two meeting rooms (one to serve as new board room), a video conferencing center, a teaching learning resource center, student computer stations, stack space, offices, and book storage areas.

Revenue projections for the current 2005-2006 fiscal year were projected to be approximately \$500,000 below that of the previous fiscal year. Upon investigation by the administration, it was discovered that due to a failure to recognize the revenue from **Partnership for Excellence (PFE)** funds in the amount of \$675,000, **the district actually realized a net revenue increase of only \$500,000 because prior year projection for enrollments did not materialize.** These new funds should assist the district in improving the level of the general fund reserve.

Since the last comprehensive accreditation visit the FTES generation (enrollments) at Lake Tahoe Community College have grown from approximately 1,590 (FY 1999-2000)

to a high of 1,876 (FY2002-2003). Unfortunately, since this high point, FTES (enrollments) have declined significantly to the current level of 1,701 FTES (FY2004-2005), with a projected production of below 1,600 for fiscal year 2005-2006.

The last comprehensive accreditation visit, which occurred in spring 2000, produced five (5) recommendations. Generally, the 2000 team found that the institution had addressed the recommendations of the 1994 visiting team. The following presents a fair and accurate representation of the observations and findings documented by the 2006 comprehensive accreditation visiting team.

TEAM EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO 2000 RECOMMENDATIONS

From March 14 - 16, 2000, Lake Tahoe Community College underwent a comprehensive accreditation visit. The eleven-member team assigned to this visit thoroughly reviewed each aspect of the institution's option and the extent to which the college met the evaluation standards established by the ACCJC. The result of that comprehensive visit was the establishment of five (5) recommendations. The following represents the observations made by the team members of the 2006 Comprehensive Evaluation Visit, with regard to the recommendations from 2000.

Recommendation, Standard 3:

The team supports the college's self study Plan of Action which calls for a research position to support the mission of the college. In this way, constituent groups can identify the office/person that has this responsibility. This action would respond to clearly identified research needs over and above the Graphically Speaking document. It would also identify for staff the method through which recommendations from program reviews and other planning documents are prioritized and otherwise move through the planning process(3A.1, 3A.3, 3C.1, and 3C.3).

Although the institution has made a concerted effort to achieve the expectations set forth by the 2000 visitation team, the likelihood of full compliance will be significantly reduced as long as the institution is challenged by declining enrollments, which drive down projected and anticipated revenues. Until such time as enrollments return to an acceptable level, meeting the expectations of the recommendation can only be accomplished through shared human resources.

Recommendation, Standard 4:

It is recommended that the college should give early attention to a comprehensive review of its Educational Master Plan,, using updated departmental program reviews and the college's Strategic Plan to ensure the Educational Master Plan is responsive to the changes which have taken place since the last updated and relevant to the changes contemplated by the Strategic Plan(3B.3, 3C.3, 4A.4, 4B.1, and 4D.1).

The extent to which the institution has accomplished this recommendation deserves a commendation. From the 2006 visiting team's review of this recommendation, the team concludes this issue has been resolved.

Recommendation, Standard 5:

The team recommends that the college provide, in addition to the current support, bilingual Spanish-speaking assistance at the point of contact in the admissions and records area (5.3, 5.6, and 5.7).

This recommendation has been fully resolved with the employment of a full-time bilingual Spanish speaking staff member in the office of admissions.

Recommendation, Standard 6:

It is recommended that the college provide additional “certificated” support on the library floor (6.4).

The evidence collected by the visitation team clearly indicates that this recommendation has been sufficiently addressed. There is now additional certificated help in the Learning Resources Center.

Recommendation, Standard 7:

It is recommended that evaluation criteria for adjunct faculty be consistent with those for full-time faculty with regard to knowledge of and currency in subject matter (4D.2, 7A.1, and 7B.3).

The institution has fully complied with this recommendation.

It is recommended that the college president take steps to assure that all management evaluations are completed systematically in accordance with governing board policy (7B.1, 7D.3).

The institution has made considerable progress in this area. Management evaluations are completed in a timely manner and a system for tracking the evaluation process has been established.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Authority

The visiting team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College is a legal component of the California Community College System. The System operates under the leadership and governance of the System's Chancellor and the Board of Governors. On the local level the institution operates under the authority of a locally elected Board of Trustees. Additionally, Lake Tahoe Community College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.

2. Mission

The visiting team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College's Mission Statement is clearly defined, representative of the population it serves, and reflects the institution's commitment to student learning. The Mission Statement was last reviewed by the Board of Trustees on October 2005. The Mission Statement appears in the college catalog, **quarter** schedules, and is present on the website.

3. Governing Board

The visiting team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College possesses a functioning governing board responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the institution. The board also assumes responsibility for ensuring that the institution's mission is being carried out. Its membership is sufficient in size and composition to fulfill all board responsibilities.

4. Chief Executive Officer

The visiting team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College has a chief executive officer who is appointed by the governing board and whose primary responsibility is providing academic and financial leadership to the institution.

5. Administrative Capacity

The visiting team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College possesses an administrative staff of sufficient size, composition and knowledge to provide the necessary services for an institution of its size, mission, and purpose.

6. Operational Status

The visiting team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College is fully operational and is actively providing all educational and support services necessary to assist students in meeting their needs.

7. Degrees

The visiting team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College offers 23 Associate Degrees and 24 certificate programs.

8. **Educational Programs**

The visiting team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College's degree and certificated programs are consistent with the stated Mission Statement, are based upon recognized higher education fields of study and are of sufficient length and content.

9. **Academic Credits**

The visiting team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College awards academic credits based upon generally accepted practices employed by other two-year degree granting institutions.

10. **Student Learning Achievement**

The visiting team confirmed that Student Outcomes appear in a specified section of the official course outline for approved courses. The members of the faculty utilize multiple assessment strategies, at the course level, to assess student achievement. However, as determined through personal interviews, these course-level student outcomes do not embody the expected structure of student learning outcomes nor is there an institutionalized process for officially documenting student achievement of the course outcomes.

11. **General Education**

The visiting team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College defines and incorporates into all degree programs a substantial component of general education designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual curiosity.

12. **Academic Freedom**

The visiting team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College faculty and students enjoy and are free to express, examine, and test the world of knowledge appropriate and related to their discipline or area of study.

13. **Faculty**

The visiting team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College employed 45.5 full-time and 161 part-time faculty members, during the term in session at the time of the visit, and that those members of the faculty are qualified to conduct the institution's programs and meet state mandated requirements.

14. **Student Services**

The visiting confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College provides for all students appropriate student services and programs consistent with student characteristics and the institutional mission.

15. **Admissions**
The visiting team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College has adopted and follows admission policies consistent with its mission that specify the qualifications of students appropriate for its programs.
16. **Information and Learning Resources**
The visiting team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College provides specific long-term access to sufficient information and learning resources and services to support its mission and all of its educational programs.
17. **Financial Resources**
The visiting team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College documents its funding resources and plans for financial development necessary to support student learning programs and services to improve institutional effectiveness.
18. **Financial Accountability**
The visiting confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College annually engages the services of an external auditing firm for the purpose of producing an annual audit for public review.
19. **Institutional Planning and Evaluation**
The visiting team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College provides basic planning for the future development of the institution and district property.
20. **Public Information**
The visiting team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College publishes in its catalog, class schedule, and other publications information concerning the college's purposes and objectives, admission requirements and procedures, rules and regulations affecting matriculated students, degree offerings, and degree requirements.
21. **Relations with the Accrediting Commission**
The team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College adheres to the eligibility requirements, standards and policies of ACCJC. Additionally, the institution communicates significant changes in its program offerings and modality of delivery to the commission, to include any material changes in operational policies that could substantially alter its accreditation status.

EVALUATION OF INSTITUTION USING ACCJC ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

STANDARD I Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

Standard I.A. Mission

General Observations:

The college has an approved mission statement that is consistent with the mission of a comprehensive California community college. The statement defines the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning. It is communicated to the campus and the community through campus publications, the college's website, the Faculty and Adjunct Faculty Handbook, the Classified Employees Handbook, and posted in various areas of the college. It is reviewed yearly each fall during the strategic planning process.

Findings and Evidence:

The mission statement was approved by the Board and is generally understood by the campus as a whole. The fall 2004 Accreditation Survey of employees noted that 87 percent of full-time faculty and 90 percent of classified employees are familiar with the Mission Statement. A graduate survey given to students who graduated in 2003 and 2004 affirmed that 100 percent of those students believed they achieved their educational goals and would study again at LTCC (I.A.1).

There is evidence that the mission is communicated to internal and external constituencies (I.A.2).

The college community asserts and the visiting team confirms that the mission statement is included in planning and budgeting documents. In the fall 2004 Accreditation Survey of employees, 74 percent of the faculty/staff respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they are familiar with the planning process at LTCC. When asked if they have the opportunity to provide input into the College planning process, 74 percent strongly agreed or agreed. It has also been confirmed that the mission statement is reviewed yearly each fall during the strategic planning process (I.A.3, I.A.4).

Conclusions:

Lake Tahoe Community College is in substantial compliance with Standard I.A.

Recommendations:

None.

Standard I. B. Institutional Effectiveness

General Observations:

The college can be proud of its many faculty and staff who have demonstrated their commitment to improving institutional effectiveness and student learning (I.B.1, I.B.3).

While the college is knowledgeable of the emphasis on student learning outcomes, it does not process or have in place proper procedures for the inclusion of student learning outcomes (SLOs) into approved course outlines of record. Additionally, the institution has not determined when or how to implement measurement protocols or methodologies to determine effectiveness of SLOs (I.B, I.B.3).

There is broad based dialogue related to institutional effectiveness in the various college committees as determined through personal interviews; however, the documentation of such dialogue is significantly lacking (I.B.1).

Findings and Evidence:

There is evidence that instructional units and the college, as a whole, set goals consistent with the institution's mission. However, only in a limited number of cases, do the goals have measurable terms attached to them (I.B.1, I.B.2).

The planning process is broad-based, offers opportunity for input by appropriate constituencies, allocates resources (though those resources have dwindled recently), and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness (I.B.2, I.B.4).

The faculty and staff indicated a desire for training in the interpretation of research data. There is a clear message, however, that the college has not been providing the research assistance and data that faculty and staff feel they need. There is a fact book published annually that has a great deal of data that supports decision-making. There is an expressed need for hiring a researcher to lead the campus in the development of outcome measures and with analysis of data. The college has hired an analyst who may be underutilized due to the lack of clarity as to the support he could provide to faculty in the development, assessment, and evaluation of SLOs (I.B.1, I.B.3).

The college has produced an extremely limited number of student learning outcomes and no outcome measures. They have addressed SLOs somewhat at the program level, and for that they are to be commended, but they have stated in the self-study that they are far from completing and assessing course level SLOs. The team confirmed that the college does not have an approved process in place for this to occur.

The team also finds an apparent lack of communication and dialogue between the Academic Senate and other constituency groups on campus as evidenced by an Academic Senate SLO subcommittee that was not reported to the team until 2 pm on the second day of the visit, however; the existence of this committee was noted in the Self Study page 73 and District's Update letter page 4. The existence of this committee had not been

acknowledged by the Curriculum Committee, the administrative team, nor faculty or staff before a conversation with the Academic Senate President.

The continued education of the faculty and staff needs to occur in both structured and informal dialogues especially in the areas of how outcomes differ at the various levels and how to relate outcomes at the various levels (I.B, I.B.1, I.B.3).

The college has conducted program reviews for many years, and there is clear evidence that the findings of the reviews were used to make changes. However, under the new standards, there needs to be documented evidence that the reviews resulted in improved student learning (I.B, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4).

The college has held open forums and retreats. The self-study asserts that regular, meaningful participation that is inclusive of all segments of the college community in college wide reflective dialogue is occurring at this time. However, the team found that the college does not document those discussions and decisions on a consistent basis (I.B.1).

The team could find no verification that the college has systematically reviewed its evaluation processes (I.B.6, I.B.7).

Conclusions:

The college has clearly put many hours into addressing institutional effectiveness. Still they are not yet in substantial compliance with ACCJC Standard I.B.

Though there is much evidence that the college uses quantitative data when determining resource allocations, the team could find no evidence that data collected from assessing student-learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels is linked to planning and resource allocation. Providing those links is likely to lead to continuous program improvement, enhanced student learning and improved college effectiveness as called for in the standard (I.B, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4).

The team finds there is not yet a preponderance of evidence at a level that meets Standard I.B.

Recommendations:

1. In order for the college to achieve substantial compliance with Standard I, the college must begin developing and implementing student learning outcomes (SLOs) for all of its courses, programs, degrees and certificates. The team recommends that the college adhere to the October 2005 Academic Senate Resolution that mandates responsibility for the development and oversight of SLOs to the Academic Senate for all instructional units of the campus. The team further recommends the college develop mechanisms for measuring student learning outcomes and demonstrate how it uses these findings to improve student learning (I.B, I.B.2, I.B.3).

2. To obtain substantial compliance with Standard I, the visiting team recommends the institution revisit its established and published planning cycle and demonstrate the extent to which the planning process and cycle includes the establishment and measurement of SLOs and how these are linked to the mission statement, institutional research, planning, resource allocation, and evaluation (I.A.4, I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7).

STANDARD II

Student Learning Programs and Services

Standard II.A. Instructional Programs

General Observations:

The college uses an array of information both formal and informal, to identify student educational needs. The curriculum is comprehensive, particularly for a school of this size. Students appear to be satisfied with their educational experience at LTCC. The college has discussed increasing the number of offerings using non-traditional delivery formats, but to date there are few Distance Education classes. The self-study addresses the fact that the college does not have SLOs for all of its courses and programs, and has not identified a process for complying with this standard. Additionally and equally important, they have acknowledged the fact that they must assess the SLOs using appropriate strategies and then link the analysis of the data to the planning and budgeting processes of the college (II.A.1, 1.a, 1.b, 1.c, A.2.b, 2.d).

The college has been conducting program review (at LTCC it is called program planning) using a variety of quantitative data sources. They utilize an established process of curriculum approval, review and revision. They consider the breadth, depth, relevance, currency, and rigor of the curriculum. It is faculty driven. Students agree that they are receiving high quality instruction at LTCC (II.A.2, A.2.a, A.2.c, A.2.e, A.2.f).

The college has an established planning process that is broad based and links program review to strategic planning.

The units of credit awarded by the college correlate to accepted standards common to institutions of higher education. However, because the college has not developed SLOs for all of its courses, it is difficult to say that they award credit based on “the course’s stated learning outcomes” (II.A.2.h).

The college has a published general education philosophy statement that is in line with accepted higher education standards, though it does not address SLOs as explicitly as the new standards require. All programs have a general education component. This is true of both the two-year degree and vocational programs (II.A.3).

Transferring in and out of LTCC does not appear to be a problem. Transfer information is made available to students. Counselors provide accurate information, and the college does a comprehensive job of evaluating transcripts (II.A.6).

The academic freedom policy of the college is published in the faculty handbook and the catalog. The academic honesty policy is clear and accessible to students (II.A.7).

Findings and Evidence:

The team found a strong sense of collaboration and commitment on the part of the faculty and staff of the college. There is an energy and enthusiasm at the campus demonstrated by a high level of morale among personnel and students.

The team found many areas deserving of commendation: The college has an excellent process for mentoring new teachers. There is a plethora of faculty resources available on the website. The college guarantees sabbaticals for the faculty. It has strong, active Advisory Committees as well as a well-structured curriculum development and review process.

There are also areas of concern. There is a sense that the college has for many years informally addressed student-learning outcomes linked to continuous improvement, but not in such a way, as the new standards require. The self-study states, and the team confirmed, that the college has not developed SLOs for all its instructional programs and courses, nor has it set up a process or plan to make that happen. The team did find evidence of SLOs in a minimal number of courses and more at the program level (II.A.1.c.).

There was a resolution passed in October 2005 that assigns responsibility for SLO development to the Academic Senate. The Academic Senate (AS) President stated that the **academic senate** has established a subcommittee of the AS called the SLO Committee that he reported has met on a regular basis since Fall 2005. The team received no documentation of the meetings or any actions by the committee.

Faculty and staff express the need for assistance in developing and measuring SLOs and for training in data analysis. The campus identified the need for an analyst, and a position was filled in 2002. However, that person's responsibilities were divided between data collecting and programming. The team reiterates its finding that this position is underutilized.

There appears to be a lack of understanding on the part of the faculty of the development and implementation of SLOs as it is linked to the cycle of assessment.

There are clear, established processes for developing programs and curricula. There is evidence of thorough, systematic, and cyclical curriculum revision and review (II.A.1.a.).

The general education component of all degrees is clearly defined and in alignment with the mission and the printed philosophy. Still, there are no SLOs or process for assessing SLOs for general education courses (II.A.3.).

There is clearly dialogue taking place, but the team found that because of the size of the campus, some of the dialogue is informal and not documented.

Conclusions:

Lake Tahoe Community College is in partial compliance with Standard II A. They have, however, not developed, implemented, or assessed SLOs for their instructional programs, nor is there to date, a process in place to have that occur.

A preponderance of evidence was not identified to indicate that the institution, as a whole, is ready or willing to provide the time or resources required to substantially meet this standard.

Recommendations:

3. In order for the institution to demonstrate substantial compliance with Standard II, it is recommended the college develop SLOs and a systematic process for the assessment of those SLOs, at the course and program level, and use the outcomes of that process in course and program improvement. Furthermore, it is recommended greater emphasis be placed upon documenting dialogue taking place in all the other aspects of the campus and making it more readily accessible to internal and external constituencies (II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.c, II.A.2.f, II.A.3, II.A.5, II.A.6).

Standard II. B. Student Support Services

General Observations:

The college provides an extensive array of student support services to its students. Students report they are satisfied with the services. The college has identified that additional services to ESL students would enhance their program (IIB.3.b).

The catalog is developed collaboratively with wide campus input. Efforts are made to ensure the accuracy of the contents and its timely publication. The self-study acknowledges that the website needs to be more frequently updated and more interactive (II.B.2).

The college acknowledges that the full array of student support services is not equitably applied to the off-campus sites. **Conversations with the administration indicates the district's belief is that because of the proximity to the main campus (less than two miles) it is more beneficial for the students to come to the campus to receive these services.** But for a campus of this size, it offers an exceptional number of opportunities for students to engage in intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development activities. Likewise, there are many programs and services that promote and enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity (II.B.3.a).

The college has identified counseling follow-up and student tracking as an area that needs improvement (II.B.4).

The college undergoes periodic validation of its placement process. Students express satisfaction with the admissions and placement practices (II.B.3.c, B.3.e).

The college follows all requirements for maintaining confidentiality and security of student files. The policy is published and followed (II.B.c, f).

The self-study acknowledges that Student Services needs to develop and assess SLOs for its programs. It then needs to use the results as a basis for improvement (II.B.4).

Findings and Evidence:

Student Services has much to be commended for: they go above and beyond to serve their student population. They provide comprehensive support and services. Of note is their new outreach focus to the high schools and to the students at the off-campus sites. They have identified and addressed ESL student concerns. They have assessed and improved their orientation program. Students express a high level of satisfaction with the services provided (II.B.1, B.3, B.3.a, B.3.e, B.3.d).

Student Services **personnel have** discussed how they will address the requirement to measure SLOs for their division. They chose to focus first on orientation. They discovered several areas of weakness which they have analyzed and set about correcting. They admit they need assistance in determining how to assess and how to analyze data for continuous improvement (II.B.4.).

Conclusions:

Lake Tahoe Community College is in only partial compliance with Standard II.B.

Recommendations:

4. To ensure substantial compliance with Standard II, it is recommended Student Services develop and implement outcome measures for all its component units, assess those measures, analyze the data, link the process to planning and budgeting, and use the results for continuous program improvement (II.B.4).

Standard II.C. Library and Learning Support Services

General Observations:

The Team commends the librarian and the library staff for creating an inviting and welcoming library facility in somewhat cramped circumstances, for their demonstrated courtesy and helpfulness to students, and for their professional and comprehensive planning for the new library.

The library is open sufficient hours to support the learning needs of students, staff, and faculty. Surveys indicate that library services are valued by students and faculty and are well utilized (II.C.1.c).

The move into the new library will place existing staffing levels under considerable strain, particularly in the areas of information competency instruction, reference assistance, and the acquisition, cataloging, and processing of new materials that funds associated with the move may generate (II.C.1.c).

In addition, more than doubling the number of student workstations in the new library may add to the workload of classified staff in terms of troubleshooting and of the librarian in terms of assisting students with online database instruction and the ethical use of information found on the Internet (II.C.1.c).

Selection of resources is done with faculty input. The library utilizes a number of innovative strategies to ensure faculty participation in collection development (II.C.1.a).

Evaluation of library services has been documented and occurs in a several forms: surveys, statistical reports, program planning, and comparison with standards articulated by professional associations such as the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL)(II.C.2).

The librarian provides instruction on an as-requested basis and has plans to develop a number of online tutorials on relevant topics such as copyright and intellectual property (II.C.1.b).

Learning support services are well established at the college (II.C.1.c).

The Gateway Math Center utilizes data to guide the placement of students and their tutoring and to gauge the results of that tutoring (II.C.2.).

The Learning Support Complex, consisting of the Learning Assistance Center (LAC), Writing Center, and Gateway Math Center (GMC), will move into the area currently occupied by the library when the new library building opens, thus improving access and visibility (II.C.1.c).

The need for a bilingual math tutor is acknowledged (II.C.2).

Conclusion:

The college meets the standard.

Recommendations:

5. To attain a level of service exceeding the expectations of Standard II, it is recommended the institution ensure, to the extent possible, that sufficiently trained and

certificated human resources are made available during the times of library operation, to maximize the benefit of opportunities provided to students by library services (II.C.1.c).

STANDARD III

Resources

General Comments:

The college has many processes in place (both formal and informal) that work successfully for the institution in ensuring quality and integrity of resource management. Particularly noteworthy is the campus' strength in communicating to its constituents. This occurs in various formats, e.g. verbally, weekly bulletins, and via email.

The college did a very good job of introspection in its self-study document and very clearly outlined successes and areas for improvement pertaining to this standard. The Team completed an exhaustive review of the resource management of the institution including a thorough review of the self-study, analyses of documentation, and interviews with campus constituents. After broad and thorough investigation, it is clear that the institution does utilize its human, physical, technological, and financial resources effectively to meet faculty, staff and student needs.

Findings and Evidence:

Standard III.A. Human Resources

Lake Tahoe Community College follows a comprehensive and consistent hiring process from beginning to end, which ensures that faculty, classified staff, and administrators have the necessary experience and credentials to perform their jobs. Once employees are hired, they are evaluated in accordance with specific written criteria and prescribed procedures that measure effectiveness and make suggestions for improvement when applicable. Although the faculty evaluation process includes personal reflection on their individual teaching effectiveness, methodologies, philosophies, and effects on their students, in its current form it does not seek evaluation of effectiveness in achieving student learning outcomes (III.A.1.a, III.A.1.b., III.A.1.c).

Board policy manual includes a specific written code of ethics for trustees and the superintendent/president. However, no such code of ethics has been adopted for faculty, staff, and administrators. The college has recognized this need in its self-study (III.A.1.d).

The college has operated with staffing levels that meet basic instructional, student, and business services needs. Although program growth and enhancement will certainly impact workload, financial conditions have precluded additional hiring. Personnel policies and procedures are reviewed and updated annually and with appropriate consultation. Personnel records are managed with adequate levels of security and confidentiality (III.A.2, III.A.3.a, III.A.3.b).

Hiring practices as well as institutional behavior suggests the college's support for and commitment to a diverse workplace and to increased understanding of equity and diversity in its policies and practices. The college is also continuing its efforts to attract a diverse student body and employee base to reflect the ethnicity of its local community. As noted in the self-study, the college is awaiting a model policy on faculty and staff diversity from the State Chancellor's Office and, once it is received, we concur with the institution's intention to update its faculty and staff diversity plan since the current one is outdated (III.A.4.a, III.A.4.b).

Of equal importance is the institutional commitment to respectful treatment of all employees at the college. Notwithstanding several specific efforts outlined in the self-study that suggest a commitment to participatory decision making, there was a perception noted in the self-study that some constituents suggested improvements needed to be made in respectful treatment of faculty and staff. However, other than the survey mentioned in the self-study, no supporting evidence on this matter could be found by the visiting Team during its examination of data or from broad discussions with college representatives (III.A.4.c).

Except for its recent period of financial hardship, at all levels of the college, from the Board of Trustees to faculty and classified staff, professional development has been fostered, supported, funded, and evaluated for use in improving programs and services (III.A.5.a, III.A.5.b). It is clear that Human Resources are an integral part of the institutional planning effort at the college.

Standard III.B. Physical Resources

The facilities and capital assets at the three primary sites utilized by the college are adequately equipped, maintained, and managed to meet the instructional and service needs of faculty, staff, and students. Prudent and thorough policies and procedures are in place to ensure access, safety and security, and a positive and healthy working and learning environment. The visiting Team observed firsthand the cleanliness and high level of attention given to the facilities and grounds of the campus and college faculty and staff expressed great pride in their new buildings (III.B.1.a, III.B.1.b).

In the self-study, adequate parking was noted as a concern; however, as enrollment has declined this issue is not currently significant. The campus has recognized and is making efforts to develop long-range plans for capital and equipment needs. Noting the absence of ongoing resources to meet this need, the college still has a commitment to campus improvement goals and incorporates physical resource planning into institutional planning processes (III.B.2.a, III.B.2.b).

Standard III.C. Technological Resources

The college has provided essential technology equipment, software, professional support and services within limited financial resources. The registration process was modernized,

a degree audit system implemented, and a help desk established. The college has done a reasonable job in meeting the teaching, learning, and operational needs that technology enhances. The institution offers a vast array of training opportunities to employees and students. There is a systematic plan for staying current with technological needs (e.g. new and cascading computer replacements). Although the budget has influenced decisions to some extent, the college has demonstrated a commitment to supporting critical operational systems and the technological infrastructure of the institution (III.C.1.a, III.C.1.b, III.C.1.c).

Appropriate efforts have been made to maintain the technology infrastructure, and necessary resources have been allocated to meet critical needs. The college prioritizes its technology needs through multiple committees who, consistent with documents such as the strategic plan, educational master plan, and program plans, determine short and long-range goals, share ideas and recommendations, and evaluate existing technology. Since the self-study, the college has completed a technology plan (October 2005), which will help guide the college's technological advancements for the next several years. This plan should be updated routinely to ensure currency of institutional needs (III.C.1.d, III.C.2).

Standard III.D. Financial Resources

The mission and goals of the college are reviewed at multiple levels during the annual financial planning process. Financial planning at the college has incorporated a realistic assessment of enrollment trends and economic analyses while attempting to develop partnerships external to the college to generate other sources of ongoing income for the institution. At the time of the team's visit with individual constituents of the college, considerable focus was given to the current financial and enrollment decline. The financial situation is serious, and the campus is responding to the matter with due course and diligence and with broad and open communication. While there is evidence of prudent long-term planning to meet future obligations, the team agrees with the college's self evaluation that district priority must be given to funding its long-term liability for retiree health benefits (III.D.1.a, III.D.1.b, III.D.1.c).

The budgeting process follows prescriptive timelines. An accreditation survey reported that less than half of the respondents indicated they were provided ample and appropriate opportunity to participate in the budget development process. However, in examination of documents and after discussions with representatives of the college during the team visit, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that reasonable opportunities are in place for all constituencies to participate in the development of institutional plans and budget formulation. Still, the team encourages the college to explore ways of improving mechanisms for involvement in the budget process (III.D.1.d).

The financial management system has appropriate control mechanisms and reports are generated routinely for managers who have control over resource allocations. No major non-compliance issues to state or federal regulations have been identified in recent audit reports. Broader communication on the budget status and financial issues are shared campus-wide in a variety of ways, both formal and informal. Most noteworthy is the wide

dissemination of discussions and recommendations formulated at the College Council meetings. These correspondences are generated by the committee chair and sent to the entire college via email (III.D.2.a, III.D.2.b).

While overall financial management appears sound and the district has developed strategies to respond to financial hardships, the contingency reserve level was lowered to 3.1% in an effort to minimize the budget effects of reduced enrollment. At the same time, decisions were made to reduce the level of the self-insured retention (SIR) fund. Lowering these reserves subjects the district to potential risk in meeting unforeseen emergencies (III.D.2.c).

Otherwise, oversight of the college's finances, contracts, investments, grants, fiscal programs and activities are sound and work in concert with the mission and goals of the institution. Food services continue to be an operation of concern for the college, but the district is addressing the issue (III.D.2.d, III.D.2.e).

The college has incorporated a financial planning process that links mission and goals to resource allocations, has implemented adequate control and review mechanisms, and communicates financial information effectively. There is, however, a lack of evidence suggesting that processes are in place for the college to assess the effective use of its financial resources and is using the results of that evaluation for the basis of improvement (III.D.2.f, III.D.2.g, III.D.3).

Conclusions

The visiting Team conducted comprehensive review of the self-study, college documentation (including audits, budgets, financial and business procedures) and interviews with campus managers, faculty and staff, and students. The overall assessment of the Team is that **except for the following three recommendations** the college meets this standard.

Recommendations:

6. In order that the institution represent itself as committed to the principles embodied in Standard III, it is recommended the college incorporate student learning outcomes in the process of evaluation of faculty and other staff as applicable (III.A.1.c).
7. To achieve substantial compliance with Standard III, it is recommended the institution adopt and publish a Board policy defining and delineating a code of ethics and conduct for faculty, staff, and administrators (III.A.1.d).
8. To achieve substantial compliance with Standard III, it is recommended, as soon as fiscally reasonable, the college address the issue of restoring and maintaining the Self Insured Retention (SIR) fund to a prudent level and to increase and maintain the General Fund Reserve to at least a minimum level as prescribed by and consistent with Board policy (III.D.2.c).

STANDARD IV

Leadership and Governance

General Comments:

The team found strong evidence at Lake Tahoe Community College of a campus culture that embraces shared governance, mutual concern, respect and honesty. The institution recognizes the role of leadership throughout the college and utilizes its contributions. The institution, led by the president and the board of trustees, strive to create a cooperative and collaborative atmosphere that fosters a real **concern** for student success.

Standard IV.A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

Findings and Evidence:

The college meets the standard. The college has published its committee structure, including membership for all constituencies and the charges of all committees. The size of the college provides for an informal discussion and exchange of ideas in addition to the formal processes developed by the college. The College Council serves as the primary shared governance vehicle on campus. All college wide constituencies are represented on this committee. This year the chair is a classified employee. **Although** there is a widespread feeling that participatory opportunities exist across the campus, there is mention in the self study that members of the classified service may be resistant due to workload, lack of effective backup and a perceived lack of support from supervisors. Further inquiry suggests that this is a minority opinion and the classified service is participatory and well represented in the shared governance process. There is a feeling campus wide that ample opportunity is provided to participate in shared governance dialogue (IV.A.2, 2.a).

There is policy and anecdotal evidence that the governing board, faculty and administration have substantive and clearly defined roles in the institutional governance and exercise their roles through a clearly defined process. Faculty members frequently hold committee chair roles. As noted above, members of the classified service also participate in the governance committee, as do students from the **Association of Students Council (ASC)** (IV.A. 2, 3, 5).

There is evidence that institutional leaders create an environment for empowerment, innovation and institutional excellence. This is evident in the approach the College Council has taken in dealing with the decline in enrollment and the subsequent reduction in income. However, institutional wide commitment to the development of Student Learning Outcomes is missing. The faculty, through a resolution adopted October 18, 2005 by the Faculty Senate, holds the primary role in the development of the Student Learning Outcomes process. The commitment and development of Student Learning Outcomes by faculty is fragmented with no formal plan in place. A Faculty Senate appointed Student Learning Committee has been in place for about a year. However, only

a few instructional divisions and programs have begun the process of formally addressing SLOs. Institution wide dialogue about Student Learning Outcomes and the development of an institution wide plan for the development of Student Learning Outcomes has been minimal (IV.A.2. a, b).

The team observed that at LTCC there is a free exchange of dialogue and ideas as administrators, staff, faculty and students work together for the good of the college. Dialogue and problem solving at the College Council is a good example of this aspect of governance. Team members who attended a College Council meeting witnessed a free exchange of dialogue regarding college wide budget issues. Interviews with college staff also affirm the fact that faculty, staff, students and administrators work together for the good of the college. Shared governance is enhanced by the size of LTCC. The small size provides for an ongoing informal and formal exchange of ideas. The combination of a well established shared governance and campus wide communication system is enhanced by the informal collegial atmosphere, which allows for routine business to take place (IV. A.3).

The College advocates and demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relations with external agencies, including the Commission and the United States Department of Education. The college has responded to the concerns and recommendations expressed by the Commission (IV.A.4).

Standard IV.B. Board and Administrative Organization

The college meets the standard. Board of Trustees members are well aware of their role as independently elected officials charged by their constituents to set the general direction of the college. Board members have been trained to become better aware of their role as policy makers. Board members participate in statewide conferences and in regional organizations. They have been effective in being responsive to the expectations of their role as evidenced by the fall, 2004 Accreditation Survey. Board members served on all four standards committees for the Accreditation Self Study. They are active in the ongoing refinement of the mission statement along with the vision and goals of the college. Goal setting and mission refinement include representatives from the entire college community. The processes adopted by the Board of Trustees provide for a systematic process that assesses the effectiveness of the college programs within the mission and philosophy of the institution. Program planning at LTCC is institutionalized, and program review results are utilized for budget and other planning purposes (IV.B. 1.a, b).

The board recognizes its role as having the ultimate responsibilities for the educational quality, legal liability, and financial integrity of the district. It has adopted policies and procedures that address the organization of the board along with policies regarding ethics and board member roles. These are published and disseminated throughout the district. The board follows its own policies and procedures. It evaluates and revises related policies on a recurrent basis and adopts and or revises educational and fiduciary policies as needed (IV.B. 1. b, c, d, e, g).

The current CEO has served as president for the last sixteen years. The board delegates full operational authority and responsibility to the CEO. The board is very supportive of the CEO and his authority. They hold him accountable through a comprehensive annual evaluation that involves input from a committee of faculty, students and staff every third year. It is evident that the CEO sets a collegial tone at LTCC and commands much respect from the staff and students. He sets a climate of cooperation and expectation of steady improvement that are characteristics of the culture at LTCC. He is involved in various community boards and organizations, which allows him to provide a high profile of the college in the community at large (IV.B.1.j, 2.a, b).

The CEO plans, oversees, and delegates authority to administrators and other staff as appropriate. The CEO is evaluated annually. In the November 1, 2002 Mid-Term Report, it was recommended that the president take steps to assure all management evaluations be completed systematically. There is evidence of an ongoing formative evaluation of administrators under his supervision. Since the Mid-Term report, substantial improvement has taken place in delivering formal evaluations of managers. The CEO played a significant role in the development and refinement of the planning processes at the college. However, institutional research is a challenge at small colleges and LTCC is no exception. The lack of a research department makes it difficult for the College to have access to appropriate planning data (IV.B.2.a, b, c).

The CEO, through his shared governance and operational committees and processes ensures that the College leadership, including the Board of Trustees, is kept abreast of **statutes**, regulations and Board policies. The CEO effectively controls the budget and expenditures. The operational processes established and implemented at the college ensure a constant review of expenditures. This is especially evident as LTCC struggles with the challenges of being a comprehensive community college with the limited resources that are generated by a small college like LTCC. Though budget reserves have fallen to 3.1% for 2005-06, plans are in place to raise the reserve to 5% in the next fiscal year. The president involves himself with many community organizations and businesses that allow him to often head off problems or barriers that may put the college in a bad light with the community (IV. B. 2. c, d, e).

Evidence Examined:

Academic Senate Year End Report, 2000-01 and 2001-02

Accreditation Self Study, 2000

Accreditation Survey: Fall 2004: Faculty and Staff

Accreditation Survey: Fall 2004: Students

Board Policy and Regulations, 2005-06

College Council Self-Evaluation Results, 2003-04

Educational Master Plan, 2004

Graphically Speaking, December 2005

Independent Auditor's Report for the Year Ended June 30, 2004

Lake Tahoe Community College Accreditation Mid-Term Report, November 1, 2002

Policies and Procedures of the College Council, Revised June 10, 2005

Program Planning Handbook, January 2004

Strategic Plan, Goals and Objectives, 2004-09

Interview: President, Standard IV Committee, President of CEA, President of Faculty Association, President of Faculty Senate.

Conclusions:

The team made a comprehensive study of evidence provided for the examination of Standard IV. The college meets the standard and commends the members of the Standard IV Committee for their diligence and concise preparation of the Self Study.

The team observed that the Self Study is clear as to the progress made by the CEO and the board since the last accreditation.

Recommendations:

9. To achieve substantial compliance with Standard IV and to increase the effectiveness of the institution's commitment to college wide dialogue and consultation, the team recommends that an institutional commitment be established to the development of Student Learning Outcomes from the course level to the institutional level. The team recommends that the administration, as part of the institution's overall assessment of its own quality and effectiveness, provide the appropriate level of resources and support to accomplish this task in a timely manner (IV.A.2.b, IV.A3, IV.B.1.b, c, IV.B.2.b).