

EVALUATION REPORT

Lake Tahoe Community College
South Lake Tahoe, California

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

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited Lake Tahoe
Community College from October 24-27, 2011

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Chair

Visiting Team Roster

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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

INSTITUTION: Lake Tahoe Community College District

DATES OF VISIT: October 24-27, 2011

TEAM CHAIR: William C. Farmer Jr.

A ten-member accreditation team visited Lake Tahoe Community College from October 24-27, 2011, for the purpose of evaluating how well the institution is achieving its stated purposes, analyzing how well the College is meeting the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior College (ACCJC) standards, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement, and submitting recommendations to the Commission regarding the status of the College.

In preparation for the visit, team members attended an all-day training session on September 6, 2011, conducted by the ACCJC, and studied Commission materials prepared for visiting teams. Team members read carefully the College's self study report, including the recommendations from the 2006 visiting team, and assessed the evidence provided by the College. The team also reviewed two progress reports completed in 2007 and 2008, a mid-term report completed by the College in 2009, and other materials submitted to the Commission since the College's last comprehensive visit.

Prior to the visit, team members completed written evaluations of the self-study report and began identifying areas for further investigation. On the day before the formal beginning of the visit, the team members spent the afternoon discussing their views of the written materials provided by the College and reviewing evidence provided by the College in support of its self study. They identified areas that needed further information and developed plans for finding that information.

During the visit, the team held 56 meetings with 109 faculty, staff, administrators, members of the Board of Trustees, and students. The team chair and other team members met with members of the Board of Trustees, the president of the College and various administrators. Team members also attended several college committee meetings, a Board of Trustees meeting, and two open meetings scheduled to receive comments from any member of the campus or local community. They also visited various classes.

The College was prepared and ready for the team's visit. The team felt that the self-study report was comprehensive and well written. College staff members were very accommodating to team members and available for interviews and follow-up conversations. Any requests for evidence and meetings were responded to immediately.

Major Findings and Recommendations of the 2011 Visiting Team

As a result of the October 2011 visit, the team made five recommendations to Lake Tahoe Community College:

Recommendation 1 (2011)

In order to comply with the standards and to improve, the team recommends that the College continue the improvements it has recently made to its planning processes and use its educational master plan to drive development of new technology, facilities, and human resources plans that are integrated with its educational master plan. (I.B.4, I.B.5, III.A.6, III.B.1.a, III.B.2.b, III.C.2)

Recommendation 2 (2011)

In order to comply with the standards, the team recommends that the College develop and use quantitative measures—in addition to the qualitative measures it has already identified—to enable it to better assess progress toward realizing its mission and completing its planning goals. (I.B.2)

Recommendation 3 (2011)

In order to meet the Proficiency Level described in the ACCJC's rubric for Student Learning Outcomes by 2012, the team recommends that the College build on the work it has achieved in student learning outcomes assessment for courses and accelerate the assessment of program and institutional outcomes. (II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.f)

Recommendation 4 (2011)

In order to meet ACCJC standards and to improve, the team recommends that the College consistently and formally evaluate all of its core systems and processes, including governance, budgeting, communication, planning, and decision-making, and use those evaluations to improve these core processes. (I.B.5, I.B.6, III.A.6, III.B.2, III.D.3)

Recommendation 5 (2011)

In order to improve, the team recommends that the College analyze staffing issues in the administrative services area and effectively staff the area so that the College president no longer performs part of the work formerly done by the Vice President of Business Services. (III.A.1, III.2)

The team also commended Lake Tahoe Community College in five areas:

Commendation 1 (2011)

The team commends the College for the scope and quality of its recently approved Educational Master Plan which projects Lake Tahoe Community College into the future as a 21st century learning institution. (I.B, I.B.1, I.B.2, (I.B.3)

Commendation 2 (2011)

The team commends the College for its strong student-centered atmosphere, particularly for the active involvement of students in governance, for the large number of student support services and programs that enhance student learning, for its focus on student clubs and activities that tie students more closely to the institution, and for the open door policy that enables students to communicate with all members of the College staff. (II.B, II.B.1, II.B.3, II.B.3.a, II.B.3.b)

Commendation 3 (2011)

The team commends the College for the aesthetic quality of its facilities and campus, especially the strong emphasis on displays of art—including student work—that grace the walls of campus buildings and its gallery spaces. (II.B.3.b, III.B, III.B.1)

Commendation 4 (2011)

The team commends the College for the work of its middle managers, support staff, and faculty that kept the College's core activities and processes functioning during recent years of turnover in senior administrative staff. (III.A, III.A.1, IV.A, IV.A.1, IV.A.3)

Commendation 5 (2011)

The team commends the College for the open, transparent and inclusive communication about core events and processes that has recently been instituted and practiced by senior leadership at the College. (IV.A.3, IV.B.2.e)

**ACCREDITATION EVALUATION REPORT
FOR
LAKE TAHOE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Introduction

The Lake Tahoe Community College District is a single-college district located in northern California on the southern shore of Lake Tahoe and bordered by the state of Nevada to its east. It serves an alpine community of about 30,000 residents and is over two hours away from any other California institution of higher learning although it is much closer to several Nevada colleges and universities. Until very recently, it has operated under a shared “good neighbor” policy with Nevada, which allowed Nevada students in the area to attend Lake Tahoe Community College without pay non-resident fees. Nevada colleges allowed students from Lake Tahoe’s service area to do the same at their institutions.

Approved for formation by a vote of district voters in 1974, Lake Tahoe Community College held its first classes in 1975 in temporary facilities. The permanent campus opened in 1988 on a 164-acre site acquired by the College in 1978. The College campus houses four major structures, three of which are connected by hallways, as well as a Child Development Center and several portable classrooms. Together, these structures comprise 176,000 square feet of space. Although the College offers the majority of its classes on this campus, it does offer classes online and in several community locations, notably the El Dorado County Jail and South Tahoe High School. The College also uses considerable outdoor space, including a demonstration garden, for several of its programs. The College currently functions with 128 employees: six administrators, 41 full-time faculty, and 81 classified staff (including classified managers).

Since its last accreditation visit, the College’s Full-Time Equivalent Student (FTES) total has grown from 1554.4 to 1685.1, an increase of 8.4 %. Of that total, Distance Education FTES have increased from 1.9% to 17.6% of the total number of FTES.

Demographically, the student population of Lake Tahoe has remained much the same as it was in 2005-06, the time of its last accreditation visit. Approximately 68% of its students are White and about 15% are Hispanic. Other ethnicities comprise smaller portions of its enrollment. In the College’s service area, Hispanics have grown to comprise a third of the service area’s total population. One of the steps the College has taken to address this demographic shift is to move its ESL program, which primarily serves a Spanish speaking population, onto the campus so that students who complete the program are better positioned to matriculate to its other degree, transfer and/or certificate programs.

Over the past three years, the College has faced three significant challenges: (1) turnover in senior administrative staff, (2) budget and economic challenges which may be

exacerbated by the recent end of the “good neighbor” policy with the state of Nevada, and (3) implementation of a new ERP system.

Following a twenty-year tenure, the College’s second Superintendent/President retired in 2008-09. Within the first year of his successor’s tenure, the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services, who had been in the job for seven years, resigned to take a position elsewhere. At the same time, the Vice President of Business Services resigned and was replaced by an interim. A permanent replacement was hired in January 2010. The College’s new and third president resigned in July 2010 and was replaced by an interim in August 2010. In August 2010, a permanent Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services was hired. In June 2011, the new Vice President of Business Services resigned. A recruitment for that position is currently underway; the work of this position is currently being done by the College president and two other staff members in the business services area. In July 2011, the current Superintendent/President assumed her position and had been in the job almost four months when the team arrived.

The end of the “good neighbor” policy is a very recent development for the college, taking effect in Fall 2011, after the Nevada Board of Regents voted to halt it for California students attending Nevada colleges. Following that vote, the California Community College Chancellor’s Office directed Lake Tahoe Community College to end its participation in the “good neighbor” policy as well by declaring it would no longer consider Nevada residents as California residents for purposes of determining fees. Current students, however, are guaranteed the lower enrollment fees as long as they maintain continuous enrollment, as defined by each institution. While the decision is so recent that the College has not done a concrete analysis of how, when, and how much it will affect enrollment, it raises concerns about long-term enrollment and budget trends.

After receiving a Title III grant in 2008, the College embarked on an ambitious project to replace its legacy ERP system with a new Datatel product, which has been christened “Project View.” When the team arrived, the original implementation was behind schedule and a new schedule and project charter had only recently been developed to readjust implementation strategies.

Evaluation of Institutional Responses to Previous Recommendations

Recommendation 1 (2006)

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).

The College has developed SLOs for 100 percent of its courses. SLOs have also been developed and implemented for all academic and student services programs. Learning outcomes for each department, major, and program are published in the College catalog. The responsibility for leading the development of SLOs was assumed by the SLO Coordinator, a faculty member appointed by the Academic Senate, who receives 50 percent reassigned time to spearhead the SLO development process. The SLO assessment process for courses is currently in its second year of operation, with a goal of 100 percent of courses being assessed a minimum of one time by the end of three years, or by 2012. The College has developed mechanisms for assessing program and institutional outcomes but is not as far along in assessing them as it is for course outcomes.

The College has addressed this recommendation.

Recommendation 2 (2006)

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).

The College has embedded the assessment of SLOs in its planning and resource allocation processes. Student learning assessment takes place every quarter for instructional programs and is part of the program review process for instructional and non-instructional programs. SLO assessment is also tied to the College's planning and resource allocation processes. The SLO assessment documentation for courses includes a section on resource requests in order to support the improvement of student learning based on the results of the SLO assessment process. As part of the annual budget process, these results are used to support requests for resources. Further, these requests are aggregated as part of program review, which forms the foundation for the educational master planning and strategic planning processes at the College. The results of SLO assessment have become a regular part of the planning and resource allocation process.

The College has addressed this recommendation.

Recommendation 3 (2006)

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 on 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).

This recommendation encompasses much of what was required in Recommendation 1 (2006), and the College's response to Recommendation 1 (2006) is relevant to its response to Recommendation 3 (2006). The College has indeed developed SLOs and processes for their assessment. It has actually assessed substantial numbers of course outcomes and has a schedule that will see all courses assess outcomes by 2012. The College has developed mechanisms for assessing program and institutional outcomes but the team did not find evidence that program and institutional outcomes had actually been assessed and improvements made as a result. The team did confirm that considerable dialogue about Student Learning Outcomes and their assessment does take place at the College, in department and committee meetings, especially in the Student Learning Outcomes Committee and the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee, both committees of the Academic Senate.

The institution has addressed this recommendation.

Recommendation 4 (2006)

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).

The team confirmed that Student Services programs have developed Student Learning Outcomes or their equivalent, and that assessments of the outcomes have occurred in ways that have led to improvements in the programs.

The institution has addressed this recommendation.

Recommendation 5 (2006)

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).

The institution has allocated funding for adjunct librarian coverage to provide professional assistance during all of the library's open hours (with the exception of summer quarter). Evaluation of the College's summer curriculum and summer library usage has led the institution to conclude that the lack of coverage during the summer is

not an issue; since the few courses offered in the summer quarter do not involve completing research-based assignments, students are not seeking librarian assistance. An interview with the Library Director confirmed that if changes in the summer curriculum and/or students' needs occur, the institution will provide appropriate librarian coverage in the summer.

The institution has addressed this recommendation.

Recommendation 6 (2006)

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).

The faculty negotiating team and administration have made modifications to the faculty evaluation process to ensure these evaluations include adequate reflection on the instructor's effectiveness in assisting students to achieve stated learning outcomes. During their evaluation period, full-time faculty write a self-assessment, including reflections on their effectiveness in helping students achieve student learning outcomes. This focused assessment on SLOs is a part of faculty evaluation, as referenced in the full-time *Faculty Association Agreement*.

The College has addressed this recommendation.

Recommendation 7 (2006)

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).

An administrators' code of ethics is contained in Board Policy 2.02. A classified staff code of ethics is delineated in Board Policy 5.13 and published in the *Classified Employee Handbook*. A faculty code of ethics was developed by the Academic Senate and is published in the *Full-Time Faculty Handbook* and in the *Adjunct Faculty Handbook*.

The College has addressed this recommendation.

Recommendation 8 (2006)

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).

The College has maintained a self-insured retention reserve of between \$50,000 and \$60,000 over the past three fiscal years. That amount has been deemed sufficient by the College's audit committee and the Board of Trustees. The College's current general fund reserve is seven per cent, a percentage that is embedded in board policy. The team noted that this percentage was higher than the five per cent reserve mandated by the California Community College system.

The College has addressed this recommendation.

Recommendation 9 (2006)

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, IV.B.1.c, IV.B.2.b).

The institution has demonstrated a commitment to the development and assessment of Student Learning Outcomes since the last formal accreditation visit. The College has developed SLOs for all its courses and programs and has identified core competencies, which serve as institutional outcomes. The assessment of course outcomes has begun, and every course should have outcomes assessed by 2012. The College has begun this assessment process and is on track to meet its schedule for course SLO assessments. Though not explicit in this recommendation, the team does note that the College should accelerate its assessment of program and institutional learning outcomes.

The College has demonstrated its commitment to supporting SLO development and assessment by providing fifty per cent reassigned time for faculty to assist in the development and assessment of SLOs.

The College has addressed this recommendation.

Eligibility Requirements

- 1. Authority:** Lake Tahoe Community College is a public, two-year institution that is part of the California Community College system and authorized to offer degrees and certificates under terms of the California Education Code. The College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC).
- 2. Mission:** Lake Tahoe Community College's current mission statement was adopted by the Board of Trustees on December 8, 2009. The mission statement is reviewed annually and either reaffirmed or revised through a collaborative process that seeks input from all campus constituencies. Student learning is at the core of the College's mission statement. The statement is published in the College catalog and on the College's website.
- 3. Governing Board:** Lake Tahoe Community College is governed by a five-member Board of Trustees elected by voters of its district. A student trustee is elected by the student body and is the official non-voting representative of students to the Board. The team confirmed that the board sets policy, ensures the integrity and quality of educational and support programs offered by the College, and is responsible for the financial integrity of the College.
- 4. Chief Executive Officer:** The Board of Trustees appoints and regularly evaluates the Superintendent/President, who serves as the chief executive officer for the College and is responsible for its administration, as guided by Board of Trustees policy.
- 5. Administrative Capacity:** In addition to the Superintendent/President, the College has five full-time certificated administrators as well eight classified administrators. All administrators are selected using appropriate minimum qualifications and district guidelines and have the education and experience needed to perform their assigned duties.
- 6. Operational Status:** The team confirmed that the College is clearly operational through interviews with students, classroom visits and other observations of campus meetings and documents.
- 7. Degrees:** The College catalog reveals that the College offers 41 degrees and 25 occupational certificates and that the overwhelming majority of its courses are part of degree and/or occupational certificate programs. The team confirmed that the overwhelming majority of student enrollments are in these degree or certificate program courses.
- 8. Educational Programs:** Through an examination of program reviews and curriculum documents, the team confirmed that the College's programs, as identified in the College Catalog, are congruent with its mission, are based on recognizable patterns of study, and demonstrate appropriate quality and rigor.

9. Academic Credit: The College awards academic credit based on generally accepted practices in degree-granting institutions of higher education, i.e., the Carnegie unit. All courses are reviewed by the College Curriculum Committee. The College has a well-developed *Curriculum Committee Handbook* (2010-2011), which includes a section on Standards for Course Approval.

10. Student Learning and Achievement: Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) have been adopted for all courses and programs at Lake Tahoe Community College and are published in the approved course outlines of record. The College has identified core competencies, which serve as institutional learning outcomes. The assessment of these outcomes is included as a regular part of the College's program review process. The College has implemented a schedule that will see SLOs for all courses undergoing assessment by 2012 and is on target to meet that deadline.

11. General Education: Lake Tahoe Community College incorporates into all its degree programs a substantial general education component to ensure breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry. The general education requirements of the College include four core competencies: Communication, Critical Thinking and Information Competency, Global Awareness, and Personal Responsibility and Professional Development.

12. Academic Freedom: Lake Tahoe Community College has adopted an Academic Freedom policy, published in *Board Policy Manual* Section 4.06, the College Catalog and the Adjunct Faculty and Full-Time Faculty Handbooks.

13. Faculty: The team confirmed that the College has an adequate number of full-time faculty. As of Fall 2010, the College employed 40.5 full-time faculty. This is 18.3 positions greater than its most recent Full-time Faculty Obligation Number (FON), as required by California Assembly Bill 1725. Faculty responsibilities are detailed in Board of Trustees policy and include an expectation that both full-time and adjunct faculty will be involved in the development and review of curriculum as well as the evaluation and assessment of student learning. Further, the self-evaluation component of the full-time faculty evaluation process requires comment on the effects of instruction, counseling, librarianship, or directorship on student learning.

14. Student Services: The team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College provides a robust array of student support services appropriate for its student body and community.

15. Admissions: Lake Tahoe Community College has open admission policies and procedures that are consistent with its mission and with California regulations governing public, open-access community colleges.

16. Information and Learning Resources: The evaluation team found that the College provided sufficient access to library and learning support resources, consistent with its mission, for both online and face-to-face instruction.

17. Financial Resources: The College has an adequate funding base and resources with which to support its educational and student support programs. Its most recent ending balance was 7% of its budget, larger than the 5% required by the California Community College system.

18. Financial Accountability: Lake Tahoe Community College is audited annually by an external auditing firm that reports its findings to college managers and the Board of Trustees. Audits for the past two years have revealed no material findings.

19. Institutional Planning: The College has an integrated system of assessment and planning and uses the results of those processes to make improvements. Program reviews form the basis of an integrated Educational Master Plan, the most recent version of which was reviewed and revised in 2010.

20. Public Information: The *Lake Tahoe Community College Catalog 2011-2012* and the College's website provide current, accurate information about the College and its programs of study.

21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission: The College represents itself honestly and truthfully to the Commission and adheres to the eligibility requirements and policies of the Commission. The College conducts the self-study and accreditation process in accordance with the standards, guidelines, and practices set forth by the Commission. Further, the College complies with all Commission requests in a timely and appropriate manner, including the submission of annual and mid-term reports.

STANDARD I

Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

A. Mission

General Observations:

The Lake Tahoe Community College mission statement was most recently revised and approved by the Board of Trustees on December 8, 2009. It clearly identifies educational purposes that are appropriate for a two-year institution of higher learning in its final sentence: “The College is committed to fostering innovation and sustainable practices that contribute to institutional effectiveness and student success, verified by a process of assessment and supported by integrated planning and resource allocation.” The College mission provides the framework for all college programs because they are required, through program review and program planning, to align their goals with those of the College’s strategic and educational master plans, which emanate from the College’s mission statement. (I.A.4) The College also relies on its educational master plan, strategic plan, and program review processes to assess how well it meets student needs and achieves its goals. (I.A1)

Findings and Evidence:

Lake Tahoe Community College has a long history of reviewing and, when necessary, revising its mission statement. The College mission was most recently modified in 2009 to include more emphasis on student learning and to more clearly identify the population served by the College, given that the percentage of online Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTES) has increased from 1.9% to 17.6% since 2004-05. The team found ample evidence that the institution’s processes allowed all stakeholders to have input into the proposed changes to the mission statement before it was submitted to the Board of Trustees for final approval in 2009. The mission statement is published in formal internal documents and externally on the College website and in its catalog. (I.A.2, I.A.3)

The College mission statement describes its intended student population as “the local community and those who show an interest in our unique and supportive environment.” The last clause is intended to include the increased number of students who take online classes and who may not be members of the “local community.” While the team understood the intent of this phrase, the College may want to reconsider the wording of this part of its mission statement during its next revision to more precisely talk about online learners as part of its intended student population. (I.A.1)

Examples were provided to demonstrate that the College is committed to aligning student learning programs and services to its student population. For example, changes to the location of the ESL program—from off-campus sites to on-campus ones—were made to better support the College’s English Language Learner population. These changes were supported by program review documents, reviewed and approved by the College Council, and then implemented. (I.A1) In another example, a Fire Science program was developed as a result of environmental scanning and the program planning process.

While the mission statement is included in many of the College's formal documents, including the program review template, results from the *Faculty and Staff Experiences Survey* revealed that only 46 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement that "LTCC relies on its mission as the foundation for financial planning." While that constituted a plurality of respondents, 23% disagreed with the statement and 31% did not know if the mission statement drove financial planning, i.e., resource allocation, or not. The team noted that the College has as one of its planning agendas improving communication about the role of the mission statement in guiding planning.

Conclusions:

The College reviewed and updated its mission statement in 2009 and used it as a basis for a revised Educational Master Plan and Strategic Plan. A more considered review of the mission may clarify the population of online students the College intends to serve, and continued efforts to communicate the relationship between the mission and planning/resource allocation may lead to a better understanding by more members of the College community.

The College meets the standard.

B. Institutional Effectiveness

General Observations:

The College assesses student learning through its Student Learning Outcome (SLO), program review, and program planning processes. The College council reviews SLOs and program reviews as well as program plans and makes resource allocation recommendations to effectively support student learning. Program performance is evaluated through the program review process. Institutional planning strategies have constantly changed during the last eight years. The College recently updated its Educational Master Plan, Strategic Plan, and institutional goals (I.B).

Findings and Evidence:

The institution has structured its dialogue about institutional effectiveness through its numerous college committees, groups, processes, and governance structures. The College SLO committee and the assessment committee of the academic senate facilitate the dialogue on student learning. The SLO assessment committee is charged with overseeing the assessment process and encouraging dialogue throughout the process. The committee submits recommendations to departments that promote improvements in the collection of data and the use of that data for improvement. (I.B.1).

The College provided evidence that institutional level planning was conducted in prior years, but due to high levels of turnover in senior leadership positions, institutional planning agendas were constantly changing. For example, during the last eight years the College has developed four different versions of its six-year strategic plan (2004-2009, 2008-2013, 2009-2013, and 2011-2017). It was unclear to the team whether these frequent changes in plans were the result of assessments that demonstrated the need for new and better institutional plans or the result of this leadership instability. Based on the evidence provided, it is unclear if the College was ever successful in establishing an ongoing systematic cycle of institutional evaluation and if it was able to measure how well it met its established planning goals. The creation of a new subcommittee called the College Planning Council, provides evidence that the College believes it needs to improve the evaluation of core planning processes. (I.B.6)

However, the team found the current, updated versions of the College Educational Master Plan and Strategic Plan to be excellent models of planning that should lead the College effectively into the future. These data-driven plans provide institutional goals that are shaped by key internal and external trends. They should also provide an institutional planning framework for the alignment of other college plans that need updating, particularly in human resources, technology, and facilities. (I.B1, I.B2, IB.3)

The institution has a long history of planning and consequently has a developed planning infrastructure. The College Council has been in existence for many years and serves as the official body on campus to provide faculty, staff, administrators, and students the opportunity to participate in governance and decision-making processes. Recently, the Council formed a subcommittee, the College Planning Council (CPC), to improve the College's ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource

allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation. Specifically, it is charged with evaluating and recommending improvements to the processes by which the College Council assesses institutional effectiveness. Additionally, CPC is charged with overseeing measures of institutional effectiveness and communicating progress toward attaining college goals and objectives based on those measures. As part of this charge, the subcommittee has developed a *Guide to Integrated Planning*, which outlines a six-year planning cycle for each of its major planning activities: strategic planning, the Educational Master Plan, program review and planning, and budget development. (I.B3, I.B.5, I.B.7)

The research capacity of the College has been enhanced since the last accreditation visit by the employment of a full-time Director of Institutional Research and Planning but is still somewhat hampered by its current information system. Availability of data continues to be a challenge as the College has not finalized the implementation of its new student information system (Project View), which, when fully implemented, will provide the research office with a data warehouse and other reporting solutions. Program reviews include quantitative and qualitative data that can be used by instructors and planning committees to evaluate program performance, but some quantitative measures, such as student retention data and faculty productivity, are not part of the data set provided for program review. The team questioned how successfully the College is using quantitative metrics to assess its programs and processes. (I.B3, I.B.7)

Planning committees are broad-based and have representation from all college constituencies. The College Council, for example, is composed of the following voting members: four faculty, four classified employees, two students, and two administrators. Additionally, two non-voting administrators sit on this committee. Broad involvement in this committee is guaranteed by allowing each of the mentioned college constituent groups to appoint its members after consultation with the Superintendent/President. (I.B4)

The institution utilizes assessment results to communicate matters of quality assurance to appropriate constituencies. The office of institutional research generates and distributes reports to appropriate constituents for further review and inquiry. Student success data is provided to programs undergoing program review, the academic senate is provided with data related to enrollment management and educational effectiveness, the board of trustees is provided with Accountability Reporting for Community Colleges (ARCC) information, and data is provided to planning committees and planning sessions to review progress in achieving strategic objectives. (I.B.5)

Conclusions:

While the College has updated its strategic plan at various times, it is unclear if the College was ever successful in establishing an ongoing systematic cycle of institutional evaluation and if it was able to measure how well it met its established goals.

The College partially meets the standard.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1 (2011)

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends that the College continue the improvements it has recently made to its planning processes and use its educational master plan to drive development of new technology, facilities, and human resources plans.

Recommendation 2 (2011)

In order to comply with the standards, the team recommends that the College develop and use quantitative measures—in addition to the qualitative measures it has already identified—to enable it to better assess progress toward realizing its mission and completing its planning goals.

Recommendation 4 (2011)

In order to meet ACCJC standards and to improve, the team recommends that the College consistently and formally evaluate all of its core systems and processes, including governance, budgeting, communication, planning, and decision-making, and use those evaluations to improve these core processes.

Commendations:

Commendation 1 (2011)

The team commends the College for the scope and quality of its recently approved Educational Master Plan which should, when fully enacted, effectively guide Lake Tahoe Community College into the future.

STANDARD II

Student Learning Programs and Service

A. Instructional Programs

General Observations:

Lake Tahoe Community College offers a comprehensive array of instructional programs that are consistent with its mission and appropriate for its size. Currently, the College offers 41 degrees and 25 occupational certificates in transfer majors and career/technical education, respectively. The College also offers courses to meet students' developmental education and personal needs. The majority of students surveyed agree that the College provides them with adequate access to courses and instructional programs to meet their goals. It offers those programs and courses in online and face-to-face formats, and has seen a significant increase in online students over the past several years. Thirty-eight courses were offered online in the Fall 2011 quarter, which represents approximately 11 percent of scheduled classes.

The College has developed Student Learning Outcomes for all of its courses and is on schedule to have assessments completed for every course by 2012. These assessments occur as part of the regular program review process, and results are used to improve the courses and to request resources, when necessary, to achieve those improvements. The College has also developed outcomes for all of its instructional programs and has defined institutional outcomes as a set of core competencies which every student completing a degree or certificate program must demonstrate. The College is currently mapping course and program outcomes to these core competencies. The team found that assessment of program and institutional outcomes is not yet institutionalized in the way that course outcome assessment is.

Findings and Evidence:

The mission statement specifies four areas in which the College will offer instructional programs and courses: developmental education, professional and career education, lower division post-secondary education, and general education. The curriculum committee uses its approval processes for courses and programs to make sure that all offerings are appropriate and connected to the College's approved mission. The program review guide (2009) and template use the College mission statement to frame each program's formal assessment of itself and thereby present a second review of instructional programs and courses to make sure they are tied to the College's mission. (II.A.1)

Lake Tahoe Community College develops curriculum and course schedules that meet its students' needs. In Spring 2010, the College served 668 full-time and 2,362 part-time students. The majority of students indicated they had undecided goals, wished to transfer to a four-year college with an AA degree, or needed to improve their foundational skills, all goals—with the exception of being undecided—which are included in the College's mission statement and offerings. The College also offers occupational programs that reflect the needs and interests of the community, such as the Wilderness Education, Fire Science, and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) programs. In addition, the College

provides basic skills instruction in English as a Second language (ESL), English, reading, and mathematics in both credit and non-credit formats. The College offers a non-credit certificate of completion in ESL proficiency as well as short-term occupational certificates in programs such as culinary arts, dental assisting, and personal trainer certification. To assist transfer students, the College holds a College and Transfer Day as well as California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) application workshops. (II.A.1.a)

The College's Curriculum Committee, a shared governance committee of the Academic Senate, reviews and approves all courses prior to their being first offered, with the exception of special projects courses, which may be offered two times without review. Faculty have primary and direct involvement in the Curriculum Committee and examine and approve all course outlines to ensure the presence of appropriate course content, student learning outcomes, assessment of those outcomes, methods of instruction, critical thinking, writing assignments, prerequisites/advisories, and number of units. Curriculum is reviewed as well by the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Committee for inclusion of appropriate SLOs in the course outline before it is eligible to be placed on a Curriculum Committee agenda. The Curriculum Committee also has responsibility for classifying courses as general education courses and reviewing the academic rigor of courses. (II.A.2.a, II.A.2.c) To ensure the quality of instruction the College conducts regular evaluations of its faculty, provides professional development opportunities, and engages in systematic program review. To ensure the appropriate breadth, depth, and rigor of instruction, the College reviews and revises its curriculum on an established cycle. To ensure timely completion of programs, the College publishes a two-year plan of course offerings. (II.A.2.c)

Through an analysis of varied course outlines, course syllabi, and Curriculum Committee policies and procedures, the team confirmed that Lake Tahoe Community College awards credit according to generally accepted practices in American higher education. It uses the principles of the Carnegie unit. The Curriculum Committee has a special approval process for distance education courses, which must offer equivalent content and/or experiences to the same courses offered face-to-face.

The courses and programs, including program outcomes, are described in the College catalog, which is published annually in paper and on the College's website. All courses are reviewed by the Curriculum Committee in a six-year review cycle. With agreement by the Academic Senate, this cycle has recently been accelerated to accommodate the addition of SLOs and to make certain the College reaches the proficiency level of the ACCJC's Student Learning Outcomes rubric by 2012. (II.A.1.a)

The *Curriculum Committee Handbook* states that courses may be challenged by students through the credit-by-examination process. While these challenges rarely occur, when they do, comprehensive challenge exams are prepared by "the appropriate faculty member to gauge student knowledge of course content. The examination must indicate adequate mastery of the course content as set forth in the official course outline of record." Often, they consist of the comprehensive final examination given to students

who have enrolled in and completed the course. Test bias is minimized by having two evaluators review the challenge examination; if they do not agree on the assessment, a third evaluator reviews the examination. Similar procedures are used in all courses that can be completed through a challenge examination. Moreover, these procedures are regularly reviewed and altered if test bias or other issues emerge. (II.A.2.g)

From this approved curriculum, the College presents a schedule of classes for each of its quarters which, like the college catalog, is printed and available online. The College offers day and evening classes that are delivered in a variety of formats that include face-to-face instruction, distance education and hybrid instruction (a blend of online and face-to-face instruction). Distance education courses require an additional review and approval of the online course component by the Curriculum Committee. Classes are offered at several locations other than the campus, such as culinary arts courses at the El Dorado County Jail. The College also offers internship and work experience education. (II.A.1.b)

The college catalog includes the College's general education philosophy and general education requirements for degree programs and for transfer curricula. These requirements include English communication, mathematical concepts and quantitative reasoning, fine arts and humanities, social sciences, physical and biological sciences, lifelong understanding and self-development, and cultural pluralism. The breadth of general education courses is examined through assessment of the College's general education core competencies of communication, critical thinking and information competency, global awareness, and personal responsibility and professional development. The team did not find these core competencies in the *2011-12 College Catalog* and has concerns that they are not yet being assessed.

Completion of courses in general education areas is required for all Associate of Arts degrees; according to the catalog, students must earn a minimum of 90 quarter units that include general education, a major, and electives. Specific major requirements are described for each major in the catalog. All majors require 27 quarter units in a single or related disciplines. (II.A.3a, II.A.3b, II.A.3c, II.A.4, IIA.5)

The vocational and career technical education programs of the College rely on direction provided through advisory committees, feasibility studies, and industry and community requests. In addition, standards provided by external accrediting agencies and licensure programs guide instruction and outcomes. All career/technical certificates are reviewed through a thorough review process, including advisory committee and consortium approval. According to the State of California's Emergency Medical Services Authority, the pass rate for LTCC's students taking the EMT National Registry Exam in 2009 was 90 percent. The pass rate for students in the Dental Assisting Program sitting for the Radiation Safety Certificate (California Board of Dental Examiners) in 2009 was 98 percent. In the Nursing Assistant Training Program, students testing for National Aide Certification (California Department of Public Health) had a pass rate of 100 percent on the written exam and an 85 percent pass rate on the skills exam in 2009. Local industry recently requested the addition of a physical therapy assistant program; while a feasibility

study indicated that this program was beyond the scope of the College's mission, the College responded to industry needs by creating a physical therapy aide program. (II.A.5)

The college catalog, along with other publications like the *Classified Employee Handbook*, the *Full-Time Faculty Handbook*, the *Adjunct Faculty Handbook*, and the *Board Policy Manual*, are reviewed annually for accuracy and completeness. (II.A.6.c) The college catalog provides clear information on transfer planning as well as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about transferring. In addition, the catalog lists the courses that are approved for transfer to the California State University and University of California systems as well as for transfer to the University of Nevada, Reno. (II.A.6.a) The college statement on academic freedom and responsibility is included in the *College Catalog*, Section 4.06 of the *Board Policy Manual*, the *Adjunct Faculty Handbook*, and the *Full-Time Faculty Handbook* and notes that academic freedom is the right of instructors in their area of expertise to teach, conduct research, and communicate one's knowledge to the academic community openly, honestly, and without interference. Academic responsibility is the acceptance on the part of the instructor, while teaching, researching, and communicating, to do so in such a manner as not to discredit the College, profession, or community. This position is enhanced by an Acceptable Use Policy, explaining the guidelines for the ethical use of technology, and a Faculty Code of Ethics. (II.A.7.a) Standards of student conduct, academic honesty, and the consequences and disciplinary procedures regarding dishonesty are found in the *Student Handbook Planner*, the *College Catalog*, the *Full-Time Faculty Handbook*, the *Adjunct Faculty Handbook* and Section 6.12 of the *Board Policy Manual*. (II.A.7.b)

When programs are eliminated or program requirements are changed, students who would be adversely affected are counseled about options that will enable them to complete their programs on time. Students may file petitions for exceptions to academic policies and procedures, outlining the substitution, accommodation, or other waiver they seek. It is then evaluated by the Admissions and Records Specialist and then referred to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Services. If questions remain, it is then sent to the Petition Committee for review and recommendation. (II.A.6.b)

In 2006, the College created an SLO Coordinator position to comply with the last visiting team's recommendations; the coordinator worked with the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs to create and implement a plan for course, program, and institutional SLO development. This plan was presented to faculty during the fall 2006 convocation, which resulted in the formation of an Academic Senate SLO subcommittee. This committee developed a three-year plan (2006-2009) for course-level SLO creation, implementation, and review. The SLO committee reviews SLOs and Methods of Assessing Student Learning Outcomes (MASLOs) for all courses prior to their approval by the Curriculum Committee. SLOs are included on all course outlines and course syllabi. The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOA) was created as another subcommittee of the Academic Senate in 2007 to review faculty-completed assessments for courses. Faculty submit assessment results to the SLOA Committee by the second Friday of the quarter following course assessments. The SLOA Committee then meets weekly to review assessments for authenticity and to recommend

improvements when necessary; recommendations from the SLOA are advisory only. (II.A.1.c)

Faculty have determined that degree and certificate SLOs will be assessed indirectly through assessment of course SLOs, but it was unclear to the team how and if this was currently being done. In addition, advisory committees assist in the evaluation of occupational programs. The *Advisory Committee Handbook* (2009-2010) outlines the purpose, responsibilities, and organization of the College's advisory committees. Program reviews have been completed for all of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs; in addition, the College reacts to community and industry requests by engaging in feasibility studies. As cited earlier, the local medical community requested that the College develop a physical therapy assistant program, but the feasibility study revealed that a physical therapy assistant program was beyond the scope of the College's mission as a two-year institution; however, it was able to develop a physical therapy aide program to meet industry needs at a different level. CTE also uses program review documentation and advisory committees to determine the need for new programs; the creation of the six-year-old Fire Academy was the result of these processes. (II.A.2.b)

The College's evaluation process requires review of course syllabi to ensure that SLOs are included in the syllabi and congruent with the course outline of record. The College's Strategic Plan requires a review of program history, outcomes, goals, curriculum, and course offerings through qualitative and quantitative analysis (reports through the College's Office of Institutional Research and Planning, surveys, and focus groups). The College has developed an Integrated Planning Guide that includes a resource allocation schedule through the annual budget process; this plan was created in June 2011, so these schedules and processes have not been fully implemented and evaluated. (II.A.2, II.A.2.a)

SLO assessment is now conducted through the program review and planning processes. The College has created an SLO Assessment Plan and Program Review Guide, and both the SLO and SLOA committees meet with faculty to help them review outcomes, assessments, and plans for improvement. SLOs have been developed for all courses, and it is evident that course assessment is ongoing. Discussions with faculty and staff revealed that mapping of program outcomes to institutional outcomes is ongoing as well but on an informal basis. The team is concerned that formal processes have not been developed to ensure course SLOs align with degree and certificate outcomes and that program-level outcomes map to institutional outcomes. (II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f)

Course-level outcomes are included in course outlines of record and on course syllabi and are approved by the SLO Committee. Course outlines also include assessment methods. Units of credit along with required lecture and lab hours are included on the course outline as well and are consistent with established educational practices that use Carnegie unit values to match instructional hours with units awarded. While all degrees and certificates have program outcomes that are listed in the College catalog, according to faculty who were interviewed and the Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Assessment Plan, "Course SLOs are mapped to Instructional Program SLOs to provide for their assessment. There is no direct assessment of Instructional Program SLOs in the

Instructional Process.” The team has concerns that the assessment process for degree and certificates has not been implemented and may prevent the College from reaching proficiency by 2012. The College is completing its third year of course assessment in the evaluation cycle, according to the cycle documented in the self-study. The College has indicated that it will track assessment data using TracDat and has developed a TracDat Implementation Plan; training is expected to begin in November 2011. The team is concerned that there has been no mechanism to track assessment data. Even so, examples of program review documents anecdotally show how data from the program review process has resulted in improvements in student learning and in the College meeting the needs of its students. (II.A.2.h, II.A.2.i)

The College has experienced significant growth in distance education and has submitted the appropriate substantive change proposals to the ACCJC. (IIA.1.b) Its Distance Education program review document (2010) states that all distance education courses “are to contain the same rigor and breadth stated in the face-to-face course outlines of record that have been approved by the LTCC Curriculum Committee.” In addition, a separate approval process is required for all courses offered in a distance education modality; the Distance Learning Course Outline Addendum must be submitted to the Curriculum Committee for review and approval prior to the course being offered. There are two distance education committees at the College; the senate (faculty only) Distance Education Committee focuses on teaching and learning and best instructional practices for distance education courses, while the College-wide committee looks at issues that include the structure of distance education, online support services, and technology needs and platforms; this latter committee is chaired by the Distance Education Coordinator, who is not faculty.

Program review for Distance Education was completed in 2010 and resulted in recommendations for student, faculty, institutional, and staff support for the program. Data show that FTES for distance education have grown from 1.9% to 17.6% of total FTES since 2004-05. The team has concerns that the distance education program is growing more rapidly than the processes and technical infrastructure to support it. Comments by committee members reveal that the level of student participation in distance education will soon result in the cost of Etudes, the College’s learning management system (LMS), moving to the next tier; while discussion is ongoing, a decision has not yet been made about whether to change the LMS and, if so, which other LMS platform is most appropriate for students and the College. Faculty who teach online are required to participate in a three-week training session in using Etudes. (II.A.2.d)

As a public California community college, Lake Tahoe Community College does not require conformity to specific codes of conduct for its students or employees nor does it seek to instill particular beliefs in its students. (II.A.7.c) Lake Tahoe Community College does not offer curricula in foreign locations. (II.A.8)

Conclusions:

Lake Tahoe Community College offers a comprehensive curriculum that meets its students’ needs. The curriculum is approved by a faculty-led curriculum committee that

makes sure that student learning outcomes and methods of assessing them are included in approved course outlines, that courses offered are of appropriate rigor, and that their development is consistent with college and state standards. The Curriculum Committee also ensures that distance education classes receive additional approvals of their distance education components. Student learning outcomes are assessed for courses and are on track to have every course undergo at least one assessment by 2012. Program outcomes are to be assessed indirectly through the assessment of course outcomes, but the visiting team was unclear about how and if this was occurring. The team also noted that institutional outcomes, which are tied to core competencies, have not been assessed yet.

The College partially meets the standard.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 3 (2011)

Student Learning Outcomes

In order to meet the Proficiency Level described in the ACCJC's rubric for Student Learning Outcomes by 2012, the team recommends that the College build on the work it has achieved in student learning outcomes assessment for courses and accelerate the assessment of program and institutional outcomes.

B. Student Support Services

General Observations:

Students at Lake Tahoe Community College can avail themselves of many student support services, most of which are available in a centralized one-stop center in the main campus building. The team noted the warm and student-friendly atmosphere that characterized the center. Services are easy to find and the staff is eager and pleasant when assisting with student needs. Student Ambassadors assist students with questions, information, completion of forms, and campus tours. The Matriculation process has been emphasized and enforced for new students. The staff has maintained its committed and student-friendly attitude while going through a period of changes and reduction in administrative leadership and classified staffing. Many have taken on multiple roles and duties to insure that students continue to be served. (II.B.1)

Online services are a major focus for student services. Since the last accreditation visit, a Distance Education Coordinator has been hired, who works closely with counselors and other service staff to expand online support services. The College plans to implement student services components of Datatel (called "Project View" at the College) as its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system in Spring 2012. The College anticipates that this implementation will improve student online access to information and services. This portal system will provide easier and more student-friendly access to direct and immediate assistance with counseling, online orientation, online assessment, financial aid, admissions, degree audits, student educational planning, library resources, student records, and online submission of grades, forms and documents. (II.B.3.A, II.B.3.C)

The team observed that the Disability Resource Center (DRC) is located on the second floor of the main campus building, the only two-story building on campus. The team is concerned about accessibility (there is one elevator in the building) and the challenges inherent in a potential emergency evacuation of disabled students from the second floor with only one elevator. Also of concern is the lack of disabled student services during the summer quarter, even though the team understands that the summer quarter is much smaller in number of course offerings than any of the other three quarters. For two years there were also no part-time counselors available during this period. This past summer that lack of service was remedied. (II.B.1, II.B.3.C.)

A major issue for both staff and students is the proposed change to the "Good Neighbor" residency policy established between Nevada and California. This policy allowed students from either of these states to attend college in the other state without paying out-of-state residency fees. The College is close to the border of both states and draws students from both. Nevada has recently decided to end this policy, and, as a result, the California Community College Chancellor's Office will no longer treat these Nevada students as residents. Current students will be allowed to continue under the old policy if they maintain continuous enrollment, but new students from Nevada will be charged non-resident fees. The College is concerned that student enrollments from its service area in

the two states will decline and many students will be shut out of the opportunity to attend the community college closest to them. Moreover, students planning to transfer will be forced to attend universities out of the immediate area because of the higher cost of tuition, and this prospect may negatively affect the College's transfer rate. (II.B)

Findings and Evidence:

Through individual and small group interviews, attendance at campus meetings, and review of documentation, the team concluded that student support services, both in person and online, have continuously improved since the last visit. For example, written information is now available in multiple languages and in alternative modes for those with disabilities. Services have been modernized through the use of new computerized systems and software. As enrollments in distance education increase, the College is improving online services by working with the Distance Education Coordinator to pilot a synchronized online orientation process. (II.B.3.a, II.B.1)

The *College Catalog* is published annually for the upcoming academic year and made available to students at no cost in hard copy. It is also available online as a PDF file via the college website. The *College Catalog* provides general information about the College including:

- The official name, address, telephone number, and website address
- The educational mission
- Course, program, and degree offerings
- Academic calendar and program length
- Academic freedom statement
- Available student financial aid
- Available learning resources
- Names and degrees of administrators and full-time faculty
- Names of governing board members

The catalog includes requirements regarding the following:

- Admissions
- Student fees and other financial obligations
- Degrees, certificates, graduation and transfer

In addition, the Catalog includes the following major policies affecting students:

- Academic regulations, including academic honesty
- Nondiscrimination
- Acceptance of transfer credits
- Grievance and complaint procedures, including the maintenance of records of resolution
- Sexual harassment
- Refund of fees (II.B.2)

The College received a TRIO “Student Support Services” grant in 2010 and a “Talent Search” grant in 2011. A Basic Skills counselor was hired in 2008. In 2009 a newly revised matriculation process, which mandated orientation, assessment, and counseling

for all new students, was implemented. An exemption process is available, but very few students request to be exempted. Students and staff feel that it has improved both the registration process and student knowledge of available services. Assessment instruments are all approved by the California Community College system office, an approval that, among other things, certifies their freedom from bias. (II.B.3.e) Student Ambassadors play a major role in this process and go through extensive training. Staff has requested more Student Ambassadors to staff a help desk during the entire quarter, instead of just during peak registration periods. (II.B.1, II.B.3.a)

Consistent with its mission, the College provides a wide variety of courses, programs, and activities to promote students' intellectual, civic, ethical, personal, and aesthetic enrichment. These include the College's general education and core competency requirements, participation in student clubs and organizations, participation on college governance committees, and extracurricular programs such as speakers series. (II.B.3.b) The College offered nine examples of programs that support and enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity. This was also one of the things that student leaders, in interviews, thought the College did well. (II.B.3.d)

Almost all student services units have developed student learning outcomes and program reviews, which are updated every six years. Many of the programs have assessed their SLOs through the use of various surveys and review of available data, but are in different stages of evaluating findings and implementing program improvements as a result of data review. The assessments have primarily used surveys and research data rather than student focus groups to gather evidence for assessments. Recently, new "In the Moment" surveys have been distributed to assess the quality of services, but results had not been evaluated at the time of the team's visit. In Spring 2012 a national college survey on student engagement will be conducted. Through retreats, staff development and working with the SLO coordinator, the student support services area is creating a climate of planning and assessment that leads to continuous improvements. A recent retreat discussion focused on developing a more comprehensive, integrated and standardized method of program review, yearly unit planning, and a formal template/matrix to document completion of the student learning outcome process. (II.B.4)

The Student Trustee and officers of the Associated Student Council expressed what they felt were positive about their college and identified areas that need to be improved. They felt there was a respectful and caring campus climate for the diverse student population, which was evident in the friendly and approachable faculty, administrators and staff, cultural events, clubs, visual and performing arts programs and opportunities to participate in shared governance. They had high praise for counselors and for the Career and Transfer Center. Students are active members on the College Council, Curriculum Committee, Academic Senate, and Facilities Committee. They are involved in strategic planning and participate as Student Ambassadors. The Student Trustee has an advisory vote on the Board of Trustees, and is treated respectfully and encouraged to voice the student perspective on issues before the Board. (II.B.3.B, II.B.3.D)

The areas of concern for student leaders were limited food service availability on campus, closing of classes needed to transfer or graduate, the need for more accessible online information and services, and the ending of the “Good Neighbor” residency policy between the states of Nevada and California.

The team confirmed that the College securely maintains student records and complies with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). (II.B.3.f)

Conclusions:

Student support programs are robust and their staffs are friendly and supportive. Programs are regularly reviewed and improvements are being made as a result of program reviews. Students report high degrees of satisfaction with student support programs and are particularly pleased with the opportunities afforded to participate in governance activities and in student clubs and organizations.

The team was concerned about the second story location of the Disabled Resource Center and shares the College’s concern about the end of the “Good Neighbor” policy with Nevada.

The College meets the standard.

Commendations:

Commendation 2 (2011)

The team commends the College for its strong student-centered atmosphere, particularly for the active involvement of students in governance, for the large number of student support services and programs that enhance student learning, for its focus on student clubs and activities that tie students more closely to the institution, and for the open door policy that enables students to communicate with all members of the College staff.

C. Library and Learning Support Services

General Observations:

Lake Tahoe Community College offers library and learning support services to support its educational programs and mission. Services include library and media services, tutoring/learning centers, and computer labs. The new college library building opened five years ago and provides a very inviting environment filled with the library's collection of books, periodicals, and media. Students also have access to computers, group study rooms, media viewing rooms, a fireside reading area, and permanent and visiting art displays.

The Tutoring and Learning Center (TLC) is now located in the library's previous space, which has been renovated to provide centralized and focused delivery of tutoring services. The Tutoring and Learning Center consists of three departments: the Math Success Center, the Writing Across the Curriculum Center, and the Writing Center. The College provides subject-specific tutoring in many disciplines within the TLC space and other adjacent areas. The TRIO Program is also housed in the Tutoring and Learning Center, and all students have access to computers in the TLC. The TLC also provides test proctoring.

Students have access to computers in the library, Tutoring and Learning Center, three open computer labs, a digital photography lab, art studios, and a variety of informal study areas throughout the campus.

The campus also includes three art galleries and a diverse collection of art from students as well as local and nationally known artists. The art is displayed in the galleries and throughout campus buildings making it an interesting and aesthetically pleasing environment.

Findings and Evidence:

The Library and TLC participate in the program review process. Learning support services are evaluated through program reviews completed every sixth year; recently, the College has changed the program review process to include an annual update, which ensures more continuous opportunities to assess and plan improvements. Input from students, staff, and faculty members is incorporated into the program reviews for Library and Media Services as well as the Tutoring and Learning Center. (II.C.2) Through interviews with campus faculty, including the Library Director and the Tutoring and Learning Center (TLC) Coordinator, the team validated that the institution's faculty members believe program review effectively assesses these services and ensures they are sufficient in quantity, currency, depth, and variety. The Library and TLC regularly collect and review data to implement changes. Samples of the last program review for these two departments confirm information from the self-study and from interviews with college employees. (II.C.1) All tutors are assessed on a regular basis, and student concerns are addressed in a continual feedback loop to ensure student needs are met. (II.C.2)

In interviews, faculty members highlighted the Library Director's consistent methods of including faculty in the process of selecting and maintaining library and media materials. The collaboration between faculty and the Library Director also includes evaluative dialogue to assess whether past selections are still considered to be of good quality, up to date, and whether they meet identified outcomes. Additionally, the Library Director is a permanent member of the curriculum committee and provides an effective link between library materials development and curriculum. (II.C.1.a)

Information Competency is addressed purposefully at Lake Tahoe Community College through a variety of opportunities. Core competencies, Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for selected courses, and the library's SLOs are opportunities for the institution to teach and assess its information competency efforts. Students taking English 103, Critical Reasoning: Writing the Research Paper, are guaranteed instruction and assessment of learning in information competency. In addition, the Library Director instructs a session of the course on information competency and all students take an online assessment to determine the success of the instruction, measure an identified Student Learning Outcome (SLO) for the Library, and support instruction for SLOs identified for English 103. In an example of the College's continuous improvement efforts in this area, the Library Director has been approved for a sabbatical which will address how to ensure all students get information competency instruction, not just students who take English 103. The library and other courses have used results to improve instruction, increase awareness of library and learning support services, and increase effective usage of library and learning support services. Opportunities for mastering information competency are available both on campus and online. Tutors are trained in Information Competency to help assist students with research-related needs while providing assistance for other discipline-specific coursework through the mandatory tutor training course, Education 110. (II.C.1.b)

Lake Tahoe Community College has staffing levels that provide an ample amount of personnel responsible for assisting students with Library and Learning Support Services. The staffing levels of the library are particularly impressive for a college of its size: three classified employees, two adjunct librarians, and a full-time library director. Many staff are cross trained. For example, the library support staff are trained to provide backup assistance when the Media Specialist is not available. The Library Director and The Tutoring and Learning Center have developed programs, such as online assistance and tutorials, to ensure students get the same access to services regardless of location or method of instruction. Some of these services are new and have not yet been assessed. The College's Distance Education Committee is also an instrument for ensuring that all students have access to library and learning support services. Open hours for these services sufficiently address student needs. (II.C.1.c)

Interviews with faculty and staff indicated that computer services responds efficiently when computer maintenance issues arise in some Learning Support Services, but others reported that was not the case. The library tracks and protects its collection through library security sensors and an Integrated Library System. (II.C.1.d)

Any services the library uses to supplement support, such as the Integrated Library System (ILS), subscription databases, and other library support vendors are assessed through the program review process and through continual collaboration with faculty. (II.C.1.e)

Conclusions:

Lake Tahoe Community College offers sufficient library and learning support services to meet the needs of its educational programs and mission. Through the College's input mechanisms, faculty and students respond positively about the quality of these services. The institution provides training to college employees and students in a variety of modes to increase awareness and effective use of these services.

Faculty and staff interviewed thought that the program reviews of the library and Learning Support Services were effective and led to resource needs being met, but they were unclear about how department level planning integrated into institution-wide planning and resource allocation. Interviews show that improvements to Library and Learning Support Services are made on a systematic basis, though sometimes through more informal processes. (II.C.1.A, II.C.2)

One gap the team did hear about was inadequate funding for an Interlibrary Loan program. Although the institution has no formal mechanism for obtaining Interlibrary Loan materials, library staff ensure access to a variety of materials by personally borrowing materials from other libraries. (II.C.1.e) The team urges the College to find an institutional solution to this gap in services.

Students would also greatly benefit from an increased institutional commitment to embedding library and learning support services into all instructional and student support services. (II.C.1.B, II.C.1.C) Interviews with faculty members show that directors and coordinators for Library and Learning Support Services rely solely on communication with students via email and personal contacts and must rely on faculty members to pass on information to students. The Distance Education Committee, among other groups, is researching ways to provide students more direct access to library and learning resource support services. (II.C.1.B, II.C.2)

The College meets the standard.

STANDARD III Resources

A. Human Resources

General Observations:

Lake Tahoe Community College employs qualified classified staff, faculty, and administrators and evaluates them regularly and systematically, according to the guidelines in Board of Trustees policy and the requirements of negotiated collective bargaining agreements. The College has reinstated funding for professional development after a brief time of not funding it because of state budget shortfalls. Through its hiring policies, the College shows a commitment to hiring from diverse backgrounds, although the College has not hired many employees in recent years, again because of budget challenges. Employees have reported concerns about the equitable treatment of employees; these concerns appeared to the team to coincide with recent years of instability among senior administrative leadership at the College. The College includes human resources requests in its program review and planning processes but does not have a college-wide human resources plan that is connected to overall institutional planning.

Findings and Evidence:

College hiring procedures, found in the *Board Policy Manual*, hiring handbooks, job descriptions, and EEO training, reveal that the College is prepared to seek and hire the best qualified employees to fulfill the College mission. For example, the screening criteria for the most recent hire, a Theatre Arts Instructor in January 2009, included the following qualifications: “education; teaching ability; sensitivity to diversity; experience managing a theatre program; ability to utilize innovative teaching practices, including participatory and critical thinking methodologies; and willingness to incorporate technology into the classroom; presentation; and ability to perform the non-teaching responsibilities of the position (budget management, curriculum development, work with part-time faculty, understanding of a small college, and ability to work independently).” Faculty hiring policy requires that at least four full-time faculty members, appointed by the Academic Senate, participate in the process. Faculty applicants with degrees from foreign institutions must acquire validation from a state-recognized evaluation service at the time of application. The newly recognized classified union is currently negotiating classified hiring policy. (II.A.1, II.A.1.a)

The College evaluates employees regularly and systematically. The College evaluates faculty every year for the first four years and then every three years, alternating between a comprehensive and a focused evaluation. Student evaluations of faculty occur each quarter. The College continues to assess the process; for example, it is reviewing the focused evaluation to make it more streamlined. A full-time faculty member or academic administrator and students evaluate adjunct faculty during their first quarter and at least once every nine quarters thereafter. Supervisors evaluate classified employees three times during their twelve-month probationary period and then annually. Classified evaluations include an optional self-evaluation. Administrators’ evaluations occur annually, and both faculty and classified staff contribute information through surveys

when administrators undergo comprehensive evaluations. The Board of Trustees most recently evaluated the Interim Superintendent/President in February 2011. (II.A.1.b)

Effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes is tied to faculty evaluations by means of Form C1, *Self-Assessment and Objectives*, which asks faculty to respond to this directive: “Describe the effects which you believe your instruction, counseling, librarianship, directorship has on students and on student learning.” While the course evaluation document asks students if “the instructor communicates and maintains course structure, goals, and expectations,” students are not asked to assess whether they believe learning outcomes for the course have been met. (III.A.1.c)

The *Board Policy Manual* includes separate codes of ethics for trustees, administrators, and classified staff. The faculty code of ethics, developed by the Academic Senate, is included in the full-time and adjunct faculty handbooks. The *Fall 2010 Faculty/Staff Experiences Survey* reveals that while the majority of faculty and administrators believe that the College upholds professional ethics, approximately 50 percent of classified staff did not believe this to be true. Anecdotal evidence suggested that these opinions might be related to actions taken during the period of senior administrative instability over the past several years. To address these concerns, the Strategic Plan 2011-2017 includes Goal 10: A Dynamic Workforce. Objective 10.2 states: “Improve systems of communication, governance and recognition to enhance individuals’ professional commitment, contributions and satisfaction.” Anecdotal reports also indicate that staff are cautiously optimistic that this perceived lack of ethical behavior is not characteristic of recently hired senior administrators. (III.A.1.d)

While the self-study states that there is a sufficient number of full-time faculty, its *2011 Educational Master Plan* acknowledges a decrease of six faculty members over the past six years. The current organizational chart reveals at least one faculty position left vacant by a faculty member serving as an interim dean. However, the team noted that, despite this decrease in full-time faculty, the College is still 18.3 positions over its most recent Full-time Faculty Obligation Number (FON), required by California’s Assembly Bill 1725 and monitored by the California Community College System Office. Plans exist for prioritizing new faculty hiring requests via program review once the budget and economic situation improve. The program review process will also help to prioritize new classified positions. The turnover in administrative positions, resulting in several vacancies and interim positions, has led the College to reassess its needs and administrative structure. During the team visit, changes to the Vice President of Business Services’ job description were approved at a Board of Trustees meeting. That position will now be titled Vice President of Administrative Services. The team noted that three different people, including the President of the College, were doing the work formerly done by the Vice President of Business Services in addition to their own jobs. (III.A.2)

Personnel policies and procedures are codified in the *Board Policy Manual* and the faculty collective bargaining agreement. Adjunct and full-time faculty and classified staff have separate handbooks detailing the policies and procedures. The Director of Human Resources, responsible for ensuring consistent application of the policies, now reports

directly to the College president and is a member of the President's Advisory Council. The *Fall 2010 Faculty/Staff Experiences Survey* reveals deep concern from classified staff: 61.5% disagreed or strong disagreed with the statement that the College "adheres to its written policies which ensure fairness in all employment procedures." Again, anecdotal evidence tied this concern to events that occurred before the current president assumed office on July 1, 2011. The team could not find evidence that these concerns are attached to actions of current senior administrators at the College, although classified staff members, in particular, remain vigilant about issues of equity and fairness. The *Strategic Plan 2011-2017* appears to acknowledge this perception by including Objective 10.2: "improve systems of communication, governance and recognition to enhance individual's professional commitment, contributions and satisfaction."(III.A.3, III.A.3.a)

Personnel records for former employees are archived in secured electronic files through document imaging in laser fiche. Access is through one computer in HR. Current personnel files are paper copies stored in locked file cabinets in the Human Resources office. (III.A.3.b)

The team acknowledges the work the College has done to provide activities to improve programs, services, and practices for its diverse student population and encourages the College to continue efforts to diversify its staff. The *Fall 2010 Faculty/Staff Experience Survey* reveals that 76.4% agree or strongly agree that "LTCC demonstrates an appropriate understanding of and concern for equitable treatment of diverse populations." In addition, The *Strategic Plan 2009-13* includes Objective 1D, Institutional Capacity for Diversity, under Goal 1, Student Outreach, Access, and Enrollment: "Support diversity and equity at Lake Tahoe Community College." The plan identifies the following activities and those assigned to lead the efforts:

- 1.D.1: "Continue to support efforts to increase representation at LTCC of currently underrepresented groups, based on District demographics, and nontraditional groups," assigned to the Vice President and Dean of Student Services, to be completed by spring 2013.
- 1.D.2: "Increase successful completion rate of underperforming groups," assigned to the Vice President, Deans, and Faculty, to be completed by 2014.
- 1.D.3: "Foster multicultural awareness and participation in campus life," assigned to Student Services Dean, immediate and ongoing.

The *Strategic Plan 2009-13* has since been superseded by the *Strategic Plan 2011-17*, which contains the following commitment to student diversity and success: "Over the next several years, the College will take a proactive approach to ensuring high levels of access, particularly for those who have been underrepresented historically in higher education. This purposeful focus will identify students early in their academic careers, create clear pathways leading to the front door of the College, and prepare students to be successful early-on in their college-going tenures." The staff does not yet reflect the diversity of the student population; for example, there are no Hispanic faculty while 15% of the student body is Hispanic. The College has been hampered in its efforts to improve diversity by its limited ability to hire new staff, given current and recent budget constraints. (III.A.4, III.A.4.a, III.A.4.b)

The College has appeared to have issues in its equitable treatment of employees. The *Fall 2010 Faculty/Staff Experience Survey* reveals an area of concern, supported by multiple interviews and the following statement from the self-study: “Over half of faculty and staff who responded to the survey did not agree with the statement that ‘LTCC demonstrates fairness in its treatment of its administration, faculty, and staff.’ More than half of both full-time faculty (51.5%) and classified staff respondents (69.2%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement.” Interviews showed the problems to be most severe in 2010-11. Interviewees generally believed the situation has improved, but that it will take another few years to be certain the issues have been resolved. (III.A.4.c)

The College has renewed its efforts to provide opportunities for staff development. *The Strategic Plan 2011-2017* includes Objective 10.1 under Goal 10, A Dynamic Workforce: “Develop the professional skills, abilities and talents of faculty, staff and administrators on a continual basis.” *The 2011 Educational Master Plan* focuses on professional development, recognizing the importance of developing effective, engaged, and sustainable human resources. While travel and conference funds had been suspended, they were restored in fiscal year 2010-11: \$30,000 for faculty, allocated by the Faculty Professional Development Committee of the Academic Senate, and \$7,500 for classified staff. The same amounts have been allocated for 2011-12. (III.A.5, III.A.5.a)

Faculty initiate, allocate funds for, and evaluate professional development activities through the Faculty Professional Development Program operated by a committee of the Academic Senate. In February it sent a survey about professional development to all faculty. The results, discussed in Academic Senate meetings, helped shape the allocation process for 2011-12. Classified staff recently completed a similar survey for the Professional Development Committee. (III.A.5.b)

In the new organizational structure, the Director of Human Resources reports directly to the President, as she did prior to 2010-11. The Human Resources area is characteristic of many on campus: human resource planning does not appear to be integrated with institutional planning. (III.A.6)

Conclusions:

Lake Tahoe Community College has effective hiring and evaluation procedures for staff. It also provides development opportunities for all staff and has policies and plan objectives in place to address hiring, as well as student, diversity. Recent concerns about equity and fairness among classified staff appear to have resolved themselves with the hiring of new senior administrators.

While the College includes human resource requests in its overall program review and planning processes, the team did not find a human resources plan that was tied to institutional planning. Nor did it find effective evaluation of human resources processes

that might have prevented some of the concerns about unfair treatment of classified employees.

The College partially meets the standard.

Recommendations:

See Recommendation 1.

See Recommendation 4.

Recommendation 5

The team recommends that the College analyze staffing issues in the administrative services area and implement changes that effectively staff that area and remove the College president from doing part of the work formerly done by the Vice President of Business Services.

Commendations:

Commendation 4 (2011)

The team commends the College for the work of its middle managers, support staff, and faculty that kept the College's core activities and processes functioning during recent years of turnover in senior administrative staff. (III.A, III.A.1, IV.A, IV.A.1, IV.A.3)

B. Physical Resources

General Observations:

Lake Tahoe Community College is located on 164 acres of forest land in South Lake Tahoe. It opened with a single 55,000-square-foot building in 1988 but is now a campus of 176,000 square feet, with seven buildings that includes a Child Development Center, Science Wing, Theatre, and Physical Education complex. LTCC uses its *Space Inventory Report* to review space needs and also has a *Five-Year Capital Outlay Plan* that is driven by the *College Educational Master Plan 2011-2017* and the *Strategic Plan 2011-2017*. There is also a business services area program review process that addresses college facility needs.

Findings and Evidence:

The facilities operated by the College are relatively new and in good condition. Additionally, while the College does not have a public safety department, it does have a Safety Committee, and the campus gets support services provided from the local police and fire departments as needed. The few off-campus sites the College uses are maintained through the entities it contracts with. All facilities have been constructed to support the educational and program service needs of the College. (III.B.1)

To support institutional program needs noted in a prior department program review, LTCC allocated funding in 2009-10 to complete a necessary remodel in the Admissions and Records area. This facilities remodel was necessary to address American Disability Act (ADA) issues as well as other space needs in the Student Services area. Because the College did not have sufficient unrestricted general funds for the project, it was able to utilize limited local redevelopment agency funds to solve and address these remodeling issues. This was a good example of how LTCC has used program review to drive facilities planning since the issues precipitating the remodel emerged through program review. However, LTCC has not provided sufficient documentation to show how it systematically evaluates the overall effective use of its facilities, nor how program, service needs and equipment are reflected in facilities planning. The last Business Services Program Review was done in 2003; thus, there is no recent evaluation to document needed facilities improvements or their source(s) of funding. While the College does have a Scheduled Maintenance Plan that shows needed items, such as HVAC and boiler replacements, and the College is setting aside some funds to address these long term facilities needs, there is no comprehensive plan to address facility, equipment and maintenance needs for the College. (III.B.1.a, III.B.2)

LTCC operates facilities that are safe, accessible, secure, and provide a good working environment. The display of student and professional art work throughout the campus significantly enhances the aesthetic qualities of the College. Art work adorns the walls of many buildings and the passageways between them. The College also has appropriate committees and structures to review whether its physical resources meet health and safety requirements. (III.B.1.b)

The College did not provide sufficient documentation to show how it evaluates the effective use of its facilities, nor how college programs, services, or capital equipment are reflected in planning other than through unit program reviews and plans. While the College is currently working on a Facilities Master Plan, it was not completed at the time of the visit. While facilities planning appears to be involved with institutional planning through resource requests driven by units' program reviews and plans, the team did not find that the College as a whole had facilities plans that were driven by institutional planning. (III.B.2)

LTCC also did not provide evidence to document how "total cost of ownership" principles have been incorporated into capital planning, and, prior to this year, there appears not to have been a process in place to discuss facilities issues and do necessary facilities planning. The College now has a Facilities Committee and an institutional planning office to address these issues. (III.B.2.a)

The College has used some of its planning documents to drive facilities decisions; however, none of the program or service needs were incorporated into a single document to effectively assess and use college resources to meet anticipated needs. A faculty/staff experiences survey indicated that 70% of the College faculty/staff respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the College provides sufficient physical resources. However, no long-term plan exists to support the College's future planning and assessment of its resource needs. (III.B.2.b)

Conclusions:

The College has a very attractive, serene, and open campus. Its facilities are in good condition, the campus gets support services as needed from the local police and fire departments, and off-campus sites used to deliver programs and instruction sufficiently support college needs. The facilities are safe, accessible, secure, and provide a good working and studying environments. (III.B.1)

LTCC does not have a long-term comprehensive facilities plan to address facility, equipment and maintenance needs for the College. (III.B.1.a) Physical resource planning in the past was incorporated into unit program reviews that were forwarded to the College Council. However, there has been no assessment to determine if physical resource needs have been effectively met through this process. (III.B.2.b) The College does an annual update of its Space Inventory and Five-Year Capital Outlay Plans, but there is no comprehensive plan to evaluate how facilities and capital equipment needs are assessed. Nor is there a formal process for how space is allocated for programs and services. (III.B.2)

The LTCC Educational Master Plan and Strategic Plan have been used in the past to determine capital needs. While these plans support the College mission and goals, it is not clear that "total cost of ownership" or "sustainability" principles have been used in the capital planning decisions of the College. (III.B.2.a)

The College now has an institutional committee and planning structure in place to review physical resource needs and is working on a comprehensive Facilities Master Plan to address these issues. (III.B.1.b)

The College partially meets the standard.

Recommendations:

See recommendation 1.

See recommendation 4.

Commendations:

Commendation 3 (2011)

The team commends the College for the aesthetic quality of its facilities and campus, especially the strong emphasis on displays of art—including student work—that grace the walls of campus buildings and its gallery spaces.

C. Technology Resources

General Observations:

Lake Tahoe Community College uses a variety of different onsite and off-site technologies and staffing models to support the technology needs of the College. This includes student computers and software, employee computers and software, network infrastructure (wired/wireless), network-based applications and databases, terminal services, web services (internal/external), library databases and offsite resources for distance education, finance, and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) development. All constituents of the College—students, faculty, staff, and management—rely on varied technology resources for learning, teaching, college-wide communication, research, and operational systems. For this standard, the team saw the most compelling issues to be implementation of the ERP system, technology planning and distance education, and the need for improved institutional planning and governance for technology resources. (III.C.1)

Findings and Evidence:

Since the last self-study, the most significant event for technology resources at the College was the receipt of a Title III grant, Project View, for technology improvements. Project View is a five-year (2008-2013), two-million-dollar project to "transition Lake Tahoe Community College from its legacy administrative system to a highly integrated, effective Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system that promotes administrative and academic excellence," according to the project's charter. When implemented, the scope of this project will significantly change the College's business practices in student services, academic services, administrative services, and human resources through the implementation of Datatel Colleague, the College's choice for a new ERP system. (III.C.1.a)

The implementation of Project View is behind its original implementation schedule but appears to be on track with the March 2011 revision of the project charter and the establishment of new executive sponsorship and project management. It is a large and complex project that calls for outside consultants and ten internal work teams: project implementation, technology, MIS/reporting, scheduling, human resources, student, portal, systems integration, training, and a steering committee. The teams are responsible for extensive planning, training, preparation, coordination, consulting, communication and implementation. The network infrastructure and computer servers for the project are leased and hosted offsite in Roseville, California. The first major rollout of the project was the new portal, Passport. It was successfully released in Summer 2011 and is being developed in phases. In 2012, 21 additional modules are planned for release. These modules include Academic Records/Registration, Accounts Receivable/Cash Receipts, Curriculum/Faculty Information, Chart of Accounts, and others.

Project View is a vast undertaking that is meant to improve overall institutional effectiveness. Project View also will also provide technology infrastructure upgrades, new hardware upgrades, research reports, and the rollout of Live@edu email accounts for part-time employees and students. In order to reassess the best course of action for

hosting the new technologies and implementing Project View, the district recently approved a contract for an outside vendor to help the College develop an information technology assessment and plan. (III.C.1, III.C.1.a, III.C.1.b, III.C.1.c, III.C.1.d)

Another significant event since the last self-study has been the dramatic increase in the number of student enrollments in online courses. Between 2005 and 2010, online FTES have grown from 1.9% to 17.6% of the College's total FTES. This rapid increase in online enrollments was largely driven by student demand and faculty availability and was not the result of institutional planning. The average success rate for students in online courses has been significantly lower than that of students in traditional courses, and the College is working to close the gap. In 2010, the Academic Senate formed a Faculty Distance Education Committee and the College formed a Distance Education Advisory Committee and hired a half-time, hourly Distance Education Coordinator. Last year these groups developed new hiring and evaluation procedures for online faculty and revised the Distance Learning Course Outline Addendum. The primary online Learning Management System (LMS) is Etudes, and instructors are required to take a training course in its use before teaching online. The secondary LMS's are Moodle and Yahoo Groups. The College provides in-house support for Etudes and contracts for 24/7 help desk support for students and faculty. Students rely on instructors to provide support for the secondary LMS's. Currently, Etudes does not offer all of the features the College would like to see in an LMS, such as the ability to produce a "master shell" to post institutional resource links in all online classes. The Distance Education Advisory Committee will be considering whether to go to a new LMS in the future—perhaps one that integrates with the new portal. Selecting and using only one LMS for all online courses would make training and support for students and faculty easier and would ensure compliance with ADA and other federal requirements. Although the College did not plan for such a dramatic increase in online enrollments, Distance Education did complete a program review in 2009-10 and is working diligently to develop policies and procedures to ensure that students and faculty are successful with online courses. (III.C.1.b, III.C.1.d)

The Title III Steering Committee has become the *de facto* technology committee at LTCC although it is primarily focused on Project View. The Technology Advisory Committee has been phased out and the technology governance committees described in the 2005 Technology Master Plan—Technology Council, Instructional Technology Committee, and Operational Technology Committee—no longer exist. Perhaps this lack of overall institutional governance and planning contributed to half of the faculty disagreeing that technology supports the needs of the College and led the Academic Senate to establish a Faculty Technology Needs Committee. Furthermore, the Title III committee is, understandably, fully occupied with Project View and should not be expected to provide technology governance and institutional technology planning.

As the self-study states, the College "needs to improve its mechanisms for assessing and prioritizing technology enhancement requests moving forward." And, indeed, this month (October 2011), the district approved a contract for an outside vendor to work with the College to develop a new Technology Master Plan. Given that the last Technology Plan covered 2005-2008 and the last program review for Computer Services occurred in 2004,

it is critical to complete a new, comprehensive plan that is integrated with the Educational Master Plan. However, it is also critical that this new plan establish a governance structure to ensure that ongoing institutional technology planning is integrated with ongoing institutional planning and assesses the effective use of technology resources among all constituents on a regular basis for continuous improvement. (III.C.1.d, III.C.2)

Over the past five years, the College has reduced the number of technology professionals at LTCC and shifted resources to outside contractors. The shift is attributable to the need for highly skilled workers and the small number of potential qualified employees in the area. The upcoming technology assessment and technology plan should help determine a staffing plan to best meet the College's current and future needs to provide support for all technology resources at LTCC. (III.C.1.a)

Conclusions:

LTCC is in the middle of implementing a major project, Project View, to utilize ERP technology resources to change business practices and improve institutional effectiveness while replacing legacy systems. This will fundamentally affect the way that students, faculty, staff and administration interact with the College and each other for learning, teaching, college-wide communication, research, and operational systems. In addition, the College is experiencing major growth in online student enrollments. The College recognizes the need to develop a new technology plan that encompasses Project View and all aspects of technology resources. The College also needs to develop an institutional technology governance structure to ensure that technology planning is integrated with institutional planning and that the institution systematically assesses the effective use of technology resources and uses the results of evaluation as the basis for improvement. (III.C.2)

The College partially meets the standard.

Recommendations:

See Recommendation 1.

D. Financial Resources

General Observations:

Recent years have been financially challenging for Lake Tahoe Community College, a small college with approximately 1,890 Full Time Equivalent Students (FTES), as state economic support has diminished in the face of a shrinking California state budget. Moreover, a recent end to a “good neighbor” policy with Nevada, which allowed residents of both states to pay in-state tuition and/or fees, has raised concerns about future diminished enrollment. The decision is a recent one and actual results may not be clear until several years in the future. The College has done a preliminary, historical analysis of FTES and student head count but has found it difficult to know with any certainty how the change will affect the College, its enrollment, and its finances. However, the College has so far managed its resources frugally and has sufficient resources and reserves to meet its financial obligations, as well as any unforeseen financial emergencies. The College strives to use various college planning processes, using appropriate data, to drive its resource decisions. To assess the strengths and weakness of its financial management processes, the College undergoes an independent audit each year. This audit provides a comprehensive review of its fiscal processes and management, and with the exception of one material weakness found in 2008, the college’s fiscal management and processes are sound.

Findings and Evidence:

The College has a general fund base budget of \$12,525,093. With its prior year fund balance of \$2,940,547, and its restricted fund sources, the overall FY12 college budget is \$18,451,308. The FY12 Adopted Budget was approved on September 13, 2011 by the LTCC Board of Trustees. Given its small size, the College received a small college exemption from workload reductions that were implemented to base budgets for California community colleges during the 2011-12 fiscal year. This resulted in the retention of 116.25 FTE and approximately \$528,440 to the College. (III.D)

The College has an established process for setting priorities for funding institutional improvements and changes. Recently, it implemented a budget change proposal process to review program and service needs and recommend funding for these requests based upon available funding. Additionally, the College went to a modified zero-based budget allocation process in 2009-10, which now gives the College the flexibility to review augmentation requests for needed improvements to programs and services. This model however, is relatively new and has not been evaluated. (III.D)

To help facilitate college planning each year, an annual budget planning calendar is created and distributed college-wide by the Business Office, budget workshops are provided as needed, and an annual planning meeting is held to go over the College mission and goals as well as resource request emerging from the program review and planning process. This annual planning meeting involves faculty, classified staff, students, and administrators. Strategic Plan and Educational Master Plan goals and objectives are then used by college staff to generate budget change proposals for program

and service needs. Upon review and prioritization at the department/unit level, requests are forwarded to the College Council, the representative body of the various constituent groups, which uses the information to help it plan and recommend the annual college budget to the College president and, subsequently, the Board of Trustees. Upon adoption by the governing board, the College Business Office then is responsible for managing the College budget and providing college constituents and the governing board with financial information about reserves, income, and expenses. (III.D.1.a, III.1.D.b, III.D.2.a, III.D.2.b, III.D.1.d)

LTCC uses its program review process, its Strategic Plan, its Educational Master Plan, and its Five-Year Capital Outlay Plan to drive its fiscal planning. Program Reviews are sent to the College Council who review and recommend approval of the respective plans that emerge from program review. However, LTCC provided limited documentation that program reviews drive long-term planning and budget priorities. While the program review process may be used to drive program and service decisions, it is not clear that the College has collected sufficient and recent data in all areas to assess its improvement in programs and services. College Council agendas and minutes, while reflecting discussions about the plans, merely indicate the approval of submitted plans. (III.D.1.c, III.D.3)

A review of annual independent audit statements reveals that LTCC has good financial management processes in place. Though audits found one material weakness in 2008—which was quickly corrected—no material weaknesses have been found in audits since that time. The College also maintains sufficient reserves to meet unanticipated emergencies, has sufficient cash flow to meet its obligations, and has sufficient self-insurance coverage to address any unanticipated liabilities. Although state guidelines require at least a five per cent reserve, Lake Tahoe Community College policy is to maintain a reserve of seven per cent. Additionally, all contract agreements, pursuant to Board Policy 7.06, are reviewed by the College Vice-President and/or President and then submitted to the governing board for its review and approval. Contract oversight is then provided by the Business Office and reviewed as part of the annual audit process to ensure contract compliance. (III.D.2.a, III.D.2.c, III.D.2.d, III.D.2.e, III.D.2.f, III.D.2.g)

Conclusions:

LTCC does receive sufficient resources and support to fulfill its educational mission, its resource allocation process is sufficient to provide educational improvements as needed, and the College does have an established process to set college priorities and fund needed improvements. (III.D) LTCC has an established process for reviewing its mission and goals and uses this to drive the annual fiscal planning process. Budget requests must show linkages to the LTCC Strategic or Educational Master Plans and their educational objectives. The College has implemented an annual update process to program review and unit planning beginning this year that will allow units to make annual changes to plans as needed. (III.D.1.a)

The College's annual fiscal plan is reviewed by the College Council to make sure that student learning needs are met. Proposed changes to the annual budget are required to show a linkage to college plans and must support the achievement of student outcomes. LTCC budget documents reflect all of the College's short-term and long-term liabilities and reflect how those obligations will be met. LTCC maintains a cash reserve above 5%, has sufficient cash flow, has access to borrow funds if needed, and maintains an appropriate level of self-insurance. (III.D.2.c)

The College has annual external audits done by an independent agency to review its fiscal processes and relies on its quarterly financial reports, as well as its annual audit findings, to review its fiscal expenditures, planning, and address its future needs. Audits reflect good financial management practices. When noted, audit findings are addressed immediately (III.D.2.A, III.D.2.G)

Regular budget updates are provided to college constituents, and year-end expenditures document the achievement of the proposed budget plans. Minutes of the governing board and the College Council indicate that the Business Office provides necessary financial information for planning decisions and that LTCC actively holds planning meetings to establish priorities for funding to achieve student success priorities. (III.D.1.B)

However, LTCC has provided limited documentation to document that Program Reviews, based on the Strategic and Educational Master Plans, drive long term planning and budget priorities. College Council minutes do not reflect constituent discussions regarding these plans; they indicate approval of submitted plans. (III.D.1.C)

The College partially meets the standard.

Recommendations:

See recommendation 4.

STANDARD IV

Leadership and Governance

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

General Observations:

Lake Tahoe Community College has a well-developed decision-making structure that has been buffeted in recent years by the significant turnover in senior administrative staff. The structure remains mostly intact, some improvements have been made, and a majority of those the team spoke to expressed optimism about current and future leadership at the College. During this somewhat chaotic interim (the self-study describes it as a time of “an inconsistent and sometimes ineffective administrative presence on campus”) which has seen, among other changes, three presidents in three years, others in the College community—primarily middle managers, faculty and classified staff—stepped in to provide needed leadership on key issues and to maintain necessary assessment and planning processes although not all activities occurred as regularly as they should have. In the last year, most, if not all, of this leadership vacuum seems to have been filled, and planning and assessment are once again beginning to operate at optimum levels.

Findings and Evidence:

Despite the challenges of the recent past, Lake Tahoe Community College remains a highly collaborative culture where members of all constituencies participate in decision-making processes. The principal vehicle for collaborative decision-making is the College Council, the College’s chief shared governance body with representation from all constituencies. All significant college recommendations flow through this body to the Superintendent/President and then to the Board of Trustees for final action. Constituency groups also participate on other important college committees and organizations, including the Curriculum Committee, SLO and SLO Assessment Committees, the Academic Senate, Classified Employees Association, Associated Student Council, and the Title III Steering Committee. The newest college committee is the College Planning Council, a subcommittee of the College Council, whose purposes are to “facilitate the development and revision of College Strategic, Master, Program and Unit Plans; develop, review, evaluate and recommend improvements to College planning processes; and oversee the assessment of Institutional Effectiveness.” (IV.A.1)

A number of examples confirmed that leadership has emerged from all constituency groups through the committees on which they serve. The College revised its mission statement to more precisely delineate the College’s overarching purposes. A new Educational Master Plan and a new Strategic Plan have been completed and are guiding the College’s activities. The Curriculum Committee and Academic Senate implemented improvements to the review and approval process for Distance Education curriculum. The College Council recommended institution of a modified zero-based budgeting process, which resulted in the elimination of several programs that were deemed insufficiently connected to the College’s mission. The College has decided to implement

a new ERP system to improve many of its processes. The SLO and SLO Assessment committees emerged under the leadership of the Academic Senate. Most of these decisions were made collaboratively during a tumultuous time in the College's history and demonstrate the viability of decision-making structures and processes at the College. (IV.A.1)

Board of Trustees Policy 1.13 specifies the manner in which constituency groups participate in decision-making processes. Faculty have a clearly defined role in academic and professional matters and exercise that role through the Academic Senate and its standing committees. The Academic Senate President also represents faculty at Board of Trustees meetings. Administrative roles in decision-making are spelled out in Chapter II of the Board Policy Manual as well as in job descriptions. Classified employees share decision-making responsibilities through the Classified Employees Association and students do the same through the Associated Student Council (ASC) and the election of a non-voting student trustee, who represents student interests at Board of Trustees meetings. In interviews, students were particularly pleased with the significant role they play in college governance. These positive feelings were borne out in a survey conducted with the ASC in 2011. (IV.A.2.a., IV.A.3)

Faculty play a significant role in matters relating to curriculum and program development, primarily through the Curriculum Committee of the Academic Senate, through which all course and program proposals must proceed before they can be offered. Faculty also assume the most important roles in the College's SLO and SLO Assessment committees. Some of the initiatives that have sprung from faculty leadership have been the development of standards and practices for distance education and the development of guidelines for interviewing, hiring, and training online instructors. (IV.A.2.b, IV.A.3)

Lake Tahoe Community College advocates for and demonstrates integrity in its relationships with external agencies. The College effectively responded to recommendations from the ACCJC's last report in 2006 and has filed all needed reports with the Commission, including a substantive change report. Its audits and lack of material findings in all but one year since the last accreditation visit also confirm the honesty and integrity which characterize the College's activities. (IV.A.4)

The College has effectively evaluated its leadership and governance processes, primarily through staff and student surveys. These surveys have spurred the College to adopt several planning agenda items related to a lack of understanding of some processes. For example, almost half the College Council members indicated that they did not sufficiently understand the council's processes and expressed concerns about the effectiveness of Council communication to the president and then to the board. In interviews, several people expressed concerns about a previous lack of transparency in processes but agreed that the new president and senior leadership appear to be changing their assumptions with more openness and positive communication. (IV.A.5)

Conclusions:

Despite some recent rough patches in college leadership occasioned by considerable turnover in senior administrators, the College has continued to function relatively well with some deficiencies in planning that now appear to be back on track with the completion of a new Educational Master Plan and Strategic Plan. During this challenging interim period, leadership emerged from many parts of the campus and demonstrated the principle that leadership in an organization can come from any group or individuals.

The College meets the standard.

Commendations:

Commendation 4 (2011)

The team commends the College for the work of its middle managers, support staff, and faculty that kept the College's core activities and processes functioning during recent years of turnover in senior administrative staff.

B. Board and Administrative Organization

General Observations:

The College is governed by a five-member elected board which is joined by a non-voting student, chosen by students to represent their interests. The Board is characterized by stability as several members have served for long periods of time. Two are founding members while another has served in the Board for twenty years. The two newest members have served for six and three years. The four members interviewed by the team displayed a deeply-held commitment to the College and its importance in the community.

After a period of instability in senior leadership at Lake Tahoe Community College, the Board of Trustees has recently hired a new President who began her tenure on July 1, 2011. The Board and President appear to be working well in their brief time together, and the team, like many people it interviewed from the College, is optimistic about the College's leadership prospects for the future.

Findings and Evidence:

The Board focuses its energies on creating an environment in which students can succeed. Board policy 1.06 states that the Board "is elected by and accountable to the voters of the Lake Tahoe Community College District to determine the direction and policies of the District in pursuit of its mission...promote a healthy academic environment for the students, faculty, and staff which inspires and challenges the College's community to greater service and achievements." Board Policy 3.01A clarifies the goal of the Board: "Lake Tahoe Community College exists to meet the post-high school educational needs of the residents of the District. The College places the student at the center of all considerations. The needs, interests, and welfare of the students are the principal criteria against which all determinations are measured." (IV.B.1, IV.B.1.a)

Those statements guide the development of all Board policies, which include chapters on instructional programs, personnel, student services, and organizational, administrative, and resource allocation systems. The Board ensures the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources needed to support them in a variety of ways. It receives regular and numerous reports from college staff about programs. It receives and reviews all completed program reviews so that it is informed about the College's programs and their needs. During the team's visit, a report was presented to the Board about one of the College's TRIO grants and the work it was enabling the College to do to help students succeed. The Board asked numerous questions of the speaker, indicating its interest in the program she was talking about. (IV.B.1.b, IV.B.1.c) The Board is also informed about accreditation and members served on self-study committees. (IV.B.1.i) The Board Policy Book contains numerous policies that enumerate the Board's by-laws (IV.B.1.d). Board Policy 1.05.A.3 requires it to establish policies and "review them regularly." (IV.B.1.e) New board members receive an orientation governed by Board Policy 1.07A: "The Superintendent/President and the Board shall assist each new member-elect to understand the Board's functions, policies, and procedures before the assumption of office. Such assistance will include providing written materials and invitations to attend Board meetings and conferences with the

Superintendent/President. New Board members shall be encouraged to attend meetings held as training/information sessions on a regional basis by other organizations.” The most recent member to join the Board confirmed to the team that she had received an orientation and was mentored by one of the more experienced board members. (IV.B.1.f)

The Board evaluates itself annually. Minutes confirm that the Board most recently conducted this self-evaluation on February 11, 2011. (IV.B.1.g) The Board also has a code of ethics, codified in Board Policy 1.06. Notably, that policy includes a statement emphasizing the Board’s policy-making role. It “confines board action to policy determination, planning, evaluation, and maintaining the fiscal stability of the district [and] delegates authority for the execution of these items on a day-to-day basis as the chief executive officer of the district.” (IV.B.1.j)

In one of its most important duties, the Board appoints the Superintendent/President, as it did recently. The President is charged with implementing policies, statutes and regulations, duties which are described in Board Policy 2.02B. The College’s program review process is one mechanism by which the College ensures that policies, statutes and regulations are appropriately implemented. The new Superintendent/President is currently evaluating the administrative structure of the College, and one change she has already recommended—a title change and revised job description for the Vice President of Business Services—was approved by the Board of Trustees at a meeting attended by team members. (IV.B.2.a) The Superintendent/President, working in collaboration with faculty, classified staff, and the administrators of the College, has established a variety of processes that have as a fundamental goal the institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment. Much of this is embedded in program review, planning, and budgeting, all processes that have undergone revision in recent years. (IV.B.2.b)

The Superintendent/President also meets regularly with the President’s Council, College Council, Academic Senate leadership, Classified Staff leadership, and the Academic Senate to discuss college activities and policies and how these support the College’s mission. (IV.B.2.c) The President also is responsible for controlling budgets and expenditures. This is usually done through a delegation of authority to employees in Business or Administrative Services. Lake Tahoe Community College is fiscally sound, due in large part to the Board’s policy of maintaining a seven per cent reserve, so it appears to the team that Presidents have been successful in implementing this policy to maintain the fiscal health of the institution. (IV.B.2.d) Finally, the President is charged with communicating with the communities served by the College. Board members reported that the new President is already out in the community. Internally, many people interviewed told the team about the President’s open and transparent communication. As one example, the campus now receives a summary of each Board meeting after it occurs. (IV.B.2.e)

Conclusions:

The Board is committed to the College’s well-being and functions well as a policy-making body. It has successfully hired a new President who is generating optimism throughout the campus with her competence, friendliness, and open communication style.

The College meets the standard.

Commendations:

Commendation 5 (2011)

The team commends the College for the open, transparent and inclusive communication about core events and processes that has recently been instituted and practiced by senior leadership.