

EVALUATION REPORT

Mt. San Antonio College
Walnut, 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 Mt. San Antonio College
from October 25 – 28, 2010.

Dr. Brian King
Chair

**Mt. San Antonio College
Comprehensive Evaluation Visit Team Roster
October 25 –28, 2010**

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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

INSTITUTION: Mt. San Antonio College

DATES OF VISIT: October 25 – 28, 2010

TEAM CHAIR: Dr. Brian King, Superintendent/President
Cabrillo College

An eleven-member accreditation team visited Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC) from October 25 – 28, 2010, for the purpose of evaluating how well the institution is achieving its stated purposes, analyzing how well the college is meeting the commission standards, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement, and submitting recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) regarding the status of the college.

In preparation for the visit, team members attended an all-day training session on September 9, 2010, conducted by the ACCJC and studied commission materials prepared for visiting teams. The team members were divided up by standard with a lead and a second assigned to each sub-standard. Team members read carefully the college's self-study report, including the recommendations from the 2004 visiting team, and assessed the online evidence provided by the college.

Prior to the visit, team members completed written evaluations of the self-study report and began identifying areas for further investigation. Via email, team members began discussing their views of the materials provided by the college.

During the visit, the team met with over 50 faculty, staff, administrators, members of the Board of Trustees, and students. The team chair met with members of the Board of Trustees, the president of the college and various administrators. The team attended two open meetings to allow for comment from any member of the campus or local community, and also attended a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing board.

The self-study report was lengthy and thorough. Though some sections were duplicative, the self-study did provide appropriate information for the team to begin its review. College staff members were very accommodating to team members and available for interviews and follow-up conversations. The college was well prepared and ready for the team's visit.

Major Findings and Recommendations of the 2010 Visiting Team

As a result of the October 2010 visit, the team made the following commendations and recommendations:

Commendations:

1. The team commends the college for its academic approval and quality control committees, policies, and achievements. The college, through these policies and practices, demonstrates an intense focus on quality courses and delivery systems. Committees such as the Educational Design Council (EDC) have highly impressive processes and values that insist on an integrated curriculum of the finest quality.
2. The team commends the college for including academic and student services planning and assessment in its comprehensive Planning for Institutional Effectiveness (PIE) process. The linkages between planning and budgeting are evidenced by dialog and successful collaboration.
3. The team commends the college for its many publications and other communication vehicles that have been deployed to move the campus forward on issues regarding academic quality.
4. The team commends the college for thoughtful fiscal planning in incredibly difficult times, resulting in a solid financial position.
5. The team commends the college for excellent and innovative programs that recruit, orient, and prepare students for college success. In addition, the college commitment continues with support services including library and learning support services. The data demonstrate real progress in student success and retention of students who are academically at risk.

Recommendations

1. In order to strengthen institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that the college continue its dialogue with classified leadership to improve classified employee participation in the participatory governance process. It is recommended that the college and classified leadership work collaboratively to implement the components of the planning agendas itemized on pages 3 and 4 of the August 23, 2010 addendum to the self-study and continue to encourage participation by members of the classified service. (Standard IV.A.1; IV.3)
2. The team recommends that the college review and clarify its student learning assessment terminology to alleviate potential confusion involving “measurable outcomes” and “student learning outcomes.” By comprehensively assessing what the college refers to as “measurable outcomes,” students and faculty could better understand assessment outcomes. The team also

recommends that outcomes should be more easily accessible to students. (IIA.1.c; IIA.2.e,f, IIA.1.6)

3. The team recommends that the college award degrees and certificates based on student achievement of a program's stated learning outcomes. The team reminds the college of the approaching deadline for compliance with this standard. (Standard IIA.1.c; IIA.2.h,i)

ACCREDITATION EVALAUTION REPORT

FOR

MT. SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE

Introduction

Mt. San Antonio Community College District is a single-college district. The campus is situated on 421 acres which were originally part of the 48,000 acre La Puente Rancho.

Mt. SAC reports that it began in 1945 when voters of four local high school districts approved the formation of a community college district. Initially named Eastern Los Angeles County Community College, Mt. SAC opened in the fall of 1946 with 635 students, and now serves over 60,000 students annually. The college district boundaries encompass the communities of Baldwin Park, Bassett, Charter Oak, Covina, Diamond Bar, the southern portion of Glendora, Hacienda Heights, City of Industry, Irwindale, La Puente, La Verne, Pomona, Rowland Heights, San Dimas, Valinda, Walnut, and West Covina.

Evaluation of Institutional Responses to Previous Recommendations

Recommendation #1 (2004 – page 71 of the self-study report)

“To support the momentum and progress in addressing the college’s themes of student learning outcomes (SLOs), and self-reflective dialogue, the team recommends, a) that the college, as a whole, analyze what is already part of their culture, and address gaps between old and new planning and assessment paradigms, and, b) using forums, such as the newly formed IEC, promote recognition of data analysis as evidence.”

See Recommendation #2.1

Recommendation #2.1 (2004 – page 71 of the self-study report)

“In order to build on progress already made on institutional evaluation, planning and improvement, the team recommends the college establish an ongoing and systematic cycle of integrated planning, resource allocation, and evaluation that is driven by the college’s mission and goals with clear links between the institutional and program levels. Attention should be paid to the appropriate uses of data and evidence documentation, communication, and mechanisms to assure systematic review...”

Recommendations #1 and #2.1 (2004 – p. 71)

The college addressed recommendations #1 and #2.1 together. It provided a thorough response to the recommendations involving the use of evidence for self-reflection and to drive planning and decision-making. Through its new planning and program review processes, the college has implemented more inclusive and meaningful processes of planning and budgeting, program review, and SLO assessment.

The Office of Research and Institutional Effectiveness now not only plays a central role in evidence-based program review and planning, but has expanded its outreach on available data and ways it can be used in self-reflection and institutional improvement. The periodic newsletters and research briefs produced by the office are excellent and very accessible. The extent of the readership of these publications is unclear.

The team concludes that the college has successfully incorporated the new process into the culture, perhaps due in part to the “carrot” of funding requests tied to participation in the PIE process leading to broader interest in institutional improvement.

The team concludes the college has met both recommendations.

Recommendation #2.2 (2004 – page 73 of the self-study report)

“...The college should consider maximizing the use of the Research and Institutional Effectiveness Office as a resource in planning and evaluating processes within the institution.”

The college has responded admirably to the previous recommendations in this area. The college has designed and implanted a full scale comprehensive and integrated planning process that includes academic program review.

Recommendation #3.1 (2004 – page 74 of the self-study report)

“In order to promote institutional commitment and increase effectiveness, the visiting team makes the following recommendation: a) as Mt. San Antonio College heightens its focus on all aspects of institutional effectiveness, including the significant contribution of academic counseling to student learning, the college should make increasing the counseling services available to the general student population a priority...”

The college has expanded the number of counselors and types of counseling available to students. The college has almost doubled the number of general counselors and those in specific programs (EOP&S, Bridge, and ASPIRE). In 2004, the college had approximately 15 counselors; in 2010 it has 31 in various programs, including an increase in general counseling. It also uses multiple mediums to counsel and advise students: in-person, the portal, email, and group sessions. The team concludes that Mt. SAC has met this recommendation.

Recommendation #3.2 (2004 – page 76 of the self-study report)

“...to assure students are aware of an can make appropriate use of the student complaint and grievance procedures, the college should include a description of these procedures in the college catalog, schedule of classes, and other appropriate publications. In addition, the existing academic freedom policy should be widely published.”

The college uses several different mediums to communicate college policy, including the student complaint and grievance procedures. These procedures are communicated to students in the college’s catalog (2010-11 edition, pages 248-252), class schedule, the portal, web site, printing material, email, and listing on classroom signs. The team concludes that Mt. SAC has met this recommendation.

Recommendation #4.1 (2004 – page 76 of the self-study report)

“...[the college should enhance] self-reflective dialogue, particularly in lateral communications, between the representatives to governance committees and their constituent groups and peers.”

Though the team concludes that Mt. SAC has met this recommendation, the first recommendation of the 2010 team acknowledges that work to improve the dialogue, specifically with classified leadership and employees, remains.

Recommendation #4.2 (2004 – page 80 of the Self-study Report)

“...the Board of Trustees [should] give serious consideration to developing good practices in self-reflective dialogue and, through their leadership promote institutional integrity through candid self-evaluation and continuing board training.”

- Board Policy (BP) 2745 specifies that each year the self-assessment instrument will be completed by each board member; the board will discuss a compilation of the results; and the board will develop a set of objectives for the next year.
- Board of Trustees’ self-evaluation was an agenda item for meetings on Saturday, 2/5/05; Sunday, March 12, 2006; Tuesday, June 18, 2008; July 23, 2008; Saturday, April 11, 2009; Saturday, February 27, 2010.

Though the recommendation was met, the team observed that Mt. SAC could be well-served by holding its self-evaluation at a regularly scheduled meeting instead of during a weekend meeting and by considering making more public some of the outcomes of the self-evaluation, as well as the college’s annual goals, including the possible publication of college goals on the college’s web site.

The team concludes that Mt. SAC has met the recommendation through its policy of self-evaluation and through regular evaluations.

Eligibility Requirements

- 1. Authority:** The evaluation team confirmed that the Mt. San Antonio Community College District is an institution of the California Community College System and is authorized to provide educational programs by the California Education Code. The college is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC).

- 2. Mission:**
The evaluation team confirmed the first mission statement. BP 1200 was approved on May 26, 2004 and was revised in 2008. The mission statement is regularly reviewed, updated, and published in the college catalog.

- 3. Governing Board:**
The evaluation team confirmed that Mt. SAC has a Board of Trustees consisting of five members representing specific geographic regions serviced by the college. The board is empowered to formulate policy, maintain integrity, financial stability, and ensure the college mission is being carried out. BP's were reviewed between 2003 and 2004. The Board of Trustees has a Conflict of Interest policy and a Code of Ethics.

- 4. Chief Executive Officer:**
The Board of Trustees selects the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The board not only confirms the appointment of the CEO but establishes a search process to establish a vacancy. The search process shall be fair and open and comply with all relevant regulations.

- 5. Administrative Capacity:**
The number of administrative staff members at Mt. SAC supports the services necessary to carry out the institution's mission and purpose. Their preparation and experience is scrutinized through rigorous Management Employee Selection Procedures delineated in Administrative Procedure 7120.

- 6. Operational Status:**
Mt. SAC serves students who are actively pursuing its degree and certificate programs.

- 7. Degrees:**
Mt. SAC offers a wide range of courses that fulfill program requirements for Associate of Art and Associate of Science degrees or certificates.

- 8. Educational Programs:**
Mt. SAC's degree programs fit its mission and are sufficient in their content and length of study required. Instructors are contractually obligated to teach to the standards of their disciplines and to honor the official course outline of record, both of which ensure that faculty honor the official course outline of record and that courses are taught with quality and rigor and focus on identified student outcomes. Courses offered via distance education are of the same quality and rigor as those offered through traditional instruction. All faculty

teaching distance education courses have been certified to do so through completion of the college's Skills and Pedagogy for Online Teaching (SPOT) program.

9. Academic Credit:

Mt. SAC awards academic credit based on accepted practices of higher education. The Curriculum and Instructional Council determines specific unit credit total for individual courses as well as credit or noncredit status. The committee follows guidelines established in the California Community College's Program and Course Approval Handbook.

10. Student Learning Achievement:

Mt. SAC defines and publishes measurable objectives for all of its courses and programs. In addition, courses and programs have student learning outcomes upon which the discipline faculty have agreed. The assessment of these outcomes ensures that students completing the college's course, programs, degrees, and certificates are achieving these expected outcomes.

11. General Education:

General education programs and courses meet, and often exceed, requirements of Title V (55805). The quality and rigor of Mt. SAC general education is consistent with the academic standards appropriate to higher education, providing breadth and knowledge, demanding critical thinking within the disciplines, and promoting intellectual inquiry.

12. Academic Freedom:

At Mt. SAC, both intellectual freedom and independence are guaranteed in BP 4030 and AP 4030. Intellectual freedom and independence are also guaranteed for all instruction, including distance education instruction.

13. Faculty:

Mt. SAC has 409 full-time faculty members who have met State mandated minimum qualifications and are qualified to deliver the institution's programs.

14. Student Services:

Mt. SAC provides a range of student services consistent with its student population supporting student learning and development within the context of the institutional mission.

15. Admissions:

There is a clear statement of open admission in compliance with both California Educational Code and Title V.

16. Information Learning Resources:

Mt. SAC provides to its students sufficient information and learning resources and services in support of its mission and its educational programs.

17. Financial Resources:

Mt. SAC uses and plans for its financial resources so that they adequately support its student learning programs and services, financial stability is assured, and institutional effectiveness is regularly being improved.

18. Financial Accountability:

On April 1 of each year, Mt. SAC contracts with an independent certified public auditor. The audit is conducted in accordance with standards applicable to financial audits contained in Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statements Numbers 34 and 35 using the Business Type Activity Model recommended by the Chancellor's Office Committee on Fiscal and Accountability Standards.

19. Institutional Planning:

Mt. SAC evaluates and publicizes how well it is accomplishing its purposes. It has evidence of planning for improvement in all areas. The institution assesses the progress it has made in achieving its goals and uses an evaluation cycle and planning tied to resource allocation to make decisions for improvement. The college is implementing campus-wide assessment of student learning outcomes and the routine publication of those outcomes.

20. Public Information:

Mt. SAC publishes its catalog and schedule, and uploads on its web site, precise and up-to-date information on the following:

- Official name, address, telephone number(s), and web site address of the institution
- Educational mission
- Course, program, and degree offerings
- Academic calendar and program length
- Academic freedom statement
- Available student financial aid
- Available learning resources
- Names and degrees of administrators and faculty
- Names of governing board members
- Admission requirements
- Student fees and other financial obligations
- Degrees, certificates, graduation, and transfer requirements
- Academic regulations, including academic honesty
- Nondiscrimination policy
- Acceptance of transfer credits
- Grievance and complaint procedures
- Sexual harassment policy
- Policies on Refund of fees

21. Relations with Accrediting Commission:

The Board of Trustees and the college fulfill their obligations to the Accrediting Commission. The accreditation standards and recommendations of the Accrediting Commission are incorporated into the board's planning activities.

STANDARD I

Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

A. Mission

General Observations:

There is evidence that the mission statement is integrated and ubiquitous throughout the college. The Board of Trustees approved the mission statement in April 2008. This mission statement is listed in Section 1 of the Mt. SAC catalog and in the fall 2010 class schedule. The mission statement is also included in the college's 2010-11 strategic plan and is displayed in meeting rooms and classrooms throughout the college. The mission statement is also contained in the college's planning documents for program review.

Findings and Evidence:

The mission statement is reviewed regularly by the President's Advisory Committee (PAC). Membership of the PAC includes two students, two classified staff, one confidential representative, five faculty and three management representatives. A subcommittee of this group was formed to develop a mission statement to be brought back to the larger group. In April 2008, PAC adopted a mission statement to be sent forward to the Board of Trustees. The board adopted the mission statement at its April 23, 2008 meeting ((PAC minutes, April 2008 and board minutes April 23, 2008). The next review is scheduled for January 2011. Members receive a copy of it and have a month to review with constituents then it is forwarded to the board for first and second reading. The involvement of the board was limited to ongoing reports from the president at board meetings. Other than the formal approval of the mission, vision and value statements, the board was not directly involved in creation of the statements. (Standard I. A, I.A.2)

The institution's mission is central to institutional planning and decision making. The mission statement is embedded throughout the institutional planning and decision making as evidenced by the statement that the purpose of the PAC is "to ensure the long-term stability of the institution [it] is the primary planning body for the college and provides a forum for review and recommends the direction and focus for the college consistent with the college's mission, vision and core values." The mission statement is prominently displayed at the front of the 2010-11 strategic plan. The PIE annual summary 2009-10 clearly states, "The college's mission statement drives all efforts of the institution."

The mission statement is as follows:

"The mission of Mt. SAC is to welcome all students and to support them in achieving their personal, educational, and career goals in an environment of academic excellence."

Through its vision statement, “Mt. SAC strives to be regarded as one of the premier community colleges in the nation.” The college “will be viewed as a leader in community college teaching, programs, and services. As a premiere community college,” Mt. SAC “will provide access to quality, focusing on student success within a climate of integrity and respect.” The college “will earn this reputation by consistently exceeding the expectations of our students, our staff, and our community.”

The following are Mt. SAC’s core values:

Integrity – We treat each other honestly, ethically, and responsibly in an atmosphere of trust.

Diversity – We respect and welcome all differences, and we foster equal participation throughout the campus community.

Community Building – We work in responsible partnerships through open communication, caring, and a cooperative spirit.

Student Focus – We address the needs of students and the community in our planning and actions.

Life-Long Learning – We promote the continuing pursuit of high educational goals through equal access to excellence in both teaching and support services.

Positive Spirit – We work harmoniously, show compassion, and take pride in our work.

Under the leadership of the president, the mission statement has been reviewed and renewed and a process has been established for a sustained review through the PAC which includes a wide representation of campus constituents. The mission statement is up for review again in January 2011. At that time, PAC representatives will have one month to review the mission statement with constituencies. Following the review, the mission statement will be forwarded to the board for adoption. (Standard I. A.3)

Mission driven institutional planning is led by PAC and IEC which serve as the district’s master planning committees populated by campus constituency representation. The development and assessment of SLOs results from planning and goal setting. In this process, the Educational Master Plan (EMP) and the Information Technology Master Plans integrate the mission into planning and resource allocation recommendations as evidenced by the reference in the first chapter of the EMP which notes, “Mission, Vision, Trends and Goals drive the EMP, department plans and priorities and budget development.” (Standards I.A.4)

Conclusions:

The mission statement is developed by including representatives of the college and a review by campus constituents is provided before finalizing it and sending to the board for approval. The mission statement is ubiquitous throughout the campus and is embedded in planning and the consideration of resource allocation. There is a process established for a review of the mission statement which will again take place in January, 2011. The college meets the Standard IA.

B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

General Observations:

Over six years ago, Mt SAC redesigned its institutional effectiveness process (PIE), which links annual planning and program review processes with resource allocation and includes a component for the development and assessment of student learning and administrative outcomes. The PIE process develops college goals collaboratively and supports programs and units in the development of strategic objectives linked to college goals. The process is managed through an online tool called ePIE that is evaluated annually and updatable throughout the year. The planning tool is comprehensive but also quite detailed and cumbersome, suggesting that the college may have difficulty sustaining the annual review effort in the long term. The team learned the college may consider more streamlined alternatives in the future. (Standard I.B, I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3)

Findings and Evidence:

The college used an expansive definition of “objectives” to include administrative unit objectives, noncredit program learning objectives, and course- and program-level student learning outcomes (as listed in ePIE). The process of creating these objectives is highly decentralized, with the quality and quantity of objectives focused on “student learning” varying widely. The team found that the level of buy-in and involvement was broader in some areas than others. (Standard I.B, I.B.2, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.7)

In terms of a dialogue that supports institutional effectiveness, the self-study documents a shift to a broad-based collegial consultation process that has moved the college toward greater effectiveness. Issues of concern regarding communication and dialogue remain, as exemplified in the most recent employee survey. Members of college leadership are expressing good signs of openness to concerns, specifically those expressed by classified staff leadership. (Standard I.B, I.B.1, I.B.4, I.B.7)

Evaluation of program objectives and other outcomes are supported by a strong Office of Research for Institutional Effectiveness (RIE) whose director now plays a central role in institutional effectiveness processes. Research office staff created a variety of meaningful and accessible reports through newsletters, briefs and specially requested studies. The research office played a primary role in the implementation of the new PIE process, especially through the position of the educational assessment research analyst which supported SLO development and assessment. With the position presently vacant, progress on the assessment phase of the outcomes cycle has slowed. (Standard I.B., I.B.1, I.B.3, I.B.5, I.B.6)

In contrast, the structure to support the development and assessment of student learning outcomes has been well established. The college created a helpful and comprehensive framework in PIE and ePIE. College leadership strongly support a process of institutional improvement through collaboration, self-evaluation and reflection. (Standard I.B, I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.6, I.B.7)

Due to the college's expansive view of how outcomes are defined, the team observed the distinctions in ePIE between SLOs, General Education Outcomes (GEOs), and Administrative Unit Objectives (AUOs) are not entirely clear. Many administrative outcomes could be rephrased to reflect student learning versus college action. The college reported achieving 98 percent of student learning outcomes and means of assessment in active courses in 2009-10. However, only 36 percent of courses have gone through an assessment cycle. The college should take care to accelerate its assessment process so that a continuous cycle of assessment, evaluation, and improvement is established by the 2012 deadline. (Standard I.B, I.B.3)

The college has defined and implemented its planning process through PIE, with resource requests working up through the system and with the budget committee making recommendations of top-priority items to the president. During discussions of the college's annual summary 2009-10 report, college constituents recognize that a priority system should be added to the ePIE system. The college appears to be on the way toward broadening its constituent base in terms of participation in the planning process, especially for classified personnel who have reported reduced involvement and dialogue on college-wide planning and other processes in the past. The college appears committed to improving and broadening the dialogue. The college exhibits many examples of continual institutional improvement such as with an employee evaluation of the PIE process used to support changes in the next cycle. (Standard I.B, I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7)

Conclusions:

Mt. SAC has made dramatic progress since the last visit, fully incorporating PIE into the program review and planning processes through extensive training, teamwork, and college-wide discussions. In the space of six years, the college has reorganized its planning process, overhauled its program review process to unite it with planning and budgeting, and made dramatic progress on the development of student learning and other outcomes. The college has much to be proud of in these efforts. It is also clear from shared governance meetings attended and other documents viewed during the team visit that administrative staff, leadership and faculty leaders are invested in the process and involved in a cycle of process improvement.

With only a third of courses with assessment results and spotty assessment data throughout other outcomes or objectives, the college may experience challenges reaching proficiency on SLOs by the 2012 deadline. (Standard I.B., I.B.3., I.B.5., I.B.6.)

The team discerned a history of concern regarding how the college values its staff and includes classified staff in dialogues on institutional effectiveness. Members of the current leadership at Mt. SAC are both hearing and addressing these concerns. However, examples of exclusion and other concerns are recent. The team encourages continued movement in this direction to maintain momentum toward broad dialogue, and respect for different voices and constituencies across the campus. (Standard I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.4) [See Major Recommendation #1 in Standard IV.A.]

The team encourages the college to consider broadening the participation in meaningful SLO assessment to improve pedagogical approaches, student learning, student service, and institutional quality. The college should continue to foster self-reflective dialogue that is based

on sound evidence with the goal of institutional improvement. (Standard I.B., I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7)

The college meets the requirements of Standard I.B.

Recommendations:

In order to strengthen institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that the college continue its dialogue with classified leadership to improve classified employee participation in the participatory governance process. It is recommended that the college and classified leadership work collaboratively to implement the components of the planning agendas itemized on pages 3 and 4 of the August 23, 2010 addendum to the self-study and continue to encourage participation by members of the classified service. (Standard IV.A.1; IV.3)

Commendations:

The team commends Mt. SAC for the PIE model which has been meaningfully institutionalized for annual planning, program review, and resource allocation. There are clear linkages between planning and budgeting even during times when few resources are available to demonstrate and evaluate the process. The budget prioritization process is collaborative, with lateral and vertical dialogue used effectively to rank order budget requests, even during periods of scarce resources. Evidence seen during the team visit indicates that a few challenges remain such as adding prioritizations to the ePIE system and marrying the PIE and budgeting timelines. However, college constituents are actively working to address these and other issues. (Standard I.B., I.B.1., I.B.2., I.B.3., I.B.4.) [See Major Commendations #1 and #2 in Standard II.A.]

STANDARD II

Student Learning Programs and Service

A. Instructional Programs

General Observations:

The college presents compelling evidence that it understands the nature of and the needs of its service district. This is a crucial and essential context for academic program deployment and evaluation. The Educational Master Plan (EMP) provides a thorough analysis of the district population in terms of ethnicity, educational behavior, correlations between unemployment and degree attainment, as well as economic factors such as foreclosure pressures and outlook. The EMP documents some concern about outflow of students to nearby community colleges (EMP 46). The college has a district population of approximately 900,000. The enrollment of the college is large at over 60,000 unduplicated fall/spring combined for 08-09 (according to self-study report (SSR), 11).

The EMP aligns ethnicity percentages in the surrounding service area with enrollments. The college is assessing enrollments relative to the district with special attention to serving specific ethnic groups. Further, the self-study provides excellent student achievement documentation demonstrating the relationship between specific ethnicities and retention as well as success data (SSR 23-24). Good data are also presented on transfer performance to the Cal States as well as the UCs. In summary, the SSR provides a good overview of data that breaks down the district population as well as student achievement issues, such as persistence. It is the team's understanding that this data is provided by the IT department and the team was impressed with the breadth and depth of this contextual demographic data and student achievement data. (Standard IIA.1.a)

The college offers over 1600 courses in several degree formats (11 AA degrees, 79 AS degrees, 56 skills certificates, 69 certificates of achievement, 4 certificates of competency) (SSR 119). The college has worked diligently of late to launch a new planning process (PIE) that includes annual program review roll ups from all academic and most non-academic units. It is a broad and ambitious planning vision that attempts to roll up learning outcomes along with other kinds of data and reports into a planning and budgeting process. The college has invested considerable energy and process deployment to ensure the integration of academic evaluation and college planning and budgeting. A long and detailed effort has taken place around learning outcomes since at least 2003.

It will be a measure of the success of this process to see if it can bring important data to the foreground in a way to execute decisions based on data. If all comes together, the opportunity to increase the efficiency, collegiality, and shared governance of an already vibrant campus will be significantly enhanced. (Standard IIA.2.e,f; IB.3) The college recognizes this opportunity in documents such as the Planning for Excellence series. Specifically for instance, Issue No. 1

discusses the relationship between planning and SLOs and emphasizes the fact that PIE is “intended to integrate the various planning processes” (see Issue No. 1, 2009). (Standard IIA.2.f)

Mt. SAC is a college well-positioned to nurture a new culture of change, collaboration, and integrated planning.

Findings and Evidence:

As noted, the college offers over 1600 courses in several degree formats: 11 AA degrees, (Standard IIA.4), 79 AS degrees, 56 skills certificates, 69 certificates of achievement, 4 certificates of competency (SSR 119). As suggested above, the college analyzes significant amounts of data to understand its service population (Standard II.A.1.a). In addition, the college has for several years assessed its placement testing practice and made appropriate changes (SSR 14). In addition the college has further addressed the needs of its students by charting job placement data and external licensure examination success (SSR 28/II.A.1.a). It is clear that in addition to the RIE department, the IT department is to be commended for all of the student achievement data and other contextual data about general student success and activities. (Standard IIA.1.a)

As part of this process, the team observed that the mission of the institution and its objectives are integrated into the planning process around program creation and assessment as well as course assessment and management (Standard II.A.1). In fact more than merely a dimension of the process, the SSR states that it is a “primary goal of the PIE process... to align the work and goal setting of individual departments to institutional mission and goals” (SSR 30/II.A.1). The self-study documents the fact that the college mission is included on the college’s planning documents: “The college’s planning documents (e.g., program review (PIE), EMP, etc.) also contain the college’s mission statement, as it is the mission statement that drives the programs and services offered” (SSR 39/II.A.1). The team found that there is evidence that continued focus and refinement of connecting the mission of the college, its goals and objectives, to instructional programs. (Standard IIA.1.a; IIA.2.d,e,f)

The RIE department produces the fact book and “engages in ad hoc research projects” and works with various constituencies and planning groups on campus (SSR 131). In addition the RIE department provides additional data and analysis at the unit and PAC level of the PIE process to inform decisions and judgment at those junctures. In addition: “Any individual can submit a request for a particular research question” (SSR 132). (Standard IIA.1.a)

The team reviewed distance education via direct access through the college portal. The team also reviewed the noncredit offerings. The academic programs have many modes of delivery and distance learning, in particular, receives a high level of scrutiny and quality control. Faculty must be certified to teach distance learning and the curricular process singles distance education courses out for special review (SSR 126). The college also offers multiple modes of delivery and support mechanisms related to course offerings (Standard IIA.1.b). The college deployed bridge programs/learning communities, for instance. Participation has grown 60 percent since 2007 in these programs and the participants continue to do better than students not in these cohorts (SSR 42, 114). The college has received some national attention for this program (SSR 114). According to the SSR, the college has one of the most vibrant continuous education, noncredit

programs in the state, serving more than 39,000 students during the 07/08 academic year (SSR 8). In addition, the report documents additional validation of these programs through the Accrediting Commission of Schools associated with WASC (SSR 8). (Standard IIA.1.b)

Assessment work at Mt SAC has been recognized by the California system: “In March 2010, the college was honored to receive two awards for its work in planning and assessment from The Research and Planning (RP) Group for California Community Colleges (See Excellence in Planning Award 2010; Excellence in Assessment Award 2010)” (SSR 176). (Standard IB.3;II.A.2.e,f)

The quality, currency, and performance of programs are established, assessed and maintained through what the college refers to as PIE (Standard II.A.2). Components of this PIE process include reviewing the past year’s accomplishments and areas of opportunity, an environmental scan (communicating internal and external conditions as well as data sources), setting short- and long-term goals, documenting assessment efforts (including student learning outcomes, general education outcomes, and administrative unit objectives). (SSR130)

Academic departments and non-academic units, including distance education and noncredit programs, fill out a PIE worksheet. Course outlines and programs are aligned (SSR 121) with mission by EDC which assures that the course outline and course design are intact. Courses are reviewed by this committee on a four year basis (SSR 121). The EDC evaluates course outlines looking for multiple measures (SSR 158). In addition there is a focus by the EDC to ensure that curriculum is “integrated” but without increasing unnecessary redundancy with the rest of the course requirements. An integrated curriculum is a balancing act that is “core to the purpose and function of the EDC and the Curriculum and Instruction Council” (SSR122; see also 126, 148). (Standard IIA.2, IIA.2.c) The team concludes the college has reached the entry level of the proficiency rubric on program review.

The Outcomes Committee focuses on the quality and integrity of course level outcomes by sampling a range of these campus-wide and in addition the Outcomes Committee (a combination of the SLO Committee and the GEO Committee) compares these samples with a rubric (SSR 121, SSR 152). (Standard IIA.2.a)

The SLOs Outcomes Committee was formed by the Academic Senate in late 2003, to evaluate SLOs processes and procedures, and to recommend a systematic approach to implant SLO assessment. Crucially, SLOs are part of the annual PIE review process. There is a guidebook for constructing and using SLOs written in September 2008. There are professional development opportunities and communication vehicles (Spotlight, etc.). The SSR states that SLOs are constructed within a framework of the college mission, college goals, data from internal and external sources (SSR 144). The SSR states that the college has identified at least two SLOs per (active) course. The outcomes coordinator confirms that the college has now achieved this goal at the 95-99 percent level. Evidence of this is in the portal as well as in PIE documents. (Standard IIA.2.e,f)

While many departments, such as in the Career Technical Education (CTE) areas as well as basic skills, are well on their way in this arena, many other departments have additional work to

complete. A generous amount of latitude resides with the faculty regarding how to use and if to use results. The SSR states that the faculty determine, with consultation with deans, “how results will be used” (SSR 145). Schedules for SLO assessment are developed by the faculty in each department (SSR 145). (Standard IIA.2.a) There is some concern that an uneven schedule of production of SLO assessment data may leave some departments without significant data inclusion in PIE and therefore be left out of the planning and budgeting process. (Standard I.B.3, II.A.2.f) For instance, it is not clear that the SLO impact has made it to the planning and budgeting level with any force. A review of the “Instructional PIE 2009-2010” link shows goal alignment but no direct mention of learning outcomes as part of the change and decision process at decision level at the end of the PIE process. (Standard II.A.2.f)

In addition, the nature and crafting of the SLOs are worthy of consideration. The math unit, for instance, is examining the way students “feel” about their learning environment. The outcomes design for the campus includes affective outcomes as a means of assessment. Two other more recent (dance, enterprise application systems, etc) unit assessment forms are linked, but the assessment tools and outcomes are sparse. The SSR cites an example of assessment activities and decision-making by referencing one of the “Planning for Excellence” newsletters (http://www.mtsac.edu/administration/research/pdf/newsletters/2009-10_planning_for_excellence.pdf). One finds only that outcomes and measures were finally decided on (SSR 32). The general education outcomes summary shows a well laid out plan for assessment, the tools to use and the criteria for evaluation. (Standard IIA.1.c; IIA.2.e,f,h,i)

The team observed that as a student learning outcome cannot cover the entire list of measurable objectives that a course might have, some faculty are listing both the measurable objectives for the course and either listing the student learning outcomes for that course or giving a link to where the students might find the learning outcomes for that course. (SSR 35-36)

Conversations involving members of the team and the outcomes coordinator, the Senate president, and others, highlighted the challenge the college is facing in attempting to balance the use and function of these two items. The treatment of outcomes reflects this ongoing campus issue. For instance, outcomes are not placed on all syllabi. The outcomes coordinator speculated that only around 50 percent of courses have outcomes on syllabi or have even a link that directs students to where these can be found. (Standard IIA.6)

During interviews regarding SLOs, the team had concerns over the uneven publication of SLOs, the lack of their appearance on syllabi, the nature of results treatment, and other aspects of what the campus refers to as SLO production and use. Upon further examination, the team discerned that Mt. SAC has produced larger scale SLOs (Measureable Objectives (MOs)) and smaller discrete SLOs. When asked how MOs are assessed the answer was “grades.” Several times the team was informed by faculty that MOs are too global to be fully measured by any SLO.

The EDC has an excellent style sheet for guiding faculty on course review practice. This includes excellent examples of how to construct “measureable outcomes.” These statements are crafted with strong action verbs and the EDC ensures they are connected to the testing and other assignments in the syllabi. (Standard IIA.2.a) The approach to SLO creation and assessment is to look at a much smaller piece of an MO/outcome. Therefore, the current outcomes assessment

process raises questions regarding the degree to which faculty will know how students are gaining value at the MO level in any given semester. (Standard IIA.1.c, IIA.2.a,e,f)

The team did verify that there has been some activity in the use of results area. (Standard IIA.1.c) One finds these in PIE, in planning documents and in outcomes summaries (for instance, general education outcomes summary). There are samples of unit changes as a result of SLO review, and there is consideration of evidence shown in these documents. Again, it seems that if the MO statements were being assessed in whole, the results would be more substantive and the results would also (when appropriate) impact the unit review, program review, PIE process in a more impactful manner. (Standard IIA.1.c; IIA.2.e,f)

The SSR states that the college is to have 50 percent of courses (active) through one assessment cycle of one SLO by December 2010. According to the outcomes coordinator, the college is at the 40 percent level of getting through one cycle. A recent update letter (August 23, 2010 to Brian King: “Developments since the completion of the institutional self-study”) from the president at Mt. SAC assures the team of these issues:

- 34 percent of courses have at least one use of results information and/or discussions underway
- 54 percent of degrees/certificates have one SLO and means of assessment information and/or discussions are underway.

Although there are differing appraisals of accomplishment, the college, nevertheless, seems to be on track for its course level December goal of 50 percent. The SSR further states that “by December 2012, 100 percent of courses, degrees and certificates will have gone through the evaluation cycle including use of results, thus closing the loop” (SSR 32). (IIA.1.c) The SSR further says it will have 100 percent of the GEO through a first cycle by the same time frame (SSR 145). (Standard IIA.2.e,f; IIA.3) Regarding program outcomes, the SSR states that program SLOs are only 27 percent developed as of May 2009 (SSR 147). However, the team was notified following the visit that when the college moved to ePIE, it encountered a programming error that was not recognized until recently. The error resulted in no new tabulation of program outcomes for the period of a year. The college has corrected the error, and the correct figure for program outcomes is 47 percent. Overall the structures and processes are in place for an excellent system of assessment and program review. The concerns raised above about MOs and SLOs need to be considered. In addition, it is suggested that program outcomes be completed as soon as possible. (Standard IIA.6)

The development of outcomes, the review of course design, and the monitoring of courses and programs all take place inside and alongside the PIE process. The process emanates from the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) and constitutes an annual role up. Unit worksheets receive summary/analytical treatment at the dean level, again at the team/VP level, and at the institutional level by IEC. The institutional PIE is then passed on to the PAC for final decision-making. (Standard II.A.2.f)

Academic departments, as all academic and non-academic units, fill out planning for institutional effectiveness worksheet. Course outlines and programs are aligned (SSR 121) with mission by the EDC which assures testing, assignments, (Standard II.A.2.a) and other aspects of the course outline and course design are intact. Courses are also reviewed by this committee on a four year basis (SSR 121). The EDC serves as a standing committee of the Curriculum and Instruction Council (SSR 148). The EDC evaluates course outlines ensuring the existence of multiple measures (SSR 158). The entire set of responsibilities of the EDC for completeness and quality, for distance education, regulations are outlined in the SSR (148-149). In addition, the Curriculum and Instruction Council has a set of oversight issues as well that ensure academic quality and improvement. One primary responsibility is to review potential programs; another is to recommend instructional priorities for the campus. It also serves as the conduit between the work of the EDC and the Senate (SSR 149). (Standard IIA.2.c.)

In addition, and perhaps most importantly, there is a focus by the EDC to ensure that curriculum is “integrated.” The EDC is a tightly honed group that ensures good quality and an integrated syllabus and integrated curriculum. By this the college means that courses are mapped properly to work productively and not redundantly with the rest of the course requirements. An integrated curriculum is a balancing act that is “core to the purpose and function of the EDC and the Curriculum and Instruction Council” (SSR122; see also 126, 148). The EDU also reviews distance education courses with a separate form and it tracks these courses carefully (SSR 151). (Standard IIA.2.c) The Outcomes Committee focuses on the quality and integrity of course level outcomes by sampling a range of these campus-wide (Standard II.A.2.a.) and, in addition, the Outcomes Committee compares these samples with a rubric (SSR 121).

The recent combining of the SLO and GEO efforts under the heading of the Outcomes Committee should help with some of the confusion that these two systems created on campus (SSR 153). Vocational programs (SSR 154) along with student service programs and CTE all are part of a review process that rolls up to the PAC level. These programs make excellent use of advisory committees and environmental scanning.

The college ensures that faculty are of appropriate levels of quality by deploying rigorous hiring practices, review processes, and professional development opportunities that allow for continual improvement (SSR 156-57). (Standard II.A.2.c) Departments as well as other mechanisms already mentioned (EDC, Curriculum and Instruction Council, RIE, etc.) ensure that courses have the depth and breadth needed. (Standard II.A.2.c) The departments maintain course outlines and ensure that proper transfer requirements are satisfied with an eye towards the standards of the CSU and UC systems. (Standard IIA.2.c)

The team reviewed evidence the college supplied, and observed the multiple examples of teaching and delivery modes that reflect the needs and learning styles of its students. Extensive programming is deployed and monitored to reach students of varying needs and capabilities. (Standard II.A.2.d)

The SSR states that there is a relation between SLO assessment and student attainment of course and program success. The Math/Computer Science Department is offered as an example (SSR 169). (Standard II.A.2.h) However the bulk of the conversation here seems to focus on a load

analysis as opposed to a connection between SLOs and student success in course or program completion. The position on outcomes and degree attainment is stated in the SSR: “A student receiving a degree from Mt. SAC will have successfully completed the courses required for that degree.” The student then would have met the measurable objectives for each of the courses required for that degree, and hence, met the student learning outcomes for each course” (SSR 169-70). This seems to evade the issue regarding how student achievement of SLOs is equated with student course and or degree attainment. The college recognizes it did not fully meet this standard at the time the self-study was completed. (Standard IIA.2.h,i)

The GEOs are the institutional outcomes as declared by the SSR. CTE programs that require external testing or certificates that possess capstone experiences (SSR 170) and therefore GEOs and CTE outcomes are in better shape for connection to program outcomes and correlation with grading or degree attainment. The SSR addresses this issue by stating that the mapping of AA program SLOs and course SLOs is an acknowledged thing of value but “this is an ongoing process, and the college is in the beginning of this work” (SSR 170). As mentioned, there is a promising planning and assessment (PIE) process in place but outcomes (MOs) at the course and program level need some energetic evolution and linkages set up. (Standard IIA.2.h,i)

The college not only has engaged in a general education philosophy and deployment that reflects the values of the faculty, the college must also align its curricular values with the requirements at the CSU and UC levels. As stated in the SSR, the General Educational Subcommittee approves courses for general education status assessing the rationale for each course. The GEO Committee developed General Education Zones to ensure that its broad educational mission is being achieved, responsibility for developing these “zones” fell on faculty, staff, and administrators. As with other areas relating to outcomes at Mt. SAC, dialogue, bulletins, newsletters, and meetings are manifold as the project evolves and gets implemented.

This standard on general education asks for a process for selection of general education courses that is driven by the faculty, guided by a philosophy, and has an assessment practice. The college has accomplished this and is poised to have a fine roll up of institutional goals and outcomes based on this assessment of GEOs. (Standard II.A.3).

The zones, as laid out in the curriculum map and assessment plan for general education, assure an understanding of the major areas of general education laid out in standard II.A.3.a,b,c. The processes for evaluating and approving the general education curriculum are organized by the subcommittee mentioned above. The integrated review performed by the EDC and the oversight by the GE Committee provide an impressive system and array of courses and outcomes to fulfill requirements for general education, in breadth and depth. (Standard II.A.3.a,b,c)

The college appears to have a good process for the development and monitoring of degrees that possess an interdisciplinary core and an area of inquiry. As has already been documented, the implementation of General Education Zones along with the associated outcomes and supporting committees and process demonstrate a strong commitment to a broad education experience covering the standards. The work of the EDC has already been documented focusing on an integrated curriculum (SSR 126) as well as the efforts around general education. In addition, a

“duplication and overlap policy was developed and adopted by the Academic Senate in spring 2010” (SSR 126). (Standard II.A.3. a,b,c)

The SSR documents a revision of the AA degree in liberal arts and sciences with “areas of emphasis” (SSR 127). The changes in the AA degree in 2007 and 2008 were designed to insist on focused degree areas in addition to the interdisciplinary general education requirement for these degrees. The faculty separated 4 degrees into 11 degrees “with areas of emphasis” (SSR 180). (Standard IIA.6) In addition, the CTE areas have specific focuses in occupational areas. These are reviewed by faculty in conjunction with advisory groups at least once a year (SSR 181). (Standard II.A.4)

The college is aware of and plans for the fact that many of its programs have external, professional examining and licensing requirements beyond the specific program requirements at Mt. SAC. Pass rates are documented in the SSR (181-182) and these seem to be very successful. The SSR states that there is a high degree of responsiveness between the Mt. SAC programs and changes in the regulations or focuses of external agencies (SSR 181). (Standard II.A.5)

The college has an electronic version of the catalog with clear links to important academic areas such as matriculation, academic opportunities and requirements, transfer details to CSU and UC campuses, and, of course, courses and programs. The general education philosophy is stated in the catalog (section 8, p. 65) along with general education outcomes. The college has a version of SLO publication that has already been detailed above.

The college has formal policies and procedures to facilitate and administrate transfer equivalencies and alignments. The catalog has detailed information for transfer processes leading to the CSUs and the UCs (SSR 102-109). In addition individual courses are designated with “UC” or “CSU” to indicate transfer acceptance. High school courses are available and articulated that have a dual enrollment/credit standing. All of various matriculation and transfer policies and practices are laid out clearly in the catalog. Articulation matters are referred to the EDC on general education and transfer issues. The catalog details this information in the section on transfer. (Standard II.A.6, II.A.6a)

The college makes proper accommodations for students who experience a program elimination or program change situation. The process that formalizes these actions is contained in AP 4021. This procedure addresses issues related to student completion and accommodation as well as issues facing faculty and others associated with the program. (Standard II.A.6.b)

The college has a commitment to information and accuracy as is reflected in the practices surrounding publication of the catalog, schedule of classes, orientation handbooks, fact book, annual report, and other information important for the public. The web page has a dedicated department focused on reviewing the currency and accuracy of the information available there. The catalog details transfer policies and important dates and procedures. There are policies and practices in place to allow for review of academic issues surrounding articulation information in particular. Recent changes in board policies allow for a more accountable form of policy proposal and revision. Changes in policy are disseminated campus-wide. The college has taken steps to address communication needs through increasing publication vehicles (newsletters),

broadcasting online updates, and other issues from the president's office. The college engaged a consultant in 2009 to advise on communication issues and, as a result, several changes have been made regarding how information is communicated. (Standard II.A.6.c)

The college has a clear BP on academic freedom and makes its values clear in the policy language on this issue. In addition, the BP clearly makes a distinguishing point that supports the rights of faculty to discuss issues within the instructor's "area of competence" (SSR 189). This area of the policy is meant to dissuade the irresponsible injection of opinion outside of areas of research and competence of the faculty member. Teaching within areas of competence is a right and "no evaluation shall be made...based on the exercise of these freedoms" (SSR 189). The faculty contract also lays out clear requirements and expectations regarding faculty behavior as well as freedoms. The contract makes it clear where faculty responsibilities are regarding the curriculum and other duties, especially in terms of teaching in one's area of competence and within the course outline (SSR 191). Procedures are in place to bring student concerns forward regarding teaching from bias instead of professional views in the discipline. In addition the catalog has clear policy statements on honesty and cheating (SSR 189). (Standard II.A.7, II.A.7.a, b) The college paid particular attention to conduct associated with the use of electronic communication, student rights and responsibilities, and faculty teaching and performance expectations (SSR 192). (Standard II.A.7.c)

Conclusions:

The college has responded aggressively in recent years to integrate its various committees and processes under one planning and budgeting model, PIE. The PIE model is comprehensive and integrates all the relevant units and data at the college. The college is to be commended for moving in the right direction but needs to move with concerted speed and force to tighten linkages in this process so that the roll up has a formal and not an informal set of relations. In other words, the focus on the institution must be academic life and the success of the student. And while a great effort has been made to link all units around learning, the data from this experience is still in the developmental stage and the concern exists regarding how and whether the learning outcomes information is uniform in its development and whether this information makes its way into PIE with any force, symmetry, necessity, and regularity. Nevertheless the college has moved its organizational structure around the PIE process, and it has generated results from assessment and review and used results. There is widespread and purposeful dialogue around these issues and comprehensive focus on improvement is embraced by the processes, practices, and committee definition. The team finds that the college has moved into the bottom third of the proficiency level on the student learning outcomes rubric. The team concludes the college meets Standard IIA.

Recommendations:

Major Recommendation #2: The team recommends that the college review and clarify its student learning assessment terminology to alleviate potential confusion involving "measurable outcomes" and "student learning outcomes." By comprehensively assessing what the college refers to as "measurable outcomes," students and faculty could better understand assessment outcomes. The team also recommends that outcomes should be more easily accessible to students. (IIA.1.c; IIA.2.e,f, IIA.1.6)

Major Recommendation #3: The team recommends that the college award degrees and certificates based on student achievement of a program's stated learning outcomes. The team recommends that the college be cognizant of the approaching deadline for compliance with this standard. (Standard IIA.1.c; IIA.2.h,i)

Commendations:

Major Commendation #1: The team commends the college for its academic approval and quality control committees, policies and achievements. The college, through these policies and practices, demonstrates an intense focus on quality courses and delivery systems. Committees such as the EDC have highly impressive processes and values that insist on an integrated curriculum of the finest quality.

Major Commendation # 2: The team commends the college for including academic and student services planning and assessment in its comprehensive PIE process. The linkages between planning and budgeting are evidenced by dialog and successful collaboration.

Major Commendation #3: The team commends the college for its many publications and other communication vehicles that have been deployed to move the campus forward on issues regarding academic quality.

B. Student Support Services

General Observations:

The college has expanded the number of counselors and types of counseling available to students. The college has almost doubled the number of general counselors and those in specific programs (EOP&S, Bridge, and ASPIRE). In 2004, the college had approximately 15 counselors, in 2010 they have 31 in various programs, including an increase in general counseling. They also use multiple mediums to counsel and advise students: in-person, the portal, email, and group sessions.

The college uses several different media to communicate college policy, including the student complaint and grievance procedures to meet this previous recommendation. These procedures are communicated to students in the college's catalog (2010-11 edition, pages 248-252), class schedule, the portal, website, printing material, email, and listing in classroom signs. The team reviewed the various methods of communication.

Findings and Evidence:

Student services are provided in five locations on campus, including (1) A&R, Assessment, EOPS, CARE, CalWORKs, DSPS, High School Outreach, Upward Bound, Financial Aid, Veterans, Scholarships, Counseling, Career and Transfer Center, VP Office (2) Student Life, (3) Bridge Programs, ASPIRE, ECHS, (4) DSPS Tech Center, and (5) Student Health Center.

An internal assessment tool, APS (APS -??) – access, participation, progress, persistence, success, is used to evaluate services to students. This system incorporates the student services integrated SLOs and AUOs. Each program within student services completes the PIE annually.

The PIE summary report is submitted to the IEC Committee, PAC, and is reviewed by student services managers.

The PIE process in student services relies on student surveys to determine outcomes of programs and services. Student services committees including Student Preparation and Success Council, Student Equity Committee, and Assessment and Matriculation Committee review data. Based on this data, the college makes significant efforts to improve the success and the transfer rates of the diverse students they recruit.

The college provides services to re-entry students through EOPS, CARE, and CalWORKs programs. The college has a learning community for these students and provides support for both academic and life needs. The college has, with Title V funds, expanded services to at-risk students. They are assessing if “intrusive” interventions contribute to student success of students in basic skills courses. They are also using program-identified counselors in CTE programs and have a CTE focused Technology and Educational Resource Center.

Mt. SAC recognizes that students may come to them requiring noncredit educational services. The college provides adult basic education (ABE), GED and ESL services. These programs include assessments, orientations, and educational plan development. (Standard II. B. 1)

The Mt. SAC college catalog is clear and easy to use. It is produced annually. The catalog includes all the information required in Standard II. B. 2. (a, b, c, d). It is available to students, staff, and faculty in both a paper and an online version. (Standard II. B. 2. a, b, c, d)

Mt. SAC uses an assessment process including placement testing and Cooperative Institutional Research Project (CIRP) freshman survey to ensure they are meeting students’ needs. The aggregates of the placement tests are shared with high schools and specific instructional departments to be used for planning.

Placement test scores are used to determine the number of sections to offer to accommodate incoming students. Faculties use placement tests to adapt curriculum and to create learning communities. The disproportionate impact studies are reviewed by the Assessment & Matriculation Committee and the Student Preparation & Success Council for instructional interventions and specialized support programs

The college uses the ESL computer-adaptive placement test for noncredit ESL students to place the students at one of seven levels. Freshmen complete the freshman survey or CIRP. This data goes to the Student Preparation and Success Council for review and is then shared with other departments.

Mt. SAC has only one site and it provides comprehensive services to all students. To ensure access to student services, A&R, Counseling, Financial Aid, Assessment, Health Center are open until 7:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Just prior to the beginning of fall and spring semesters they add Saturday hours to ensure student access. Other student service offices stay open until 6:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Distance education services are offered as needed by students.

Services are adapted as needed based on data collected from the CIRP and from individual student services program data. This information is shared with all student services programs. The college has added online counseling, online orientation, and the ability for students to make counseling appointments online. New programs have recently been developed to support veterans, former foster youth, African American students, and students with needs for psychological services. The ESL site on the Mt. SAC web page is available in five languages other than English. (Standard II. B. 3. a)

Mt. SAC hosts a wide variety of student government and club activities to encourage civic and personal responsibility. The associated students website provides information about student government officers, meetings, campus clubs, and sponsored events. The student health center's website lists a range of workshop offerings for the fall 2010 semester on topics including mental health, colds and flus, breast cancer awareness, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual assault and a health fair. The college also offers courses to meet Area E – Lifelong Understanding and Self-Development requirements. (Standard II. B.3. b)

Mt. SAC employs general counselors and program specific counselors for special populations, and EOPS/CARE, CalWORKs, DSPS, Bridge, Financial Aid, Noncredit including ESL, ABE. A STEM counselor is paid through a grant. There are counselors fluent in six languages – English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Swahili.

In addition to counselors, there are educational advisors who provide students with information on specific course requirements. They are given “technical training” on graduation and transfer requirements and on when to refer students to counselors. Both counselors and advisors attend workshops regarding transfer and articulation. Counselors from categorical programs have access to program specific training.

Student Educational Plans (SEP) are required for students in certain programs. The college has in place Academic Probation and Progress Probation policy and procedures. Counselors of all programs and advisors hold regular meetings. Counselors may apply for professional development funds. Most of the assessment of student counseling and advising appears to be through student satisfaction surveys.

The counseling department has program SLOs and AUOs. These are evaluated annually through PIE. (Standard II. B.3.c)

Mt. SAC has a diverse student population. A wide variety of student clubs “promoting understanding and appreciation of diversity.” The self-study reports that October is Disability Awareness Month but the team found little promotion of the event other than the DSPS web page under celebrations and events where a banner reported that it was Disability Awareness Month. On the site visit the team saw signs posted on campus announcing Disability Awareness Month. The college hosted Black College Summit in August of this year. In 2007 there was an international students’ day culture fair. The college has a Student Equity Committee, Campus Equity and Diversity Committee, and a revised Student Equity Plan. The college also has a project entitled Equity for All. Mt. SAC is making a focused effort to support and enhance student, staff, and faculty understanding of diversity. (Standard II B.3.d)

The college admissions process is routinely reviewed and evaluated. Placements tests are validated by the IECCommittee. Disproportionate impact studies apparently show that African American and Latino students are disproportionately impacted by the math and English assessment tests but the results are within the minimums required by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO). (Standard II. B.3 e)

Mt. SAC is in the process of transferring student records from hard copy to electronic records. These records are stored securely and multiple password protected. The college policy on student records is published in the college catalog (page 16) and on the website (<http://www.mtsac.edu/administration/infosecurity/privacy.html>). (Standard II. B. 3. f)

Student services has developed a comprehensive model of self-assessment which includes SLOs, AUOs, and APS system. Each department within student services completes a program review (PIE). The PIE is signed off by department staff and then submitted to the vice president of student services who summarizes the reports and submits them to the IEC. The findings of PIE are reviewed annually at a meeting of all student services staff. Managers of the various student services programs also meet annually for "informal" review and planning. The PIE process contributed to the addition of two new SLOs, dynamic research to measure outcomes and student success, and opportunities for professional development.

Student services assessment of outcomes seem to rely heavily on student surveys. The team observed certain limitations in measuring outcomes. (Standard II. B.4)

Conclusions:

The PIE program review process is clear and defines a set of goals to provide quality services and support to students. Employees engaged in PIE are clear about their mission and how their services are tied to the college missions and enhances the learning of students. It could be more closely aligned to the planning and budget process. The biggest concern is that the program review too closely mirrors instructions process; this does not allow for the differences that student services present. Some variances could allow the true nature of student services could be differentiated and celebrated. An internal assessment tool, APS – access, participation, progress, persistence, success, is used to evaluate services to students. This system incorporates the student services integrates SLOs and AUOs. Each program within student services completes the PIE annually. The PIE summary report is submitted to the PIE Committee, the PAC, and is reviewed by student services managers.

The institution's website, portal, and catalog are very clear and easy to read. It is easy for students to find the required information and policies that affect them (Standard II.B.2.a.b.c). The layout of the catalog is accessible and nicely laid out. Mt SAC has gone beyond the state and federal mandates in providing information about the college's policies, procedures and compliance requirements.

The college's student equity plan is updated regularly and does not appear to sit on the shelf. The college has an active committee that ensures that the plan is a living document. The college actively recruits students who can benefit from an education, but who may not pursue this

option. The outreach office is large and very active. The counseling office is active inside and outside the institution. Individual counselors are assigned to CTE program and are actively seeking out students to complete education plans, career assessments, and much more. This model appears to be very effective for the college. The college focuses on recruiting students from local high schools with a thorough outreach program to high school administrators, counselors, students and families, and community groups and agencies. Programs including Cash for College and “Connect 4” enable high school graduates to be college-ready when the semester begins, with applications, assessments, orientations, and early enrollments.

Mt. SAC assures equitable access to all students. The college’s student equity plan is updated regularly and is used to inform the work of student services. They have a Student Equity Committee that ensures that the plan is a living document. The college actively recruits diverse students from local communities and high schools. In addition to recruiting off campus, the counseling staff provide orientations and pre-advising sessions at local high schools and other community locations.

Counselors assigned to CTE programs actively seek out students to complete education plans, provide career assessments, and job search skills. This model appears to be very effective for the college. EOPS and CARES/CalWORKs provide specific student services to first generation college attendees, single parents and cash aid recipients.

DSPS students also receive targeted services to ensure student success. Students have access to online registration and online counseling.

Mt. SAC has two impressive programs, Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) and Character Counts that encourage personal and civic responsibility. The LEAD program is a series of workshops that targets personal growth (Core workshops are Appreciation and Respecting Diversity, Conflict Resolution, Personal Leadership, Communication Skills, Ethical Decision Making, and Leading for Change: A model for leadership). Fall 2010 sessions include getting involved on campus, personal goal setting, public speaking, values clarification, power and privilege, understanding yourself, resume development, problem solving, organizational planning for student clubs, event planning, fundraising, publicity and promotion, recruiting membership, vision and goal setting. The LEAD program conducts about 40 free workshops during each semester.

The second set of workshops is called Character Counts (CC). This workshop is tied to the conduct process. In cases where a student has violated the student rights and responsibility policy, and the infraction is not serious enough to warrant a suspension (i.e., cheating, plagiarism), a student is required to complete a four hour CC workshop to be eligible for re-enrollment the next term. The pillars of this workshop are: trustworthiness, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. (Standard II. B.3.b)

The student health center’s website lists a range of workshop offerings for the fall 2010 semester on topics including mental health, colds and flus, breast cancer awareness, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual assault and a health fair. (It is unclear how these topics are selected and how the workshops are assessed.) The college also offers courses to meet the Area E – Lifelong

Understanding and Self-Development requirements. (Standard II. B.3.b.) There are parallel programs that meet this standard in EOPS, Bridge, and ASPIRE. All three programs focus on the student's development of personal and civic responsibility.

The college clearly is exceeding the standard to improve personal and civic responsibility. Mt. SAC is thinking about the whole student and taking learning outside the classroom in smaller and manageable bits for students.

The college has expanded the number and types of counseling services available since the last visit. Each of these services is designed to support student success. Programs in general counseling, Bridge, ASPIRE, and EOPS/CARE work together to serve more students through specialized program targeted at the general student and specific populations. All programs are designed to support student learning and completion. The programs' PIE data and evaluations show that student persistence is increasing. (Standard II.B.3.c)

As stated above the college has a thorough Student Equity Plan which is used to create a campus climate of acceptance for all students. The plan reflects the college's commitment serving the diverse population of students who enroll.

The Student Life Office LEAD (Leadership Education and Development) Program which allows students to earn a noncredit certificate in leadership is available at no charge to all students. One of the six core workshops in that program is "Appreciating and Respecting Diversity." The Associated Students Senate has two "Cross Cultural" senators. Activities of campus cultural clubs are coordinated through the Associated Students.

The Student Equity Committee plans to hold retreat on diversity issues for campus committees and academic senators. There will be a specific focus on classroom issues related to diversity and identifying any disparities. The college looks closely at the persistence, completions, and success rates of students.

The college consistently and routinely revalidates the placement instruments. The disproportionate impact studies are reviewed by the Assessment & Matriculation Committee and the Student Preparation & Success Council for instructional interventions and specialized support programs

The college has excellent processes to maintain student records. In reviewing the college's security procedures set forth since in the implementation of Banner and the Luminis portal, they meet the state and federal standards for security and confidentiality. Mt. SAC is in the process of transferring student records from hard copy to electronic records. These records are stored securely and multiple password protected. The college policy on student records is published in the college catalog (page 16) and on the website. (<http://www.mtsac.edu/administration/infosecurity/privacy.html>) (Standard II. B.3.f)

Mt. SAC Student Services has developed an AUO and SLO process. A majority of the departments have SLOs and appropriate assessment plans, and initial assessment results. Two offices, Admissions and Records and Financial Aid, are missing SLOs and assessment results.

This is attributed to recent three year implementation of the new Banner student information system. A&R and Financial Aid have AUOs completed and are being assessed. The AUO has more to do with day-to-day operations and implementation of Banner. Now that the Banner system is primarily implemented, the two offices are in the process of developing SLOs and assessment plans. Through the PIE and APS process, student services is using SLO/AUOs to develop and improve their services and student learning. (Standard II.B.4)

The college meets Standard II.B.

Commendations:

Major Commendation #5: The team commends the college for excellent and innovative programs that recruit, orient, and prepare students for college success. In addition, the college commitment continues with support services including library and learning support services. The data demonstrate real progress in student success and retention of students who are academically at risk.

C. Library and Learning Support Services

General Observations:

The drafters of the self-study focused on academic programs, support, and outcomes. Interviews with the library dean and two librarians also confirmed that for Standard II.C, the library has been engaged in a variety of “intellectual, aesthetic, and cultural activities” such as:

Children’s Literature Day
Women’s History Month
Atomic Bomb Exhibition
Origami Activity

The California budget crisis has had an effect on Mt. SAC, just as it has on every community college in California. Because of extremely prudent fiscal practices and early collegial dialogue and intervention, Mt. SAC is actually in very good financial shape, in general. Still, the steps taken to preserve financial security have taken a toll on programs and departments, the library and Learning Support Services, in particular. The library is challenged with a shortage of librarians; a shortage of space; and a shortage of materials.

In response to budget shortfall, reduced staffing, and no opportunity for additional space any time soon, the college reexamined and reorganized the library in a way that makes better use of personnel and information resources. It has the added benefit of serving the students better with a more intuitive, systematic, and efficient arrangement of services, materials, and resources.

Findings and Evidence:

The library and other learning support services are sufficient to support the institution’s instructional programs in whatever format and wherever they are offered. The library has set goals (PIE 2008-2009), but none of these five goals are measureable. The link is made to both college and team goals. The goals appear to reiterate the basic job of the library and do not

provide a real target for librarians and support staff to aim for. The library has set three different kinds of outcomes:

1. Strategic Action: must do items with either a yes or no for having been accomplished or not.
2. Student Learning Outcomes: tied to FTES courses 1A and 1B
3. Administrative Unit Outcomes: measurable; online; conclusive evidence by fall 2012/spring 2013.

The Learning Assistance Center has surveyed students and undertaken studies to determine student satisfaction and the efficacy of tutoring with gratifying results. The Learning Lab has completed a PIE (2008-2009), created SLOs, and completed an assessment cycle for one of its classes. Students are very positive about their experiences with the Learning Lab. Although the learning support is highly effective, services are not always sufficient for the demand. Technology resources are sufficient, but human resources are inadequate. The shortage of staffing is exacerbated by the current fiscal crisis. (Standard II.C)

Mt. SAC provides library and learning support services that are sufficient in quantity, currency, depth, and variety to facilitate educational offerings, regardless of location or means of delivery. Despite budget constraints, the library meets its goal of providing resources, environment, and teaching, with an emphasis on information competency (a core institutional outcome) that enables students to succeed in their academic pursuits. The library provides services and resources to off-campus distance learning students, such as online tutorials, and off-site access to electronic databases and e-books.

The Math Activities Resource Center, Writing Center, Supplemental Instruction, Learning Assistance Center (LAC), Tutorial Services (with specialized tutoring for speech, sign language, student athletes, and students in technical courses), and the Learning Lab appear to be doing a very good job despite staffing challenges. (Standard II.C.1)

Mt. SAC relies on the appropriate expertise of faculty in the selection and maintenance of educational equipment and materials to support student learning and enhance the achievement of the mission of the institution. The librarians are responsible for selection of library materials and maintenance of the collection. They use professional collection development practices, and were working on a formal, written collection development policy and procedures when the self-study was being written.

According to the self-study, there is “no process [that] requires library to sign off on new courses or programs to ensure that sufficient materials are available to support the programs.” Providing resources to support specific courses and/or programs is a key function of the community college library. When librarians are not involved in course and/or program approval there is a very real danger of an information gap occurring that could seriously affect students in the future. Also, the approval of new courses or programs does not include provision of funding to purchase library materials to support them. This impacts the library’s ability to support both existing and new courses.

The librarians are to be commended for taking on the challenge of completing a full inventory and removing approximately 5,000 obsolete items from the collection. Weeding is often a painful process and hard to explain to others when there is a budget crisis, but is absolutely essential to maintaining a viable, useful, and appropriate college collection.

The quantity and quality of equipment and technological resources in learning support services are sufficient to meet students' needs. Students have access to learning support at open labs, discipline specific labs, computer classrooms, and mobile labs. In addition, an online tutoring platform is being explored to provide tutoring support to distant learners. (Standard II.C.1.a)

The library and other learning support services provide ongoing instruction for their users so that students are able to develop skills in information competency. Librarians have created a number of ways to offer information competency instruction:

- Reference and research assistance on a one-on-one basis with students.
- A credit Information Resources and Research Methods course.
- Library orientation classes.
- Course specific instruction.
- Skills workshops throughout the semester.
- The Library Exercise, a 12-page workbook that includes library services and finding books, articles, and websites.
- Interactive research tutorials.

The actual number of students reached through these various methods has been hard to determine. (Standard II.C.1.b)

Both the library and other learning support services have provided adequate access to their resources and services despite fluctuating budget constraints. Whenever possible hours have been expanded to include Sundays; unfortunately funding for these additional hours has been cut in the last few years.

Mt. SAC and the library are to be commended for adding two full-time librarian positions, reference/instruction and reference/collection development, in response to one of the library's action plans from the last accreditation cycle. The LAC is not fully staffed in relation to the number of hours and days open and the number of students served. This is true despite the fact that hours of service have been reduced due to budget cuts. There are plans in place to restore service hours and staff when budget permits. (Standard II.C.1.c)

Mt. SAC provides effective maintenance and security for its library and other learning support services. The library provides effective maintenance by the systems librarian, learning resources computer technician, media service technicians and a network administrator. Security in the library is provided by a 3M Detection System and an Optex Morse security system, SirsiDynix PocketCirc.

The LAC has an administrator, computer facilities supervisors, computer technicians, hourly personnel, campus security, and custodial services that all handle different levels of maintenance

and/or security. The drafters of the self-study put technology needs, including funding, replacement, and development of a continuous inventory process in this standard. (Standard II.C.1.d)

Mt. SAC documents the formal agreements it has with CCLC, IEALC, CalPoly, OCLC, SirsiDynix, VTEA, SirsiWebCAT. These resources and services are adequate for the institution's intended purposes, are easily accessible, and used. In addition, both the Technology and Telecommunications Infrastructure Program (TTIP) and the Vocational and Technical Education Act (VTEA) provided some funding opportunities for library technology. TTIP was a statewide grant that was given to every community college in the state in equal amounts until last year. Termination of funding by the legislature, with little hope of it ever being refunded, has caused great consternation throughout the state college libraries. Loss of this funding has not impacted Mt. SAC significantly yet. (Standard II.C.1.e)

Library, the LAC, and Tutorial Services completed and submitted PIE reports. It is unclear whether the institution uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement, although it seems that the library and Learning Support Services are doing so. The library completed PIEs in 2007-2008 and 2008-2009. Although the library has struggled with data collection and evidence-based planning in the past, there is evidence that in the last two years an effort is being made to develop appropriate assessment instruments. Data collection and analysis should be regular, ongoing, and routine. The annual SLO cycle for courses will help with the particulars of student learning outcomes tied to planning and budgeting, but represents only a small part of the overall measurable outcomes of library and learning support contributions to the institution. Library and Learning Support Services administration and staff may want to explore developing robust SLOs for services that data collection can verify and measure.

In Learning Support Services, data sources beyond student and faculty surveys may provide additional and/or more appropriate information regarding adequacy, efficacy, and achievement of department, team, and/or institutional goals (core outcomes). Mt. SAC Tutorial Services provided evidence in their PIE 2008-2009 that their services contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes.

At present there is "no process [that] requires library to sign off on new courses or programs to ensure that sufficient materials are available to support the programs." Providing resources to support specific courses and/or programs is a key function of the community college of library. When librarians are not involved in course and/or program approval there is a very real danger of an information gap occurring that could influence students in the future. (Standard II.C.1.a)

The library has set goals (PIE 2008-2009), but none of the five goals is easily measured. The link is made to both college and team goals. The goals appear to reiterate the basic job of the library and do not provide a real target for librarians and support staff to aim for. (Standard II.C) Although the library and Learning Support Services are using evaluation of PIE to make improvements and/or changes, it is not clear from any of the documents how Mt. SAC uses the results of the PIE as the basis of improvement, or in institutional prioritization, planning, or budgeting.

Conclusions:

The library and Learning Support Services are operating with an unpredictable, shifting budget, inadequate staffing, and some institutional impediments to achieving their academic missions. Both the library and the Learning Support Services focused their reportage entirely on the academic nature of their missions, although it is clear in the standard (II.C) that “intellectual, aesthetic, and cultural activities” should have a place in their missions.

Despite staffing shortage and unpredictable funding, librarians are to be commended for taking on the challenge of completing a full inventory of the college’s collection and carefully evaluating each item. This evaluation resulted in removal of approximately 5,000 obsolete (or inappropriate) items from the collection. Weeding is a painful process and is often hard to explain to others, especially when there is a budget crisis and money is in short supply. However, maintenance of the collection requires removal of obsolete and inappropriate materials on a regular basis to insure a viable, useful, and appropriate college collection.

Development of library and other learning support resources and services should be aligned with development of curriculum and programs. The college may explore ways to formalize inclusion of a librarian in curriculum development and approval processes. While this would not guarantee adequate planning, acquisition, and implementation of appropriate materials, tools, resources, and staffing, it would greatly assist library and learning support services in meeting the needs of all students and faculty regardless of discipline, location, or type of delivery. (Standard II.C.1.a)

The library and Learning Support Services administration and staff would benefit by working with RIE, IEC and PIE committees to determine the kinds of data needed to provide the type of evidence that will provide useful information that will contribute to course level, department/program level/team level, and institutional level outcomes. A clear distinction should be made between outcomes, goals, objectives, and activities; and an effort must be made institution-wide to clarify their relationship to each other and ultimately to student success, achievement, and satisfaction.

The college meets Standard II.C.

STANDARD III

Resources

A. Human Resources

General Observations:

Mt. SAC has policies and procedures in place to provide adequate allocations for human resources to support both the educational system and student learning outcomes. The college also has a proven track record for its commitment to diversity and hiring qualified personnel. Based on information provided and evidence via the college website, Mt. SAC adheres to state, local and federal human resource guidelines and current practices appear to be working very well.

Findings and Evidence:

The college has policies and procedures for hiring qualified personnel and managed by human resources to ensure compliance. Included in the policies are criteria set forth to ensure that personnel hired meet the general requirements (i.e., education, training, experience, etc.) of the job description. The policies and procedures follow guidelines established by the mission and goals of the college and are integrated with institutional planning as evidenced by the EMP and program review process. (Standard III.A, III.A.1)

Procedures are established for hiring management, faculty, and classified positions as set forth in AP 7120. They have established screening committees to review all applications to ensure qualifications are met. Degrees held by faculty and administrators must be earned from accredited institutions and there is an equivalency process. Screening committees develop interview questions, and written assignments/oral presentations (if needed). The screening committee for management positions consists of managers, faculty, one classified employee, a human resources representative, and an Equal Employment Opportunity representative. Faculty screening committee consists of one area administrator, department chair, and three faculty members. Classified screening committees consist of a manager of the open position, one classified staff within the department, one classified staff selected by the appropriate CSEA unit and one optional member recommended by the office of human resources. The president's cabinet discusses need and funding and makes the decision to hire. As of February 2010, the Campus Equity and Diversity Committee was reconvened to ensure that all constituent groups are adequately represented as a commitment to the college's diversity plan. (Standard III.A, III.A.1.a)

Mt. SAC has a clearly defined evaluation process for all employees. Board policies/administrative procedures dictate evaluation of college personnel. Administrators are evaluated the first year and thereafter every two years. Full-time tenured faculty evaluation is a three year process; student evaluations the first year, classroom visitations during the second year, and a summary of the evaluation during the third year. Student learning outcomes are a component of faculty evaluations. (Standard III.A.1.b,c)

Probationary faculty evaluation is a four-year program. Evaluation is continual throughout the probationary period. Adjunct and partial contract professors are evaluated on a three-year cycle managed by the department chair. (Standard III.A.1.b)

During the first year of employment, classified personnel are evaluated twice before their probationary period ends and annually thereafter. (Standard III.A.1.b)

Mt. SAC has a Code of Professional Ethics adopted by faculty and the board in place; there is some concern as to whether it reaches all personnel on campus and there needs to better mechanism to ensure that all personnel are aware of the code. The Professional Relations Committee has recommended the Code of Professional Ethics be approved, however, they need to figure out a way to better disseminate the information to all personnel. The current practices of evaluations appear to working well for the college. (Standard III.A.1.b-d)

Presently, the college has sufficient number of qualified staff and administrators to support the mission and goals of the college. The college uses its program review process to identify the need to fill new or existing positions. (Standard III.A.2)

In reviewing board policies and administrative procedures, the college has written policies and guidelines that are available for information and review. These policies are reviewed through PAC as well as the Academic Senate and classified unions, as appropriate, and communicated to the college via its website. Employee records are kept in a safe and secure place within the human relations department and there are written policies relating to release of confidential employee information in accordance with all legal requirements. (Standard III.A.3, III.A.3a,b)

Mt. SAC has incorporated one of its goals, “The college will provide opportunities for increased diversity and equity for all across the campus” which clearly demonstrates its commitment to increase awareness of diversity campus-wide. The college provides programs, services, workshops and training for staff through its Professional and Organizational Development, Teaching and Learning Center, and Student Health Center. (Standard III.A.4, III.4.a)

For the past two years, the college used the PeopleAdmin system relating to applicant data. The college now utilizes its own reporting system which allows it to access the diversity of the pools and provides information for improvement. The college also analyzes its success rates for upcoming recruitment targeting underrepresented groups. (Standard III.A.4.b)

Integrity in the treatment of all constituents and students is encouraged by district policy, college catalog and collective bargaining agreements. (Standard III.A.4c)

The college, through its office of professional and organizational development, provides a variety of professional development activities. These programs are for both in-class and out-of-classroom needs. All are directly related to the mission of the college. Although the programs are systematically evaluated, the college has stated it needs a more systematic approach to analyze the information. (Standard III.A.5, III.A.5a,b)

PIE is the model used at the college to assess, plan, and document to ensure human resources are integrated into institutional plans. These resources may include budget, facilities, staffing, research support, marketing, etc. The process is conducted annually by IEC as a basis for improvement. (Standard III.A.6)

Conclusions:

Although the vice president of human resources has only been in her position since February 2010, she has been able to settle bargaining unit contracts that were pending for three years for the two classified unions, and proposals for successor agreements will be sunshined next month with the board. The human relations vice president has established an ongoing dialogue with the union presidents to discuss issues of mutual interest before they become problematic. Also, the vice president has brought fingerprinting requirements into compliance for the district and continues to monitor/change or restructure human resources practices that were either out of date or non-existence.

The college meets Standard III.A.

B. Physical Resources

General Observations:

The Mt. SAC campus is spread out over 421 acres, mostly one-story buildings and is comprised of 85 buildings. More than half of the structures are designated as academic buildings and the others are used for administration, operations, and farm use. Most of the college facilities were built in the 1940 or 1970 era with only two newer buildings constructed in 1990's. The community approved a \$221 million facilities bond (Measure R) in November of 2001 with 17 projects listed. Of the 17, 13 have been completed. Measure RR was approved in 2008, allowing bond sales on \$353 million for construction, equipment, and debt retirement. With the bond measurements passing, the college also updated its EMP Plan and is in the process of updating its Facilities Master Plan. A remarkable transformation of the Mt. SAC campus is well underway. (Standard III.B, III.B.1)

Findings and Evidence:

The institution provides safe and sufficient physical resources that support and assure the integrity and quality of its programs and services, regardless of location or means of delivery.

The college has a cross-functional committee made up of representation from the bargaining units, leadership from public safety, risk management, and facilities management along with student health services to ensure that the campus community is secure and safe. The public safety department is charged with the safety of all while on campus. They also provide a night security escort for students and staff for added security. When the facilities management department receives safety concerns they have a 24-hour response time. Safety issues are evaluated, prioritized, and incorporated into scheduled maintenance plans. Facilities management staff and contractors conduct regular inspections of fire-life-safety equipment and major mechanical systems to evaluate operability and make recommendations. Mt. SAC has implemented a software management program (FMIS) to improve its ability to inspect, maintain, and service

new mechanical, electrical, and fire-life-safety systems that are coming on line with the new buildings. (Standard III.B.1)

Mt. SAC has established guidelines and planning tools to ensure that facilities are designed and modernized with optimum utilization of space for learning environments. Mt. SAC is following the guidelines in the Chancellor's Office Facilities Planning Manual. The intent of any new facility is to have a service life of 75 years and at least 40 for existing building renovations. In addition, the college has identified support space, technology, and systems requirements as part of its planning process. For all work funded by local bonds, a Citizens Oversight Committee is in place, in compliance with Prop 39. The college provides thorough, quarterly updates to its Citizens Oversight Committee. (Standard IIIB.1.a)

Due to the location of the campus, many changes were needed to be in compliance with the ADA accessibility guidelines (narrow hallways, drinking fountains, doors, etc.). With the passage of the Measure R bond in 2001, building modernization projects and infrastructure improvement projects have begun to move the campus toward compliance. All aspects of the campus's physical environment were address with over 6000 barriers identified. Many items have been addressed and will be mitigated by the proposed 2020 year for the completion of construction projects. The college hired The Wright Group to evaluate building standards. Identified areas range from coded key pads, video surveillance, and hand reads for identification purposes. The college has placed high priority on ensuring a healthful learning and working environment. (Standard III.B.1.b)

To assure the feasibility of effectiveness of physical resources in supporting institutional programs and services, the institution plans and evaluates its facilities and equipment on a regular basis, taking utilization and other relevant data into account.

Based on evidence provided, Mt SAC has procedures in place for necessary improvements to maintain requirements to support equipment and instructional needs (see 5-Year Construction Plan). There is an ongoing dialogue between faculty, the Facilities Planning and Management Department, and other areas on long-range planning. Long-range capital plans are included in the Facilities Master Plan, 5-Year Construction, and 10-Year Construction Plan. Space utilization is reviewed annually. Mt. SAC appears to be committed to assuring the feasibility and effectiveness of physical resources to support institutional programs and services. (Standard IIIB.2.a-b)

Conclusions:

Mt. SAC meets the requirements of Standard IIIB – Resources.

C. Technology Resources

General Observations:

This section of the self-study report was thorough and detailed. It provided current levels of IT resources, recent changes in IT staffing, the technology resource planning process, recent and current initiatives, educational supports, and training opportunities for staff and students. Mt.

SAC provides consistent support staff, financial resources and facilities to support its technology programs for both staff and student learning programs. They have recently created a Technology Master Plan (TMP) that outlines how resources are used to support student programs and services. The TMP is currently integrated with the EMP, as well as other institutional planning processes such as PIE, and Technology Standards for Classrooms. The TMP can be viewed on the web and is addressed in the Planning for Excellence Newsletter, January 2010. The recent conversion to a new college-wide information system—Banner—will support institutional growth and future innovations.

Findings and Evidence:

Mt. SAC has more than 70 full- and part-time employees who provide support to students, faculty and staff. A new management position was created to directly support student learning (assistant director academic technology). Computers for offices are kept current with software to complete their daily duties. Faculty is equipped with either laptops or desktops and are replaced on a five year cycle. Part-time faculty has access to computers in their areas of discipline. The college also provides technology for distance learning program and services. Faculty and students can use a single sign-in process for Blackboard-supported classes through the portal. This process has eliminated the need to have multiple steps. The college also has a student web portal for anytime/anywhere access for student information such as grades and registration information. Students may also obtain an email account after registration. Two database administrators are employed (one recently who begins her employment shortly). Three database administrators are needed, but because of budget cuts, this will not happen. (Standard III.C, III.C.1)

The Banner system was rolled out on a somewhat overambitious timeline. Modules were delivered later than expected. A replacement for the Data Warehouse used by the research office is still pending. (Standard III.C, III.C.1)

The IT team also supports the library's system and electronic reference librarians to provide uninterrupted users access to library resources. College-wide communications is supported via several media formats (i.e. - satellite, video and e-conferencing, college website, Banner, etc). The new EAS Banner system was purchased to improve and integrate communications through various components of the college. The IT department help desk is also available to offer support for any technology problems and concerns. The help desk, along with the enterprise application team, are available to provide student/staff support in learning software and hardware applications. All calls from staff, faculty, and students are handled at the help desk which is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Staffing of the help desk telephone lines is many times supplemented with knowledgeable students, and this works well. Additional hours of access to the help desk are recommended, especially in terms of service to students. (Standard III.C.1, III.C.1.a-b)

Omni Update is a small pilot web content management system purchased with Title V funding. It is a 3-page template to build a web page consistent with other web pages across campus. Because it is in its “infancy” stage, many divisions/departments have yet to use Omni Update. Currently there is a vacant position that, when filled, will assist in marketing, delivering, and training using Omni Update.

Professional and Organizational Development (POD) offers a variety of training in effective application of its information technology to staff. Workshops on Luminis Portal Management, Banner Web Self-Service training for faculty, INB General Navigation, Argos Reporting System, Blackboard, and other application software are offered regularly for staff and students. Workshops are evaluated and results are used as a guide for future course offerings. The college website is another vehicle for students to learn logging into the system, registering/dropping classes, and obtaining transcripts. (Standard III.C.1.b)

State of the art infrastructure has been at the top of Mt. SAC's priority list for a number of years. This planning has allowed the college to maintain a campus-wide life cycle replacement of equipment and to stay current with technology. The recently upgraded Banner system allows for increased usage of email, portal messaging, mobile technology and advanced communications. Banner also provides web services for faculty that include instructors' class schedules, faculty schedules, real time access to enrollment data by class section, etc. The Luminis portal provides the ability to produce campus announcements, web-based student email, Lotus webmail access campus events, direct access to Blackboard, etc. The college has a new data center and new servers, upgraded phone system, and a tape backup system for secure backup of data and a disaster recovery system including off campus storage of nightly backup tapes. A fireproof vault houses the data center tape storage. Recently a power backup system was implemented and diesel generators added to ensure uninterrupted power to key areas in case of an emergency. A special database administration system (ODS-Operational Data Storage) enterprise data warehouse for research employees is being installed. It is recognized that those working with research need a different database software program.

The college supports and maintains over 40 computer labs and lab classrooms on campus. More than 1,200 workstations in labs support the college's diverse programs and services. The campus has approximately 3,500 computers on campus. The Banner system is used by the college as the centralized system for students and college staff. The college well supports the development, maintenance, and enhancement of its programs and services. (Standard III.C.1.d)

As part of the program review process, technology planning is integrated with the institutional planning process and is part of the mission statement. This process allows for evaluation of current processes and identifies needs for improvement with a link to resource allocation. Formal feedback from the faculty/staff on information technology has been positive. (Standard III.C.2)

Conclusions:

Mt. SAC provides adequate training, financial resources and staff to meet its current technology needs. They also have long range planning processes for updating equipment and training. Technology appears to play an integral part in institutional planning. The IT Plan is reviewed every year. The college's electronic program review system, ePIE, is supported by ongoing training programs. Through various administrative procedures, board policies, TMP, newsletters, and IT standards, communication, computing and other informational resources support and enhance all aspects of the college.

Mt. SAC meets Standard III.C.

D. Financial Resources

General Observations:

The financial planning for Mt SAC's annual operations is based upon a very conservative assessment of district resources. BP 6200 dictates that the college maintain 10 percent reserves in general funds. This conservative approach and sound financial planning has allowed the college to maintain an average reserve of approximately 19 percent over the past years. The college has received "unqualified" audit reports for the last three years with minimum audit findings and all recommendations have been corrected and implemented.

Financial planning at Mt. SAC aligns with the institutional goals and is integrated with the planning processes of the college. While the units are responsible for their respective budgets, PAC is the final approving body before presentation to the board. This approach has worked well for the college and has enabled the college to remain fiscally solvent. The resources are more than adequate to support the mission and goals, student learning, and other services. (Standard III.D, III.D.1)

Findings and Evidence:

Financial planning process is integrated annually with the PIE process which relies heavily on the college's mission and goals as the basis for each department's budget. The college reviews on an annual basis any revisions in its fiscal planning process. The college's long-range plans are based on the EMP with goals that meet the objectives. Short-range plans are more flexible depending upon available funds. Estimated budgets are part of the ongoing financial plans, however, based on actual expenditures, budgets are adjusted accordingly to meet the needs of the new fiscal year. (Standard III.D, D.1.a)

The grants department reports to the vice president of instruction and oversees approximately 39 federal and state grants for approximately \$6.5 million. Grant funding levels have been at \$14,116,120. They have partnered with such entities as K-12 districts, other community colleges (ie, Chabot-Las Positas, Chaffey, El Camino, San Bernardino Valley, LA Trade, etc), Bradley University, CSU Long Beach, CSU Fullerton, etc., government agencies, business/industry and community/professional organizations. The grants department monitors federal regulations and guidelines. All grants on campus are assigned a project director. (Standard III.D.1.b)

The foundation supports the college by raising money for student scholarships and for campus projects. Last year, \$175,000 was awarded in scholarships to 165 students. Both the college and foundation have developed partnerships with community, civic, education, health care, municipalities, and businesses to generate resources for the college. (Standard III.D.1.b)

The college has incorporated a budgetary vision into the 2020 visionary strategic plan over the next twenty years. The college passed a general obligation bond, Measure R in 2001 and has since passed a follow-up Measure RR Bond to allow for new structures to meet the needs of growing enrollment. However, at this time, the college has chosen not to issue bonds in light of

the current financial posture of the State. They have recently obtained a Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) for \$65 million to continue with construction for the next five years. It is anticipated that the financial status of the state will improve and they will be able to sell the bonds in Measure RR to complete the needs of their growing campus. In 2008, the college established an OPEB (Other Post-Emergency Benefits), board approved) trust for retiree medical benefits. The college updated its actuarial study in January 2009. Per board approval, annual deposits are made into a OPEB trust fund for retirees' health liabilities. As of June 2009, the trust had \$61.2 million for funding of the OPEB liability. The college updated its actuarial study in January 2009 for the next three years. Future obligations for OPEB liability are part of the College's budget planning process. (Standard III.D.1.c)

The Budget Committee develops, makes recommendations, and evaluates policies and processes and reports to PAC. Membership for each of these committees allows opportunities for participation from all constituent groups on campus. (Standard III.D.1.d)

The financial management (fiscal, budgetary, financial) prior to August 27, 2008, was contracted through the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools (LACOE). Mt. SAC has now assumed the majority control of internal audits, issuance of payroll and commercial warrants in-house. While LACOE still has a high level of oversight, it is no longer involved in the day-to-day activities. Mt. SAC achieved this huge undertaking by installing the financial management software of Banner finance and human resources/payroll systems which allows the College to provide accurate, timely, and dependable financial information campus-wide. Also, using the Banner system will allow departments to review their financial information at a more detailed level. This process was approved by external auditors prior to applying for approval by the LACOE. (Standard III.D.2)

Mt. SAC's financial records are reviewed annually by an independent certified public accounting firm. In reviewing audit reports for the past three years, the audits are in compliance with government auditing standards. The audits indicate that the management of Mt SAC is responsible in maintaining effective internal controls and in compliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grants applicable to federal programs. Although there were at least two findings that were identified for a couple of years, 1) concurrent enrollment and 2) separation of duties in the payroll department, (which have all been corrected/implemented during the last audit fiscal year) the audit did not indicate significant weaknesses or deficiencies. Thus, Mt. SAC's external audits have received an unqualified audit opinion. (Standard III.D.2.a)

In its continuing effort to distribute information regarding financial matters to all groups, the college has recently implemented a new website (Mt. SAC Budget Information) to provide budget information as well as state budget information. Newsletters have been created to facilitate a broader, more comprehensive understanding of college-wide financial planning. (Standard III.D.2.b)

Through prudent fiscal management, Mt. SAC maintains reserves well over the recommended level by the State Chancellor's Office of 5 percent. BP 6200 stipulates that reserves be maintained at the 10 percent level and they have far exceeded that level. In reviewing the audit reports for the past three years, unrestricted reserves average approximately 19.08 percent which

is more than adequate to maintain fiscal stability, and meet the goals and mission of the college, as well as any emergencies that might arise within the district. (The college's ending balances for the last three years are as follows: 07/08 - \$26,722,017; 09/10 - \$30,270,416; and 09/10 - \$24,038,725.) Management should be commended for their sound fiscal management. The college also recognizes that they must continue to monitor cash flows with the uncertainties of the State cash flows. The college will rely on Measure RR and BAN for funding additional construction projects. (Standard III.D.2.c)

Audit reports and only two material findings confirm that the district continues to have effective oversight of finances, including financial aid, grants, auxiliary organizations, and the foundation. Audit reports also indicate that the college maintains a very high degree of integrity to uphold its mission statement and goals. The college is also able to evaluate its investments and assets through its sound fiscal management. (Standard III.D.2.d-e)

The director of purchasing oversees all issuance of contracts. Board policy regulates the process by which contracts are implemented and defines policies to maintain the integrity of the college. Administrative procedures define bidding and expenditure limits of purchasing activity. BP also dictates who has signature power to sign contracts on behalf of the college (BP 6150). Board approval is required on all contracts and amendments to contracts. The college maintains controls of all contracts with indemnification and termination clauses. Contracts are in alignment with the college's mission and goals. Per BP 6330, administrative services, under the direction of the director of purchasing, purchases all supplies, equipment and services. Also in place is a procedure which prohibits purchases or materials from employees without specific conditions. There are purchasing policies and procedures included within administrative procedure 6330. (Standard III.D.2.f)

The college has several processes in place to review, improve, and identify areas of concern. Fiscal services has an annual review process in place to ensure that all departments are within their budgets and that funds are being spent following policies and procedures, as well as the mission and goals of the campus. With the implementation of the Banner finance module, the college is confident that all departments will be able to access financial data on-line in a timely manner. The system will also allow employees to view budgetary information both campus-wide and from the state level. Also, the Banner student accounts receivable module went live on May 13, 2009, which allows students to view their accounts on line. (Standard III.D.2.g, D.3)

Conclusions:

All of the evidence presented, together with the self-study reports, indicates that the college ties its mission and goals as the foundation for finance, clearly defining and following its guidelines and processes for financial planning and budget development. Financial planning is integrated with and supports all institutional planning

The college has more than adequate financial resources to support student learning, mission, goals, and distribution of financial resources to support the development, maintenance, and services of the campus. It has been through prudent fiscal management practices that the college has been able to maintain an average of 19 percent plus in reserves over the last three years.

With the additional passage of Measure RR and the recent Bond Anticipated Note for modernization of existing buildings and new construction, the college should not have any financial difficulties. Also, the implementation of the Banner financial/payroll software system, assures the district will be able to provide budget and financial information on a more consistence basis. Information is also available on the new website.

During the 2009-10 fiscal year, Mt. SAC was able to achieve significant budget reductions with an end result of \$12 million in budget savings.

Staff should be commended for the collaborative efforts in sound fiscal management.

The team concludes the college has achieved proficiency under the rubric for planning.

The college meets the requirements of Standard III D.

Commendations:

Major Commendation #4: The team commends the college for thoughtful fiscal planning in incredibly difficult times, resulting in the college being in a solid financial position.

STANDARD IV

Leadership and Governance

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

General Observations:

The college has established a super ordinate shared governance body, the President's Advisory Council. PAC has representatives from all college constituencies. The members of the council are generally aware of their roles. However, in the 2009 OSS employee survey, governance results indicate there is a need to improve communication on the shared governance process. Discussion of the role of classified and student representation took place during the visit at the Tuesday, October 26 PAC meeting during the discussion of the 2010-11 strategic plan. This discussion additionally included a continuing conversation about the 2010-11 strategic plan that includes college goals and strategic objectives. Additionally there are other governance committees that include college-wide representation, as appropriate. These include the IEC, Budget Committee, Campus Equity and Diversity Committee, Information Technology Advisory Committee, and the Professional Development Council. BP 3255 defines participatory governance as shared responsibility for developing and recommending policy through collaboration of administration, faculty, staff, and students for the purpose of establishing high quality programs and services at the college.

Since the self-study was published the college submitted an addendum regarding developments since the completion of the institutional self-study. The college administration began working collaboratively with the two chapters of CSEA to clarify roles and establish planning agendas to further strengthen involvement in planning and governance for classified employees and to strengthen communication with classified employees. There still appears to be a concern by classified leadership regarding representation of classified on shared governance committees, though there is ongoing dialogue between the administration and CSEA leadership on the issue. (Standard IV.A 1.IV.1)

Findings and Evidence:

BP 3255 which speaks to participatory governance at the college and the adoption of the college's mission, vision, and core values in April 2008, set the policy environment establishing a college climate and environment that fosters the encouragement for campus groups to work closely to meet the college's goals and strategic objectives. PAC and related governance committees provide the opportunity for input from all college constituencies. The 2009 OSS Employee Survey indicated that only 35 percent of the employees knew their role in participatory governance. Additionally 49 percent of employees were content with the amount of information received about the mission and goals from their participatory governance area, and 45 percent of employees were content with the amount of information they received about the communications from their participatory governance representative(s). (Standard I.V.A.1,IV.A.2)

The Academic Senate is relied primarily upon for recommendations of academic and professional matters. Senate Committees include the Academic Mutual Agreement Council, Assessment and Matriculation Committee, Basic Skills Coordinating Committee, Curriculum and Instruction Council, Distance Learning Committee, Educational Design Committee, Equivalency Committee, Outcomes Committee, Student Equity Committee, and Senate Preparation and Success Council.

The classified service is represented on committees by appointees of the two CSEA units in collaboration with the college Classified Senate. Subsequent work was done on classified representation and collaboration since the institutional self-study was completed. The August 23, 2010 communication from the president and vice president of instruction identifies strategies for strengthening involvement in planning and governance for classified employees. It states, “To strengthen the participation of and to create a more positive environment for classified employees in planning and governance, the college will collaborate with CSEA leaders to develop and implement a more detailed planning agenda that will enable the college to meet the standard fully.” The college further is working with classified leadership to improve and strengthen communication with classified employees. Planning agendas to further these goals are included in the August 23, 2010, communication referenced above. This planning and collaboration continues on campus. Students are represented by individuals appointed by the associated students government. Students have a voice at PAC to represent the student perspective. Planning for Excellence newsletters provide evidence of the use of the existing structure to plan for integration of SLOs and administrative unit objectives. (Standard IV.A, IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.3, IV.A.2.a)

The college relies on the Academic Senate primarily for recommendations about student learning programs and services. The Academic Senate’s Academic Mutual Agreement Council is relied upon for agreement with the board and administration on policies and procedures that are academic and professional in nature. The EDC, co-chaired by a Senate representative and the vice president of instruction, is charged with curriculum review and presents its recommendations to the Academic Senate. (Standard IV.A.2.b)

The college strives to provide opportunities for developing a culture of open communication for the good of the institution. In the college’s mission, vision, and core values one of the core values is community building which states –“We work in responsible partnerships through open communication, caring, and a cooperative spirit.” This value is reflected in the openness and inclusiveness of the representation of campus constituencies in shared governance operational and ad hoc committees. Constituent groups are encouraged to participate in board presentations and provide input through an open communication process by the Board of Trustees. The president provides a monthly newsletter and provides president’s open office hours twice a month to allow employees and students to discuss issues or concerns in a casual atmosphere. Academic Senate and Faculty Association leadership also provide substantive dialogue on issues. College goal #11 states; “The college will improve effectiveness and consistency of dialogue between and among departments, committees, teams, and employee groups across the campus.” (Standard IV.4.3, IV.A)

The college strives to maintain honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies. The inclusion of college constituency groups in the development of the self-study and the timely response to Accrediting Commission timelines, standards, and policies and guidelines have been adhered to (self-study feedback). Additionally, the college makes college documents, like the student equity plan and publishes an annual report. District voters passed Measure RR in fall of 2008, which further demonstrates support by the local community. Mt. SAC has developed a number of federal grant proposals that have been funded, which further indicates its relationship with federal agencies. (Standard IV.A.4)

The role of leadership and the institution's governance and decision-making structures are evaluated on an ongoing formative manner. Governance committees are asked each year to respond to questions on the purpose and function of the committee and the relevance of the committee membership. These questionnaires are forwarded to PAC. PAC also reviews the progress on goals and objectives from these committees on an annual basis to determine their effectiveness. The committees will begin to post its goals and results of the annual evaluation on the college-wide website. (Standard I.V.A.5)

Conclusions:

The college has an environment that fosters participation by all college constituencies in planning, decision making, and dialogue regarding institutional excellence. There is evidence that students, staff, faculty, and administrators are working hard to improve the college. The college continues to work with classified leadership in establishing a more effective voice for the classified service. (Standard IV.A.1)

PAC is the super ordinate committee that receives input from the rest of the campus governance and operational committees. PAC also oversees the ongoing review and evaluation of the governance and decision making processes at the college. During the team visit, PAC began its review of the 2010-11 Mt. SAC strategic plan and the Mt. SAC Planning for Institutional Effectiveness (PIE) Annual Summary 2009-10.

The college meets the Standard IV.A.

Recommendations:

Major Recommendation #1: In order to strengthen institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that the college continue its dialogue with classified leadership to improve classified employee participation in the participatory governance process. It is recommended that the college and classified leadership work collaboratively to implement the components of the planning agendas itemized on pages 3 and 4 of the August 23, 2010 addendum to the self-study and to continue to encourage classified participation by members of the classified service. (Standard IV.A.1, IV.3)

B. Board and Administrative Organization

General Observations:

The current members of Board of Trustees were in office during the 2004 accreditation process and seem to be confident and comfortable with the process and with their performance. In response to a recommendation made pertaining to their need for more self-reflective dialogue and continuing board training (professional development), the board has made strides in conducting self-evaluations and conducting retreats.

The current college president/district CEO will be retiring in spring 2011. The board's role in selecting the next president provides a major opportunity for the board to continue a tradition of strong leadership exemplified by the outgoing president.

The current state budget crisis doesn't show any signs of receding and as the impact deepens in the college, the processes of participatory governance may become more essential to the smooth operation of the institution, especially where there is a history of dissatisfaction and unease among some segments of the employees. Since the board has the ultimate responsibility for the operation of the college, learning more about participatory governance and fostering a more collegial environment for all Mt. SAC employees should be a priority.

Very careful management of financial resources has put Mt. SAC in an enviable place fiscally. The board has done an excellent job in many ways, and Mt. SAC's standing in the community and among the state's community colleges reflect the quality of their leadership.

Findings and Evidence:

Mt SAC recognizes the designated responsibilities of the Board of Trustees for setting policies and of the chief administrator for the effective operation of the institution. The current Board of Trustees has served together for over nine years and although they do not always agree, they do share a common commitment to the stability and excellence of the district. (Standard IV.B)

The institution has a Board of Trustees that establishes policies to assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services, and the financial stability of the institution. (Standard IV.B.1)

Board policies are easily accessible through the college's website. While there is a policy for hiring the college president (BP 2431), it should probably be reviewed and expanded. In addition, there is no administration procedure for hiring of president.

The Board of Trustees has a strong commitment to the institution and is actively involved in the community. The board does arrive at decisions through a collegial dialogue, but once a decision is made, it acts as a whole. (Standard IV.B.1.a)

The board establishes mission-consistent policies to ensure quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services, and the resources necessary to support them. (Standard IV.B.1.b)

The board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity. (Standard IV.B.1.c) The board publishes policies specifying the board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures. (Standard IV.B.1.d)

The board acts in a manner consistent with its policies. The board regularly evaluates its policies and practices and revises them as necessary, although the span of “regularly” may often be 10 years. (Standard IV.B.1.e) (Note: The policies and procedures have been completely re-done over the last seven years.)

The board has a program for board development and new member orientation. The orientation hasn't been used because members have been in office for over nine years. The board and College President provide orientation and training every year to the student trustee. (Standard IV.B.1.f)

The board's self-evaluation processes for assessing board performance are clearly defined, implemented, and published in its policies (BP 2745). The board goes through this process every year, but the board might benefit from a discussion regarding how to disseminate the outcomes of the evaluation to the college and/or the community. (Standard IV.B.1.g)

The board has a clearly defined Code of Ethics (BP 2715; BP 3050), but there is currently no clearly defined procedure that outlines a process to address any violations to the Code of Ethics. Drafting such an administrative procedure would probably be prudent. (Standard IV.B.1.h)

The board is informed about and involved in the accreditation process. (Standard IV.B.1.i)

The board has responsibility for selecting and evaluating the district chief administrator. The existing policy (BP 2430) should be reviewed and updated. There are no written procedures outlining the hiring process for the chief executive, because the process currently “works so well.” It would be prudent to draft an administrative procedure to capture the current excellent process. (Standard V.B.1.j)

Conclusions:

The board has fulfilled its role and responsibilities for assuring the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services, and the financial stability of the institution. That the sitting members have worked together for over nine years is evidence of their ability to arrive at consensus, represent the community they serve, and meet the needs of the academic institution for which they are the governing body.

Teams that have worked together successfully for a long time can slip into a comfortable routine. It appears that the Mt. SAC governing board has developed positive working relationships over the years. The college has developed many exciting programs, and both students and community members express a high level of satisfaction with the school's performance and role in the community.

Although it appears that the governing board has completed its self-evaluation process annually, the results of the evaluation process as well as the Board's annual goals could be readily available to the public. (Standard IV.B.1.g)

The board has a Code of Ethics (BP 2715, BP 3050) but no written procedures that outline how violations would come to the attention of the board or how those violations would be addressed by the board. Since they've had no recent challenges and the members are long-serving members, they have not felt any urgency in developing procedures. Having robust procedures in place, for both the Board of Trustees (BP 2715) and district employees (BP 3050), would strengthen the policies and mitigate any future confusion should the need for such procedures present itself. (Standard IV.B.1.h)

Mt. SAC demonstrates its collegial, collaborative, and commitment to the community with an annual "Puttin' on the Hits" lip-sync spectacular. All segments of the college community work together for many weeks to put on an entertaining show that raises money for student scholarships. Board of Trustees members, faculty, staff, managers, and students are proud of their part in the production. Besides bringing the Mt. SAC "family" together, three shows are sold-out each season to local area residents, so the event also functions as a massive public relations event in addition to being a very effective fundraising event.

The college meets Standard IV.B.