EVALUATION REPORT

Palomar Community College District
San Marcos, 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 Palomar College from March 9-12, 2009

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March 2009

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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

INSTITUTION: Palomar Community College District

DATES OF VISIT: March 9-12, 2009

TEAM CHAIR: Dr. Steven M. Kinsella, Superintendent/President
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A nine-member accreditation team visited Palomar College from March 9-12, 2009, 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 February 5, 2009, conducted by the ACCJC and studied Commission materials prepared for visiting teams. The team was divided into four committees, one for each standard. Team members read the college's self study report, including the recommendations from the 2003 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. On the day before the formal beginning of the visit, the team members spent the afternoon discussing their views of the written materials provided by the college, reviewing evidence provided by the college and reviewed the Midterm Report completed by the College on March 15, 2006 and other materials submitted to the commission since its last comprehensive visit.

During the visit, the team met with over 120 faculty, staff, administrators, members of the Board of Trustees, and students. The team chair met with members of the Board of Trustees, the Superintendent/President of the College and various administrators. In addition, team members visited the satellite campuses at Escondido and Camp Pendleton: the two locations considered to be offering 50% or more of a program or degree. The team also attended two open meetings to allow for comment from any member of the campus.

The evaluation team members expressed concern about the conclusions reached and reported in the College's Self Study report. The team spent a considerable amount of time gathering additional data to determine the College's position in relation to the Standards. The team members frequently reached different conclusions about the College's compliance with the Standards than what was expressed in the Self Study Report. The College was open and candid with the team members and provided all data requested by the team. 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. Comments by faculty, staff and students reveal a shared sense of pride about the quality of the instruction and services provided by the College to the students and community.

Major Findings and Recommendations of the 2009 Visiting Team

As a result of the March 2009 visit, the team made eleven recommendations:

Team Recommendations

Recommendation #1 (2009)
Mission Statement
In order to comply with the Standards, the College needs to modify its mission statement to identify its intended student population and its commitment to achieving student learning. Additionally, the mission statement should be used by the College as a central driving force in decisions made by the College (Standard 1A.1, I.A.4, IV.B.1.b).

Recommendation #2 (2009)
Integrated Planning, Evaluation, and Resource Allocation Decision Making
In order for the College to meet standards ensure a broad based, ongoing, systematic, and cyclical process that includes evaluation, planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation, the team recommends the following plan development, implementation, evaluation and improvement steps be taken:

1. Develop a comprehensive and an integrated long range Strategic Plan including measurable goals that can be used to influence resource allocation decisions on an annual basis. The Strategic Plan should incorporate the priorities established in all of the College's major plans to include its:
   a. Technology Plan
   b. Facilities Master Plan
   c. Educational Master Plan including the addition of the planned expansion of facilities to the northern and southern areas of the College's service area
   d. Human Resources Staffing Plan (I.A.4, I.B.2, I.B.3, 4, III.A.2, III.B.2.b, III.C.2, III.C.1.d).

2. Modify the budget development process in a manner that will place the college's strategic plan priorities at the center of its resource allocation decisions (III.D.1, 1.c).

3. Develop mechanisms to regularly evaluate all of the College's planning and resource allocation processes as the basis for improvement (I.B.6, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, III.D.3, IV.A.5).

4. Develop an updated Technology Plan to address such major concerns as disaster recovery, data security and on-going equipment replacement (III.C, III.C.1.a,c,d, III.C.2, III.D, Previous Recommendation #5)

5. Develop a comprehensive Human Resources Staffing Plan to address the College's stated interest in increasing the number of full-time faculty and to increase diversity among the workforce at the College (III.A).

Recommendation # 3 (2009)

Student Learning Outcomes

In order to meet the standards by 2012, the team recommends that the College identify assessment methods and establish dates for completing student learning outcomes assessments at the institutional level and for all of its courses, programs and services. This process should also include the development of performance measures to assess and improve institutional effectiveness of all programs and services. The College should disseminate the outcomes widely and use these results in the strategic planning and resource allocation process. (II.A.1.a,c; II.A.2.a,h; II.B.4; II.C.2 III.A.1.c).

Recommendation # 4 (2009)

Program Review and Planning Processes

In order to meet standards and for the College to derive the benefits expected of comprehensive robust, broad-based and integrated program review and planning which are now to be further enhanced through use of Student Learning Outcomes, it is recommended that the institution substantially expand the number of departments participating in program review and development of Annual Implementation Plans. Compliance with the spirit, intent and requirement that planning efforts be broad-based requires that the College:

1. Significantly increase the number of departments and programs undergoing program review on an annual basis.

2. Improve the quality of analysis included in each department's program review. Use of data in support of conclusions is expected.

3. Establish goals that are measurable with stated desired outcomes listed and linked to the resource allocation process and student learning outcomes (I.B.1,I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4,I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7).

Recommendation # 5 (2009)

Distance Education- Ensure Comparable Quality of Instruction

To meet standards, the team recommends the College focus efforts on identifying processes to ensure the quality of instructional programs, especially the increasingly popular distance education courses, are consistent regardless of the location or delivery mode (II.A.1).

Recommendation # 6 (2009)

Board of Trustees Policies

To comply with the Standards, the team recommends the Board of Trustees review, enforce and when necessary prepare policies to set direction on the following areas:

1. Prepare a policy to addresses significant changes in programs or elimination of programs (II.A.6)

2. Publish the updated policy on Academic Freedom BP 4030 approved in May 2006 (II.A.7)

3. Prepare a Board Policy or enforce existing requirements to protect due process rights of employees, and to protect administrators from retaliation and harassing comments when being evaluated (III.A.3, 3.a, 3.b, III.A.4, 4.a, 4.c, Commission *Policy on Diversity*).

4. Comply with existing policies related to:
   a. Professional development and new member orientation (IV.B.1.f)

5. Reassess the appropriateness of BP 7100 and consider enhancing the policy entitled "Commitment to Diversity" as the current policy has been insufficient in ensuring the College complies with the Commission's *Policy on Diversity*

6. Establish a policy that denies access to the Board of Trustees by members of the Faculty Senate unless due process rights of any employee subject to a discussion about their performance are provided (IV.B.1.e).

Recommendation #7 (2009)
Improve Human Resources Practices:
In order for the College to comply with the Standards and improve practices in the area of Human Resources, the team recommends:

1. Instructional and non-instructional faculty and all others directly responsible for student progress in achieving stated SLOs need to have an evaluation component included in performance evaluations regarding each faculty member's effectiveness in producing SLOs (III.A.1.c).

2. Ensure that all employee groups prepare, be trained in and adhere to a Code of Ethics (III.A.1.d).

3. Develop a comprehensive staffing plan in concert with the efforts of the 75/25 Task Force to provide appropriate consideration for support services necessary and link the plan to the budget development activities (III.A.2).

4. Eliminate multiple personnel files that exist for administrators. Only one personnel file should exist for any employee and that file should be housed in the Human Resources Department thereby providing security of personnel documents and affording access to the file by employees. (III.A.3.b)

5. Establish and monitor a follow up system to ensure all employees are evaluated annually or less frequently when agreed to by employment agreements as was noted by the 2003 team in Recommendation #4 (III.A.3.a)

Recommendation #8 (2009)

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Conduct additional training to prevent Harassment, Discrimination and Disparaging comments against employees.
To meet standards the team recommends that the College engage in the following activities:

1. Develop a policy to discourage the use of discriminatory, harassing and unprofessional comments when participating in any evaluation process (III.A.4).

2. Obtain professional training on prevention of harassment and sensitivity to issues of equity and diversity (III.A.4).

3. Adopt a Resolution to reaffirm its commitment to programs, practices, and services that support the diverse employees and students of the College (III.4.a)

Recommendation #9 (2009)
Protect Electronic Data
In order improve and protect the wide range of data that is vulnerable to loss, the team recommends the following improvements be made as soon as possible:

1. Develop a comprehensive disaster recovery and business continuity plan and allocate sufficient resources to provide redundancy of key technology system to ensure uninterrupted availability of critical services and to protect the College from catastrophic loss of data (III.C.1.a, III.C.2).

2. Develop a comprehensive technology security program including policies, planning and internal controls to ensure the security of critical data and uninterrupted availability of critical services. (III.C.1.a, III.C.2)

Recommendation #10 (2009)
Prepare a Comprehensive Technology Master Plan that is integrated with other College plans
In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College update its technology master plan and ensure that it is integrated with College-wide planning efforts and based on systematic assessment of the effective use of technology resources to assure that technology systems and support are designed to meet the needs of learning, teaching, College-wide communications, research and operational systems (III.C.1.a,c,d, III.C.2).

Recommendation #11 (2009)
Long-Term Health Fund Liability
In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the College identify and plan for the funding of the future retiree health benefits (III.D.1.b, III.D.1.c)

Commendations

The team recognized that although Palomar College has a number of important improvements that are necessary, there are also several noteworthy accomplishments that came to the attention of the evaluation team. The areas deserving special recognition are:

Commendation #1
Office of Institutional Research Provides Wealth of Data for Decision Making

The College's institutional research department is commended for producing ample data that will support decision making. The College has assembled a wide range of data that is compiled and distributed by the department of Institutional Research. This wealth of data provides decision makers with several angles from which to review problems and to develop possible alternative solutions that can influence and improve student learning.

Commendation #2:
College has Highly Skilled Student Service Personnel Who Provide Comprehensive Student Services

The College is commended for assembling an extensive array of comprehensive student support services provided by a highly trained professional staff who work closely and cooperatively with other college areas to ensure student success.

Commendation #3:
Early Acceptance Program is a Model Program:

Student Services at the college should be commended for the many offerings of personal and social venues, workshops, and activities provided to students, adding value to the educational experience of each student. Most noteworthy is the development of the **Early Acceptance Program** for entering freshman designed to better orient new students to Palomar College's programs and services in order to improve the retention and success rates of first-time freshman.

ACCREDITATION EVALUATION REPORT
FOR
PALOMAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Introduction

Palomar Community College District is a single-college district with one educational center and four other sites where instruction is offered. The majority of these sites are merely classroom space in a local high school or other facility. The Camp Pendleton location is the only large site that exists in addition to the main campus and the Escondido Educational Center. The main campus is situated on 200 acres located in San Marcos California, about 30 miles from the City of San Diego.

As is the case with many community colleges, Palomar College has been an important provider of higher education services to its service area. On January 15, 1946, registered voters in the Vista Unified School District, the Fallbrook Union School District, and the Escondido Union High School District established a junior college in the North San Diego County. Five individuals were appointed by the San Diego County Superintendent of Schools to be the members of the first Board of Trustees for Palomar. The board hired a president, a director, a dean of students and nine faculty members. By September 1946 with 100 students the College began its operations.

Palomar College is a public, two-year community college. The College campus in San Marcos, the Escondido Educational Center and the other instructional sites provide educational services to the 2,555 square miles of Palomar College's service area. The four small locations used for instruction are in Fallbrook, Mt. Carmel, Pauma Valley, and Ramona. The Escondido Center is located on eight acres owned by the district, and the proposed North Education Center in Fallbrook will be located on a newly acquired 82 acre property. The evaluation team determined that it was necessary to visit the Escondido and Camp Pendleton locations to assess educational support services and instructional facilities used to provide coursework in those areas.

Palomar College is organized into five instructional divisions: (1) Arts, Media, Business, and Computing Services; (2) Career, Technical, and Extended Education; (3) Languages and Literature; (4) Mathematics and the Natural and Health Sciences; and (5) Social and Behavioral Sciences. The College offers more than 300 credit degree and certificate programs within those five divisions. The College also provides noncredit courses.

In the November 2006 General Election, voters approved a $694 million educational facilities improvement bond. The College is leveraging the bond funds with state capital construction program funds and plans to complete nearly $1 billion in facility improvements.

Evaluation of Institutional Responses to Previous Recommendations

Recommendation #1 (2003)
The college should carefully structure its employment procedures to ensure recruitment and hiring efforts that result in further diversification of the staff with an emphasis on full-time faculty in particular. (2.6,7.A.3, 7.D.1)

The College focused efforts on changing its recruiting strategies to increase the diversity of job applicant pools. The major changes in recruitment efforts were reported by the College as being:

- Advertisement for full-time faculty positions begins earlier in the academic year, usually no later than October. This earlier recruitment effort provides for a potentially larger pool of qualified, diverse applicants in that the positions are posted earlier and interviews are conducted earlier than other colleges and universities, particularly community colleges. In addition, the earlier recruitment provides the opportunity for faculty to attend fall conferences in their disciplines and distribute the position announcements.

- Advertisement in print, mailings, electronic communication, and career fairs has been given a greater focus in targeting diverse populations of professionals in the faculty position's discipline. Job announcements are distributed to colleges and universities, including those with academic programs where potential diverse candidates may be enrolled.

- Professional development workshops have been conducted on an annual basis for the diverse pool of part-time faculty at Palomar, a logical source of potential applicants. Workshops focus on discussing good practices in completing the application and supporting materials and preparing for the interview. These workshops began in fall 2004.

- The training manual of hiring procedures for new faculty has been developed and improved. The training manual emphasizes the commitment and importance of diversity to the college and its students. It encourages membership on each selection committee to reflect the diversity on campus. Selection committee members are also trained on cultural differences and encouraged to consider them

The number of minority faculty hired as a percentage of full-time faculty employees ranged between 25% to as high as 38% with the most common situation being 25%. A review of the demographics of job classification information included in the *Fact Book* shows that full time faculty is 79.9% Caucasian as of FY 2007-2008. In FY 2003-2004, the percentage of Caucasian faculty was 80.9%. For years between FY 2007-2008 and FY 2003-2004 the percentage of white faculty hovered around 80% and was virtually unchanged over the six year period since this recommendation was written.

The team recognizes that the College has taken positive steps to support equal opportunity employment for all job applicants. As a whole, the College has made little progress in achieving this recommendation. The College has not achieved "**further diversification of the staff**" as recommended in 2003. This recommendation has not been implemented.

With changes in the Standards having occurred since the College's last accreditation team evaluation report was written, the team offers a revision to the Recommendation to maintain consistency with current standards. The College noted that it was working on a model Equal Employment Opportunity program. The team encourages the College to develop that program and begin to implement the practices of an ideal Equal Employment Opportunity program to increase diversity among the workforce. See 2009 Recommendations 7 and 8.

Recommendation #2 (2003)
Given the relative newness of the strategic planning process and the plans to reestablish the institutional review process, within two years the college should evaluate the effectiveness of the institutional review process, modifying, as appropriate, and linking it to strategic planning and the resource allocation process. This will greatly assist the college in assuring that its long-term educational and facilities planning efforts are updated. (3.B.3, 3.C.3)

Program reviews have been completed for 2007-2008 and 2008-2009. The College's planning structures have been in place for several years. *Strategic Plan 2005* goals were rolled over and replicated in *Strategic Plan 2009*. Objectives used to achieve the goals changed between the 2005 plan and the 2009 plan. The College's Program Review and Planning process required that departments identify one goal within the strategic plan that it will work on to assist the College in achieving a goal of the plan. The department's objective/activity is included in the College's Annual Implementation Plan thereby creating a link between program review and strategic planning. The program review process is in place. The quality of the work completed should improve over time as personnel become more familiar with data analysis techniques and see how the data analysis can lead to valuable and productive changes in teaching with a resultant positive impact on student learning. For purposes of this recommendation the team considers this part of the recommendation to be implemented.

The section of the recommendation that requires the College to link strategic planning to resource allocation decisions has not been implemented. The College's report *Institutional Self-Study for Reaffirmation of Accreditation* stated that it intends to address linking planning and resource allocation decisions. Two planning agendas were created within the self study related to this topic. The team concluded that the College has not implemented the part of this recommendation that requires linkage of the strategic plan to its resource allocation process. The College correctly identified the remaining work that needs to be completed and the two planning agendas should lead to the College's full implementation of this recommendation. See 2009 Recommendation #2.

Recommendation #3 (2003)
The college has begun to develop processes for measuring student learning outcomes
and should integrate into its formal methods of review of academic programs and
certificates the creation and evaluation of student learning outcomes on a course,
program, and degree/certificate level. (4.B.3)

Palomar College undertook the development of student learning outcomes in 2003 with the creation of a Learning Outcomes Council and the Learning Outcomes Steering Committee (on p. 107, it states that SLOs and General Education discussions began in 2001). It is the team's determination that the College has not progressed above the Awareness Level of Implementation, of the *Commission's Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness- Part III; Student Learning Outcomes*. The College has conducted preliminary, investigative dialogue about SLOs. The College has posted information on its Student Learning Outcomes web page that describes differences between course objectives and SLOs. There are two models posted on the website both from student services areas. The College has decided to proceed with development at the course, program and the degree level. College personnel indicated it was their opinion that the College was at the development level of implementation. In the team's assessment here are elements from the development level of the Rubric that have not been achieved by the College include:

- o There is no assessment strategy for assessing SLOs as appropriate to course, program and degree learning outcomes
- o Faculty and staff are not fully engaged in SLO development.
- o Appropriate resources are not being allocated to support SLOs and assessment. As of the team's visit, adjunct faculty employees were not involved in the SLO development process.

The College has in its self study acknowledged that it will begin to undertake the development of Student Learning Outcomes at the general education and institutional levels in spring 2009. A review of the CurriCUNET site and a sampling of the Colleges courses reveal that many instructors have identified the SLOs but have not completed any assessments. College staff stated that a Student Learning Outcomes newsletter would resume publication. The SLO blog established to create interest and offer a forum for dialogue regarding SLOs has had no responses in the blog record. Random samples of courses from CurriCUNET, the inventory system of all campus curricula, show the College has made little movement other than to post current course outlines of record.

The SLO annual reports seemingly report more courses have SLOs than what could be verified (see Institutional Research SLO Annual Reports) by team members during the evaluation visit. Of the College's 1500-1600 active courses, 416 have stated student learning outcomes. The team recognizes that the total course number may be somewhat inflated due to special topics, independent study, or work experience courses. However, the current percentage appears to be well below the 45% stated in the 2006-2007 ACCJC annual report. The College's learning outcomes committee and academic administrators have confirmed the current annual goal is to achieve a 33% completion rate of all courses having stated student learning outcomes.

The College was an early adopter of SLOs considering that the Commission's standards requiring SLOs were established in 2002. The Strategic Planning Council established the Student Learning Outcomes Task Force in fall 2003. A large committee, a task force of 35 members, 21 of whom were faculty, began its work by defining a structure to create the forum for discussions to identify and assess SLOs. The task force met for two semesters producing a revised Statement of Principles on Assessment and recommending a Learning Outcomes Council (LOC) is formed under the leadership of Faculty Senate. The LOC began meeting monthly in spring 2004. LOC still meets on an monthly basis. A general framework has been prepared and although the College started work on SLO development in 2002 seven years later it remains at the formative stages of implementation.

Initially a leader in development of SLOs the evaluation team concludes that Palomar College is now behind its sister colleges in development and implementation of SLOs. The College has not met the requirements of Recommendation # 3 – 2003 and needs to dedicate concentrated effort to implement Student Learning Outcomes by the Commission's required date of 2012. See 2009 Recommendation 3.

Recommendation #4 – 2003
The college should develop mechanisms to ensure that supervisors and department chairs evaluate classified staff, administrators/managers, and part-time faculty on a regular cycle with formal and timely follow-up following college policy or contract provisions. (7.B.1, 7.B.2)

The College states in the Self Study report that Recommendation #4 was to develop mechanisms to ensure faculty and staff are evaluated on a regular cycle with timely follow-up. Evaluation processes are expected to adhere to contract and college policies. Interestingly enough, the team agrees with the College's assessment yet the team reached a different conclusion than the College regarding the status of this recommendation. The College reports on Page 268 of its Self Study Report the following completion rates for evaluation of employees:

Employee Category	% Complete
Classified Employees: (required annually)	84.83%
Administration and Supervisory Employees: (required annually)	50.6%
Part-Time Faculty (1st year, then every 3 years)	75.4%
Full Time Faculty (Tenure Review Process, then every 3 years)	unknown
Child Development Center Faculty (1st year, then every 3 years)	unknown

The College has processes in place for evaluation of each category of employees. Accordingly, the College meets this part of Recommendation #4 (2003). The team was not able to locate information about the portion of employees with up-to-date performance evaluations. The portions listed in the schedule above were obtained from the College's Self Study report. Not one category is reported as being 100% current or up to date. It is recognized that with changes in personnel, the College would typically be some percentage below 100%. However, in order to meet the requirements of Recommendation #4, the team expected the College to have evaluation processes in place, which it does, and to also have means to monitor and track outstanding or incomplete evaluations. The team has concluded that all employees are not being evaluated on time and follow up, when it is occurring, is not effective in ensuring all employees are being evaluated in accordance with employment agreements and when applicable, board policies. This recommendation has not been implemented in full. See 2009 Recommendation 7.

Recommendation #5 2003
The college should ensure the planning and resource allocation processes effectively address the need for equipment replacement to meet the educational and student services needs of the college. (6.2, 6.5, 8.1, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 3.B.3, 9.A.1, 9.A.3)

The College notes in its response to Recommendation # 5 that it uses state block grant funds to pay for the cost of equipment replacement. Typically, although some years do not require this, a college contribution of one-third of the money received from the state is provided as a matching contribution. This contribution is a condition of receiving block grant funds. The College comments in its response to Recommendation # 5 that it adds the required contribution and uses the existing Program Review and Planning process of the instructional division to determine what items are to be funded. The College's general fund is providing a set amount of funds determined by the amount of the state's required contribution. The appropriateness of this amount does not appear to be considered. Instead of establishing the true program needs and locating resources to meet them, the state money plus the College match are combined and then allocated to pay for as many items as possible given the fund amount as a constraint. The Palomar College Foundation and Non-resident Student Capital Outlay Fund dollars are also used to support equipment replacement requests.

The team agrees with the College in comments about how the funds are allocated and that the allocation process used is fair and works to address the priorities of the instructional and student services departments. The College is not establishing need and then seeking funding sources to include a larger portion of unrestricted general funds or use of Proposition M funding that may be available for technology or other equipment replacement In the team's viewpoint the College is not meeting the requirements of this Recommendation. Resource allocation processes need to be established in order for the College to meet the identified and determined needs of the College. The process used currently is a method to distribute a specific source of funds. The College should determine equipment needs and then seek funding sources to ensure critical equipment replacement occurs. There may be times when the state funds and the College matching

funds are insufficient to meet the minimum critical needs. At this stage the College should be able to engage in the budget allocation discussions to argue for additional unrestricted or other fund resources. As the College continues to build new facilities and add more technology and costly equipment across the College's range of instructional facilities, it will become even more important for the College to properly identify equipment replacement needs and give those needs priority consideration when necessary.

As described, the College does not meet the requirements of Recommendation # 5. Accordingly this recommendation has not been implemented. See 2009 Recommendation #2 and 10.

Recommendation #6 - 2003
The team recommends that future retiree health and dental benefits be clearly identified and funded as a future obligation of the college. (9.C.1)

The College joined the Retired Employee Health Benefit Joint Powers Association to have access to an irrevocable trust arrangement that would meet the requirements of GASB 45. The intent of the recommendation is for the College to set funds aside to pay for the cost of this liability as payments become due each year. The College's actuarially determined cost is $53 million. The College has set aside $15 million. However, the $15 million of funds have not been placed into an irrevocable trust and instead are in a designated reserve available to the College at the discretion of the Board of Trustees. Until funds are deposited into an irrevocable trust, the College is not meeting the requirements of GASB 45. Going forward, the College needs to address this large obligation and begin depositing funds into an irrevocable trust fund.

In FY 2007-2008, the College paid $3,679,524 for retiree benefits from the Retiree Benefit Fund (Fund 69). In addition, the General Fund contributed towards the payment of the actuarial liability by transferring $3,317,209 to the Retiree Benefit Fund (Fund 69). **In 2007-08 these in and out transfers represent a net loss or decline in the fund balance of $362,315.** The estimated total gross liability, based on an actuarial study dated April 2008, is approximately $68.4 million. At June 2008, the District Retiree Benefit Fund had a balance of approximately $15 million with an unfunded liability of approximately $53 million.

The team's recommendation # 6 from 2003 required the College to identify the amount of the liability and take action to fund the liability. The College has set a portion of funds aside to address the future obligation. But, the College is now drawing down on the fund balance to pay for a portion of the annual costs and therefore has not met the requirements of Recommendation # 6.

The College has identified the future obligations for retiree health and dental benefits but is still lacking a plan on how to fund this obligation. Actual practices used in FY 2007-2008 resulted in a decline in the funds set aside to address this long-term liability. The

College has not implemented this recommendation (III.D.1.c). See 2009
Recommendation 11.

Eligibility Requirements

1. Authority: The evaluation team confirmed that Palomar College is an institution of the California community college system and is authorized to provide educational programs by the California Education Code. Palomar College is regulated by the California Community Colleges Board of Governors and is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC).

2. Mission: The evaluation team confirmed that Palomar College has a mission statement adopted by the Board of Trustees through Board Policy 1200 and was last approved by the Board in November 2007. The mission statement was reviewed although not changed at the time the Board of Trustees approved *Strategic Plan 2009* in November 2007. The mission statement is published in *Strategic Plan 2009*, the *Palomar College Catalog 2008-09*, the schedule of courses (*Class Schedule*) and *Master Plan 2022*. The mission statement is also displayed on the college website.

3. Governing Board: The evaluation team confirmed that Palomar College has a Board of Trustees consisting of five members who represent the entire district. Members of the Board serve four-year terms and are elected using staggered terms. A Student Trustee elected by students also serves on the Board in advisory capacity. The Board is empowered to formulate policy, maintain integrity, financial stability and ensure the mission is being carried out. The Board has a Conflict of Interest policy and a Code of Ethics.

4. Chief Executive Officer: The Superintendent/President is the Chief Executive Officer(CEO). The current Superintendent/President was appointed in December 2004. The hiring process for the chief executive officer was conducted in accordance with an established hiring process stipulated by BP 2431 Superintendent/President Selection. The CEO according to Board policy expected to be evaluated annually. Evaluations occur on an annual basis in accordance with existing policy. The Superintendent/President's primary responsibilities are to interpret Board policy, ensure compliance with all relevant laws and regulations, lead effectively in fiscal management, and ensure long-range planning, achievement of goals, and institutional integrity.

5. Administrative Capacity: The administrative structure of Palomar College is reorganized periodically to address the growing needs and complexity of the district. All administrators are screened to determine their ability to serve the College. Minimal qualifications are stated, job descriptions are created and all administrators are evaluated on a regular basis. All administrative positions listed in the organizational chart of the College have been filled with qualified individuals who have meet the Title 5 California Code of Regulations minimum qualifications for educational administrators established by the Board of Governors, California community colleges. Classified administrators possess the minimum qualifications as set forth by the Palomar College Board of Trustees. Palomar College employs a total of 34 educational and classified administrators.

6. Operational Status: There are more than 32,000 students enrolled at the San Marcos campus, the Escondido Center and the five sites located throughout the district. This enrollment includes full and part-time students taking credit and non-credit classes through traditional in class instruction and distance education course. Palomar College offers a variety of educational programs and services including a range of transfer, skill development and vocational curricula. Offerings and programs change to reflect the needs of the students attaining their educational goals at Palomar.

7. Degrees: Palomar College offers courses that fulfill program requirements for Associate of Arts degree and certificates. The *Palomar College Catalog 2008-09* lists all requirements for the Associate of Arts, Certificate of Completion, and Certificate of Achievement curricula, and course descriptions for all credit courses.

8. Educational Programs: Programs are based on recognized fields of study in higher education, are of sufficient content and length, present sufficient variety within disciplines and are conducted and maintained at the appropriate levels of quality and rigor. By authorization of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, Palomar College confers the Associate of Arts degree to those who complete sixty units with a grade of "C" or better in prescribed courses or who prepare to transfer to a four-year institution. Palomar College courses adhere to levels and rigor appropriate to degrees offered. The College also offers Certificates of Achievement requiring a minimum of 18 units, as well as Certificates of Completion of specifically designed activities.

9. Academic Credit: The Curriculum Committee determines specific unit credit totals for individual courses and credit or non-credit status. Credit for all coursework is awarded based on the Carnegie unit, a standard generally accepted in degree-granting institutions of higher education. All Palomar College courses are in compliance with Title 5 California Code of Regulations.

10. Student Learning and Achievement: Palomar College has established processes for the articulation and analysis of student learning outcomes (SLOs) and assessment cycles (SLOACs) at the course and program levels. A second process to identify general education and institutional level SLOs and SLOACs will be prepared in the near future. The Faculty Senate, the Instructional Planning Council, the Learning Outcomes Council and its Steering Committee, and the Curriculum Committee are responsible for oversight of the development of SLOs.

11. General Education: General education programs and courses meet the requirements of Title 5, (55806). The quality and rigor of Palomar College general education is consistent with the academic standards appropriate to higher education, providing breadth of knowledge, demanding critical thinking within the disciplines and promoting intellectual inquiry. The *Palomar College Catalog 2008-09* clearly lists the general education requirements for the Associate degree. To ensure breadth of knowledge, Palomar College has established three options for general education requirements, including Palomar College Requirements, General Education Breadth Requirements for

California State University, and the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC).

12. Academic Freedom: Palomar College fully supports the right of faculty to maintain and encourages full freedom of faculty members to teach, research, and pursue knowledge as set forth in the Accreditation Commission Standards, Board Policy, and California Code of Regulations, Title 5, §51023. The College maintains an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom and independence exist. Article 3 of the Palomar Faculty Federation contract stipulates that: "faculty members promote an atmosphere in learning environments with students that is conducive to free and open inquiry." Palomar College promotes academic freedom, free inquiry and intellectual independence as a central feature of its programs and certificates. The Board of Trustees approved a revision of Board Policy 4030 addressing Academic Freedom at the College.

13. Faculty: Full-time faculty develop new programs and courses, maintain quality in existing programs, conduct curriculum review, engage in departmental and strategic planning, serve in standing and ad hoc committees, act as coordinators and department chairs and provide services to the community and the College outside of the classroom. Palomar College has 289 full-time and 926 part-time faculty employees. All faculty employees meet the minimum qualifications for their disciplines as established by the Board of Governors for California community colleges. Full-time faculty and their degrees and institutions granting the degrees are listed in the *Palomar College Catalog 2008-09*.

14. Student Services: Consistent with the Palomar College mission and vision of "Learning for Success" is an unwavering commitment to the retention, persistence, and academic success of students. Palomar College supports student goal achievement from pre-college level basic skills course through degree, certificate, and transfer completion. Palomar College provides a comprehensive range of student services to include full pre-enrollment matriculation related services of orientation for new students, assessment, and course placement. Academic and personal counseling and educational services are available to all students at various times and locations around the College's service area. On-going services include career counseling, Disability Resource Center (DRC), Extended Opportunities Programs and Services (EOP&S), financial aid, health services, TRIO, transfer services, and tutorial assistance.

15. Admissions: The College admission policies are consistent with its mission and conform to parameters outlined in state law and district policies. The qualifications for admission are stated in the *Palomar College Catalog 2008-09*.

16. Information and Learning Resources: The Palomar College Library is the primary repository of the information and learning resources materials that support traditional in-person courses and distance education programs. The Library's collection consists of more than 104,000 book, periodical, and audiovisual titles. There are 41 full-text online research databases available in the Library. These databases include periodical articles, books, and videos covering most disciplines taught at the college. These databases are

easily accessed both on campus and remotely. Students also have access to computers for research, specialized tutorials, and word processing in the Academic Research Lab, the Academic Technology Resource Center, and in the business, English, English as a Second Language, mathematics, and foreign language laboratories.

17. Financial Resources: The Palomar College has financial resources and plans for financial development adequate to support student learning programs and services. Most of the College's funding is from state apportionment revenue. The Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services regularly reviews projected state income sources and recommends changes to the budget as appropriate. Copies of the budget are available and are reviewed regularly along with the status of state resources. The College follows generally accepted accounting principles when processing accounting transactions and preparing financial reports.

18. Financial Accountability: Palomar College is audited each year by an independent Certified Public Accountant. The evaluation team confirmed that Palomar College annually undergoes an external audit that is available to the public. The independent auditor report is presented to the Board of Trustees in public session. In addition, Palomar College employs an internal auditor. In all fiscal matters, Palomar College adheres to board-approved policies and procedures, generally accepted accounting principles and the Budget and Accounting Manual published by the State Chancellor's Office, California community colleges.

19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation: Palomar College has established several ongoing and systematic cycles of planning for improvement of institutional structures and processes, student achievement of educational goals, and student learning. These cycles include a Strategic Planning process, the Program Review and Planning process, curriculum level Course and Program Review processes and several program-specific planning cycles. The College has a strategic plan that it plans to update in fall 2009. The College has not updated its Educational Master Plan or its Facilities Master Plans that are included in and support of *Master Plan 2022*. Much of the information in *Master Plan 2022* relates to capital facilities improvements and remains useful for planning purposes even though it is seven years old. The outdated *Technology Master Plan 2005* is no longer used as a planning guide. Intermittently, the College reports progress on its plans. The College collects and reports data on a set of institutional effectiveness indicators that is published each year.

20. Public Information: The *Palomar College Catalog* is published annually and provides information that describes the College's admission requirements, rules and regulations affecting students, programs and courses, degrees and degree requirements, costs and refund policies, grievance procedures, and academic credentials of faculty and administrators. Much of this information is also provided in the *Class Schedule* published each semester, the *Student Handbook* is available on the Office of Student Affairs website, and on the College website.

21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission: The Board of Trustees regularly receives reports on the accreditation activities of the College. The Board adheres to all eligibility requirements, accreditation standards, and policies of the Commission with the **exception of the Policy Statement on Diversity** as described in detail in Standard IV of this report. The College agrees to disclose any information required by the Commission to carry out its responsibilities.

Accreditation Themes

Institutional Commitments: Palomar College acknowledges its intention to provide a supportive environment for its students and embodies it in its mission statement, its vision, and its values. These intentions were recorded in Board Policy 1200, passed in November 2007. The mission statement is augmented with a vision statement and values expressed by the College. In combination, the mission statement and supporting statements lack two key components that the evaluation team has identified and recommended be added to the mission. The existing mission statement lacks a clear and direct statement about the College's focus on improvement of student learning. Additionally, the mission statement does not define the intended student population.

With these two key components absent from the mission statement it is difficult to validate the College's institutional commitments in these areas. Reflective institution wide discussion about the mission statement is not occurring on an on-going basis. Even though the mission statement was approved by the Board of Trustees in November 2007 it is the same mission statement approved in 2002.

Evaluation, Planning and Improvement: A lot of data is provided by the College's department of Institutional Research. Information about student performance is available in a variety of formats with the *Palomar College Fact Book* being published and made available to all stakeholders. Data is available on such routine and well known evaluation elements like retention and success plus additional elements that may be limited to certain types of assessment and evaluation activities. Even though the data is available, the College is not yet including analyses of the data.

There are structured and long standing planning councils operating at the College. A major weakness of planning as it exists is that the results of actions taken are not evaluated to determine whether the actions improved student learning or whether the actions moved the College closer to achieving its objectives and goals. The evaluation team has made recommendations to the College to complete its planning cycle by evaluating the results of actions taken to determine if desired outcomes have been achieved. On a positive note the College has structured planning activities. It must now progress to a more advanced stage and assess outcomes obtained with conclusions being drawn as to whether the planning has accomplished the desired intended results.

Student Learning Outcomes: Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)s are being introduced into course outlines. Approximately one-third of courses have SLOs included in them. The Faculty Senate is leading efforts to implement SLOs. Beginning at the course level, the Faculty Senate expects to then expand to program level and finally to the degree/certificate level. As this process is refined and SLOs extend to all parts of the College, the institutional commitment is expected to be more pronounced and obvious as a means to ensure the community and the students receiving services at Palomar College will receive a high quality educational program that meets the expectations of university partners who accept students who transfer into the universities and to employers who hire

graduates who have received professional entry-level training that meets the expectations of the industry employing Palomar graduates.

Organization: Palomar College has an effective organizational structure in place. The College is organized with sufficient staff, resources and the organizational structure to support student learning. The framework to complete evaluation activities is also in place. Increasing the number of full-time faculty is a priority of the College and is receiving appropriate attention. The evaluation team visited the two primary off-site instructional facilities: Camp Pendleton and Escondido. Instructional program offerings are controlled by departments at the San Marcos college campus. The process used by the College is effective in scheduling courses to meet the needs of community members served by those two locations. Technology in support of instruction and for administration of a wide range of logistical activities involving student support functions is expanding as the College grows both in terms of student enrollment and in the square footage of facilities used to offer instruction.

Internal control weaknesses were reported by the College's independent Certified Public Accountant's audit report. The evaluation team identified additional concerns where action is needed by the College to safeguard access to institutional data and to ensure a disaster does not result in significant loss of data. This report comments not only on the structural concern for data security but also for the need for the College to either update or to prepare a new technology plan. Other than this one key weakness, the team has concluded there is an effective organizational structure at Palomar College to support student learning.

Dialogue: The College uses a comprehensive governance structure that includes a "council" for each major focus: instructional, human resources, student services, administrative services and an overarching council referred to as the Strategic Planning Council. There are a number of avenues that promote conversations and dialogue of major activities that influence College operations. Even though there are numerous opportunities for engagement on a wide range of operational topics there were concerns stated by constituency groups that many times the councils were used to disseminate information on decisions that had already been made. The College noted this concern in its self study and prepared a planning agenda to review roles, duties and expectations of representatives who are participating on the councils.

Based on interviews with College personnel, the team formed the opinion that there is ample conversation about major operational issues and concerns, but collaborative, collective dialogue where all parties have an equal voice in the conversation is missing. The team applauds the straight forward and open approach used by the Superintendent/President to address this concern by creating the forum for this concern to be discussed, practices changed if needed but at a minimum holding open and frank conversations to reach an understanding among all campus constituency groups. Clarifying roles and learning about the expectations of each constituency group will go a long way in helping the College develop stronger working relationships among its employees.

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Institutional Integrity: The theme of institutional integrity requires an institution demonstrate concern for honesty, truthfulness and the manner in which the College represents itself to internal and external stakeholders. Institutional integrity is also concerned with academic honesty. There is an expectation that there will be appropriate regard for issues of equity and diversity. The evaluation team found in all cases information presented or otherwise made available to employees, students and the communities served by the College was clear, accurate and appropriate in providing internal and external stakeholders with information about the performance of students, the range of educational programs and services available, and the financial activities of the College. There were a number of situations where there were professional disagreements between conclusions reached by the College in regards to the achievement of the requirements of the Standards as reported in its self study compared to the conclusions reached by the evaluation team. As stated in other segments of this report the team is concerned about the College's sensitivity to issues of diversity and made recommendations in the appropriate sections of this report to assist the College in reaching the requirements of the Commission's *Policy on Diversity.*

STANDARD I
Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

A. Mission

General Observations:

The mission statement was affirmed by the Board in November 2007. The mission statement is the same statement that was approved by the Board of Trustees in 2003. The College does not identify its intended student population in the Vision, Mission, and Values statements. *Strategic Plan 2009* has a "core value" listed as: "Achieving excellence in teaching, learning and service." While noted as a core value student learning is not listed as a strategic goal and is not mentioned in the mission statement or other supporting statements that serve as principle planning guidance for the College. The team concluded that the College's mission statement does not identify its intended student population and it does not emphasize student learning. The team recognizes the College has an emphasis on **"excellence in ....learning"** in the strategic plan. The team recommends, at a minimum, to place appropriate concentration on student learning, that the College include a statement about student learning in the mission statement.

In August 2003, the College completed *Master Plan 2022* that included an Educational Master Plan and a Facilities Master Plan. The Master Plan quotes Board of Trustees action taken on December 10, 2002 about its decision to acquire land that would allow the District to create at least one new campus or college with an enrollment of 10,000 students and one large center with an enrollment of 5,000. The result of the Board action in 2002 was for the College to acquire land in the northern and southern parts of its service area. The College acquired property in the northern part of its service area (Fallbrook) and has indicated it is looking for land in the southern part of its service area.

Master Plan 2022, Strategic Plan 2009, the mission, vision and values statements are all documents that are dated between four and seven years ago. The College also had a Technology Plan that reached the end of its calendar life and has not been updated. There is also a mission statement and an Annual Implementation Plan for each year since 2006-2007. Master Plan 2022 and Strategic Plan 2009 have not been updated. There is no sustained continuous quality improvement, yet there is some activity that is occurring based on the Facilities Master Plan from 2003 included in *Master Plan 2022*. Proposition M a nearly $700 million voter-approved facilities improvement bond, has allowed the College to continue its facilities improvement activities some of which were first identified in 2003. In summary, the team has reached a conclusion that even though the documents exist, there is no sustained planning effort occurring on an institution-wide basis.

Findings and Evidence:

The mission of the Palomar Community College District as stated in Board Policy 1200 approved by the Board of Trustees on November 13, 2007 is:

"Palomar College is an educational leader committed to quality learning. We provide our community the knowledge, information, skills, and aesthetic appreciation necessary to live responsibly, effectively, and creatively in an interdependent and changing world. To achieve its mission, the Palomar Community College District follows the mission of the California Community College System as determined by the State Legislature." Board Policy 1200 states that the mission will be evaluated and revised on a regular basis. Included with the mission statement is a value statement, a vision statement and strategic goals. The vision statement is: "Learning For Success." The "core values" included in *Strategic Plan 2009* were identified and defined as follows:

- Achieving **excellence** in teaching, learning, and service;
- Fostering **integrity** as the foundation for all we do;
  Providing **access** to our programs and services;
- Ensuring **equity** and fair treatment in all policies, processes, and procedures;
- Celebrating **diversity** in people, philosophies, cultures, beliefs, programs, and learning environments;
- Supporting **inclusiveness** of individual and community viewpoints in collaborative decision-making processes;
- Promoting **mutual respect** and trust through open communication and actions;
- Supporting **innovation** to enhance and enrich learning environments and services"

The mission, vision statement and core values are widely disseminated across the campus and to the community. The class schedule, the College's web site and the College's catalog all include the mission statement. The mission statement does not identify the College's educational purposes other than to note that it is dedicated to student success and seeks to achieve excellence in teaching. Also, there is no indication that a purpose or mission of the College is to offer educational programs that would prepare students for acceptance by a university in working toward a bachelor degree program or to offer students career technical training that would lead to entry into a profession. (I.A) (I.A, I.A.2)

The mission statement does not express a commitment to student learning. In the *Strategic Plan 2009* the College cites excellence in teaching and student learning. While there is a strategic plan emphasis on teaching and student learning, the College does not include student learning in its mission statement and does not meet the requirements of Standard I.A.

The mission statement also does not identify the intended student population. In the "Values" section of the strategic plan, there are statements of desired behaviors. The team has reviewed the mission, the vision, the values statement and *Strategic Plan 2009*. The team did not see language in the mission statement that would assist readers in identifying the College's intended student population. For reference purposes the team

noted that the College provides vocational and academic degree programs that would accommodate a range of students' interests and needs. The mission statement does not refer to the types of programs offered or the intended student population that its educational program is intended to serve (I.A.).

During interviews with College personnel the team was told that many of the career technical programs are the result of requests from local industry to provide programs for them. Core academic program changes are frequently the result of collaborative efforts between the feeder high schools and the College and the result of collaboration with the four nearby universities. The College articulates its courses and works closely with the universities to ensure that the transfer courses meet the requirements of these nearby universities. Some programs, for example the service learning program, are developed as a result of the interest of a faculty member (I.A. 1).

Strategic Plan 2009 includes the mission, values, and vision statements in the written plan document. The assembly of the items within the strategic plan is a convenient way to present the information in a single document. However, the team could not see how the mission, values and vision statements were linked to objectives and activities within the strategic plan. The strategic plan has five goals with College departments developing objectives that were intended to meet the goals. There is no reference back to the mission, values, or vision statement (I.A.1).

Demographic analysis of the breakdown of the population of residents who are within the College's service area is conducted to predict its intended student population. It is unclear to the team the demographic information by itself can be used by a college to predict the educational program offerings that will be taken by the students. There is no analysis of the employment base, the population concentrations, or other types of demographic review when making choices about offering educational services and programs. The College staff has commented that up to 80 percent of students that come to the College need remedial courses in order for them to be ready for College level course work. The dominance of under-prepared students has caused the College to concentrate efforts on basic skills courses (I.A).

The mission statement was last adopted by the Board of Trustees on June 11, 2002. It was reaffirmed without any changes again on November 13, 2007. The mission has remained unchanged for at least seven years at the time of the team's evaluation of the College. There were no comments recorded in the minutes of the board meeting to indicate there was any conversation about the mission statement when it was approved (I.A.2).

The Strategic Planning Council meets twice a month. The mission statement has been included in the Strategic Plan for the past two, three-year planning cycles. According to College staff, during the development of the next strategic plan which is scheduled to begin in fall 2009, revisions to the mission statement will be made. College personnel acknowledged that the mission was lacking an emphasis on student learning and that it did not identify the intended student population to be served through the educational programs offered by Palomar College (I.A.3).

The *Accreditation Employee Survey 2008* developed by the Institutional Research and Planning Office dated February 2008 requested information from staff about the effectiveness of the mission statement. The majority of employees (83.2%) commented that it was their belief that the College's mission statement did a good job of defining the College's long-term planning and strategic planning. Employees (82.1%) also felt that the programs and services offered by the College were aligned with the mission statement. Other than to survey employees, the College does not conduct an evaluation to determine whether the mission statement is appropriate for the College or not. There is no evidence to indicate that there has been any evaluation of the effectiveness of the mission statement. (I.A.3)

The team recognizes and applauds the fact that the Institutional Research Department provides a lot of data to the College community. What is missing is information that shows the College is using the data to support initiatives and to initiate programs useful in improving student learning. According to College personnel, educational programming changes have occurred as a result of an area of interest of faculty or in the case of career technical programs, as a result of requests from industry. Both are appropriate methods to assist in decisions about which educational programs to offer. Even though there is support of faculty and industry employees for creation of programs, data is necessary to support the need for educational programs. What is missing from the evaluation team's perspective is how data was analyzed, how educational services and program changes were discussed using a reflective across the College dialogue, and how the strategic plan and budget were influenced by the data analysis and campus wide discussion. Once the programs are implemented, there should be evaluations of the programs to determine if the intended outcomes were achieved (I.A.4).

Conclusions:

The mission statement does not comment on the College's intended student populations, nor does it comment on the College's commitment to achieving student learning. Evidence verifying that dialogue regarding the appropriateness of the mission statement or how programs fit into the mission was not cited by the College and could not be located by the team. The presumption is that the mission statement was discussed in the context of development or reaffirmation as in this case of *Strategic Plan 2009*. The process for developing a student learning program is unclear other than the fact that the *Strategic Plan 2009* includes a number of objectives/activities. It is hard to know what the College decision making process is when determining the support of the relevance of the mission statement to student learning. The conclusion is that the mission statement does not include a focus on student learning. The College does not meet the requirements of Standard I.A.1 and A.3.

The Board of Trustees' most recent approval of the mission statement was November 13, 2007. The Board meets the requirements of Standard I.A.2.

The mission statement does not appear to influence choices and decisions made by the College. There is no evidence to state what the role of the mission statement is in planning and decision making. The mission statement has not changed in a number of years. However, without clear emphasis about the College establishing larger, off-site educational centers and locations for providing instruction the College has added instructional locations in largely populated areas of the District, has acquired one parcel of land that is intended to be built out as a college campus and apparently plans to acquire a second parcel of land in the southern part of the District to provide a location for a third college campus (I.A.4).

The planning documents from the mission statement to the strategic plan and Master Plan 2022 are up to eight years old. Some documents still remain viable; however, the mission statement does not appear to be relevant to on-going activities and planned actions within the Annual Implementation Plan. Also of concern is that the Annual Implementation Plans have been in effect for only three years, and they do not encompass all departments at the College. The team concludes that the scope of planning is so narrow that the mission statement is not central to institutional planning and decision making (I.A.4).

Recommendations:

Recommendation #1 (2009)
Mission Statement
In order to comply with the Standards, the College needs to modify its mission statement to identify its intended student population and its commitment to achieving student learning. Additionally, the mission statement should be used by the College as a central driving force in decisions made by the College (Standard 1A.1, I.A.4, IV.B.1.b)

STANDARD I

B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

General Observations:

The College embraces on-going planning, using a strategic planning process to develop its College-wide goals, which currently focuses on Student Success, Teaching and Learning Excellence, Organizational and Professional Development, Resource Management, and Facilities Improvement. Each of the goals has a set of objectives/activities that are tracked through an Annual Implementation Plan (AIP). Program Review and Planning has been recently incorporated into the process. The Institutional Program Review and Annual Implementation Plans provide information, both quantitative and qualitative, covering academic programs and student services, tying their reviews to their program needs to the College's strategic plan, and to student learning. Other areas of the College, including Student Services and Human Resource Services, have recently participated in the Institutional Review and Planning process, while administrative services has not.

In the team's assessment the College is at the Awareness level of the Commission's *Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness- Part III; Student Learning Outcomes.* The College asserts it is at the Development level. Regardless of the difference in opinion the actions completed to date on implementation of SLOs is less than actions at other colleges. Evidence gathered and reviewed by the team is the basis for the team's conclusion.

The portion of courses with SLOs could not be verified during the team's visit. Information provided indicated roughly 1500-1600 active courses with 416 courses (26%) having had SLOs developed and added to course descriptions. The College reported it had completed SLOs for 45% of its courses on its 2006-2007 Annual Report to the Commission. The Learning Outcomes Committee and academic administrators commented the goal for the 2008-2009 academic year was to complete 33% of all courses having SLOs. At the time of the team's visit, the College had not developed program-level or institutional-level outcomes and had not assessed SLOs.

The College was an early adopter of SLOs considering that the Commission's standards requiring SLOs was established in 2002. Recommendation # 2 of the 2003 evaluation team report recommended implementation of SLOs. The Strategic Planning Council established the Student Learning Outcomes Task Force in fall 2003. A large committee, the task force of 35 members, 21 of whom were faculty, began its work by defining a structure to create the forum for discussions to identify and assess SLOs. The task force met for two semesters producing a revised Statement of Principles on Assessment and recommending a Learning Outcomes Council (LOC) be formed under the leadership of Faculty Senate. The LOC began meeting monthly in spring 2004. LOC still meets on a monthly basis. The part-time faculty is not fully engaged in the SLO discussions.

A general framework has been prepared and although the College was probably one of the first colleges to start work on SLO development, seven years later it remains at the formative stages with the following types of activities occurring:

- Preliminary investigative dialogue has occurred
- There have been conversations about course objectives and their relationship to SLOs
- Pilot project and efforts either are underway or have been completed
- The Faculty Senate has concluded that the College will begin at the course level working its way to program level and then institutional level SLOs

The activities completed place the College within the definitional confines of the awareness level of implementation on the Accrediting Commission's *Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness-Part III: Student Learning Outcomes.* Initially a leader in development of SLOs the evaluation team concludes that Palomar College is now behind its sister colleges in development and implementation of SLOs. The College has not met the requirements of Recommendation # 2 – 2003 and needs to dedicate concentrated effort if it is going to meet the Commission's requirement that SLOs be implemented by 2012.

Standard I.B of the College's self study report is largely a description of the various planning processes that occur at the College, with less in the way of evaluation of those processes or tying the processes to resource allocation, particularly with student learning as the driver of those processes. While one can assume that these processes are indirectly supportive of student learning (such as using Institutional Research and Planning data that are indirect measures of student learning and achievement), it is apparent that these processes are still finding their way to achieve what is expected. Because the development of Student Learning Outcomes is still in the formative stage, it is difficult to tie the allocation of resources to the improvement of student learning. Student learning appears secondary to the processes, while it should be the primary focus.

On the Institutional Research and Planning website, the results of the 2008 Accreditation Survey are available. Only 117 of 288 full-time faculty and 127 of 901 part-time faculty members have responded which was attributed in part to tense labor contract talks with faculty. On p. 372 in the Self-Study, it is clear that there are differing opinions as to how well the shared governance processes are working at Palomar with administration recognizing the concerns that have been expressed but still operating with the belief that the processes are working. The team agrees that the processes are working as described. The main concern of the team is that the narrow range of activity covered by planning activities to include the Annual Implementation Plan and *Strategic Plan 2009* whose goals are identical to goals in *Strategic Plan 2005* is not yielding the results that effective planning efforts are expected to achieve.

The Planning Councils Evaluation 2008 (Institutional Research and Planning, Palomar College, May, 2008) reveals that many of those who did respond are suspect of the decisions made and the value of their input in the overall process.

<u>Findings and Evidence:</u>

The College has a number of arenas in which dialogue about continuous improvement can occur, including the five planning councils, the Faculty Senate, Curriculum Committee, the Board of Trustees, the divisions, advisory committees, and matriculation and transfer committee. Insofar that these arenas provide ample opportunity for dialogue to occur, it is not clear as to how these discussions have improved student learning and institutional processes. For instance, while the Self Study points to the creation of Campus Explorations and the development of the Service Learning Program as a result of the dialogue to improve student learning, the Self Study does not address the issue of how these initiatives developed. Interviews with faculty at the College revealed that the Service Learning Program grew from one faculty member's interest. Nevertheless, neither Campus Explorations nor the Service Learning Program has been assessed as to whether either has improved student learning. In this sense the dialogue has not resulted in a collective understanding of the meaning of data and research used in evaluation of student learning (I.B.1).

There is a lot of data available for members of the councils to use in decision making. The data is present in reports such as: *Monitoring Palomar's Strategic Plan through Measures of Institutional Effectiveness* dated May 2, 2008.(I.B.1). The team noted that this report includes data assembled in the order of the objectives of the strategic plan. When appropriate, there was a short description of what the data represented when the data table was not self evident. The reports include no analysis. The team did not locate evidence during the visit that would indicate the data is being interpreted or statements that changes in student learning were the result of activities being conducted by the College. While the institutional research has a wealth of data available and provides that information to assist in decision-making, the team located no evidence that shows the data is driving decisions or being used for continuous, systematic and on-going improvements to the College's programs or how it has been used to change methodologies to improve student learning (I.B.1).

The College has used a strategic planning process to develop its College-wide goals, which currently focus on Student Success, Teaching and Learning Excellence, Organizational and Professional Development, Resource Management, and Facilities Improvement. The process to develop these goals involved a task force of over 70 members, a campus-wide workshop, and a campus-wide survey. There is evidence of a considerable amount of dialogue occurring when *Strategic Plan 2005* was developed in Fiscal Year 2002-2003. The goals in the strategic plan are not stated in measurable terms. When departments undergo the program review process, they select **one** goal that they want to work on and have the flexibility at that time to establish an objective/activity that will be tracked for one year on the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) The objectives/activities may or may not be listed in measurable terms depending on how the department decides to describe what it wants to accomplish over the next year (I.B.2).

The College reinstated program review in FY 2007-2008. The framework for the Program Review is created in the form used by departments to complete their reviews.

There are eight areas on the Institutional Review and Planning form. To provide context to the team's analysis and conclusions it is necessary to list the eight areas on the form. They are:

1. 3-year trend of quantitative data
2. Reflect upon and analyze the above 3-year trend data. Briefly describe overall observations and any areas of concern or noteworthy trends.
3. Reflecting on the 3-year trend data, describe/discuss planning related to the following:
   a. Curriculum
   b. Class scheduling
4. Discuss/identify the resources necessary to successfully implement the planning described.
   a. Equipment/Technology – block grant funds, VTEA, other resources, etc.
   b. Budget-budget development process, one-time funds, grants, etc.
   c. Facilities-schedule maintenance needs, additional classrooms/labs due to growth, remodeling, etc.
   d. Faculty position (s) – faculty priority process and projected full-time needs for 1-3 years
   e. Staff position (s) – changes in instructional support needs due to program growth, new technology, etc.
   f. Other
5. Discuss one discipline goal linked to Palomar's *Strategic Plan 2009* and how it will support the success of students.
6. Student Learning Outcomes progress:
   a. Describe a learning outcome at the course or program level and the assessment used to measure student learning of that outcome.
   b. Discuss a learning outcome that is observable yet difficult to measure.
7. Describe a discipline accomplishment that you want to share with the college community.
8. Are there other resources (including data) that you need to complete your discipline review and planning?

In order to provide sufficient information to the readers of this report, the team decided it is necessary to quote actual comments from the program review. No one department is being singled out per se, and to prevent any concern, the team is not identifying the program that is being quoted. The level of analysis identified is not atypical and it is the systemic weaknesses in the program review process that the team wants to point out. Actual comments are necessary to reinforce the team's conclusion. A review of the one academic program review completed in 2007-2008 is a cursory review with several of the eight areas to be reported on in the program review having one or two sentences as the response. For example in response to item 3.a from the list above, the department wrote: "Our COR committee is revamping and updating all CORs (Course numbers are listed) (I.B.1).

For questions involving data analysis, there is also a cursory review with no useful information being derived from the program review process. As an example, in item 2 from the list above the complete response was:

"- The department believes that there may be a correlation between the onset of the new scheduling parameters (block scheduling) and the decrease in student success rate.
Retention rate has increased and success rate has decreased since the time that Financial Aide begun requiring students to refund aide if dropping classes.

Part-time FTE is too high and doesn't follow the legal guidelines set forth by the state (and hasn't for the last 3 years). Student success is directly related to the % of full-time faculty and the instructor availability that comes from it."

The comments regarding the part-time full-time faculty ratio is used as justification to request additional members for this one department. There is no data that supports the analysis. Other than the statement being made by the department, there is no data provided to demonstrate that the reduction in student success factors is actually caused by a reduction in the number of full-time faculty. The College meets the technical requirements of going through the process of a program review as required by Standard I.B. The quality of the work completed should be improved over time as personnel become more familiar with data analysis techniques and see how the data analysis can lead to valuable and productive changes in teaching with a resultant positive impact on student learning (I.B.1).

The program reviews completed and listed on the College's web site were for the years 2007-2008, and 2008-2009. Departments that had undergone program review were asked to identify **one** objective that it would pursue over the next year to assist the College in achieving any of the strategic plan goals. In summary, the team can see the processes are in place but are only used to a limited extent. Not all departments participate every year. (I.B.2)

The Instructional Planning Council examined 110 planning documents resulting from the Program Review and Planning process and observed common themes, such as the need for full-time faculty. An Instructional Planning Council subcommittee, using the plans, prioritize hiring requests. A formula was created to balance new faculty hire requests from instructional and non-instructional programs based on baseline numbers. The planning documents were then used for block grant funds, as well as consideration of more global needs, such as furniture and technology. The funding goes to the departments. The VTEA Planning process parallels program review planning. However, the actual linking of the Program Review and Planning process to resource allocation has not occurred, as the College Budget Committee is outside the planning process. The College has noted in its Self Study report that it needs to establish a process to link planning and budget. Planning Agenda #2, page 95 of the Self Study, will address this weakness once implemented (I.B.2).

The Annual Implementation Plans (AIP) are a means of tracking objectives/activities selected by departments to assist the College in making improvements to assist in accomplishing goals. Some items have budget allocations associated with the objectives/activities but are devised more as an effort to meet the strategic plan goals and not as a means to allocate financial resources of the College as a whole. Interviews with administrators revealed that although the College has planning councils, the Budget Committee operates separately and only tangentially to the planning bodies (I.B.2)

The AIP for 2007-2008, which has a February 2008 update, has nothing for May 2008. The AIP is supposed to be updated three times a year to serve as the monitoring mechanism to show how implementation of actions to meet the objectives/activities is progressing. Moreover, an Annual Report was created and published, though most items show "in progress." Finally, the College asserts that it monitors its Strategic Plan through measures of institutional effectiveness. While the College is working on its planning initiatives and monitoring its effectiveness, these efforts are fairly recent. Much of the data used are indirect measures of student learning, such as progress and completion rates, persistence, etc. The *Fact Book* is a useful document for capturing a snapshot of the institution. However, until the College has assessment data derived from its SLOs, the tie of student learning into the planning process is implied rather than actual (I.B.3).

The sheer number of planning councils, committees, and planning processes provides ample opportunities for all constituencies to participate (see link in 1.B.1 which provides composition of the various bodies). The institution also utilizes College-wide workshops and surveys to develop the strategic plan. Yet, in its Accreditation Survey, 25.7 % of the respondents were not aware of opportunities to participate in the dialogue. This compares to 10.5 % who disagreed with the idea that ample opportunities existed to participate in the various councils, committees, and processes (p.8). The majority of the respondents also felt that they had sufficient access to information to determine the effectiveness of their programs, disciplines, or area (p.9) (I.B.4).

More evidence to confirm that the College did not meet the requirements of Standard I.B.4 was noted when the team visited the Camp Pendleton site. All of the faculty members who teach at Camp Pendleton are part-time. The team was informed that none of the part-time faculty at Camp Pendleton or at the Escondido Center is involved in planning activities. It also does not appear that their input is sought. There is no separate "program" for this off-site group as each part-time faculty member teaches courses controlled by departments on the main campus. The sites are managed by faculty and administrators who take care of the needs of students and faculty on the site (I.B.4).

The College has developed structures that are supposed to link resource allocation and budget development to planning, but they have not quite "closed the loop." Some of the specific strategic plan goals have been linked to allocation of funding, such as the SLOs and the *Early Acceptance Program*. The College has also sought other sources of funding including a bond measure, the State Chancellor's Office Basic Skills Initiative funding, and a Title V Hispanic Serving Institutions grant which by the nature of each funding source requires certain activities be performed as a condition of receipt of funds.

The College has used its strategic plan goals and has linked those to the special and separate sources of funds. The College now needs to expand the process used to allocate the specially funded monies to its unrestricted general fund. The College needs to show how all of its resources are aligned in a manner that will assist the in achievement of strategic plan goals (I.B.4).

In I.B.4, the Self Study specifies "Institutionally, planning has driven resource allocation in many cases (p. 137)." The current Program Review and Planning and Institutional Review processes have been through two cycles, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009. The College is clearly devoting much effort into establishing a solid planning and resource allocation process. However, because the process has only been through two cycles, the conclusion is that the College does not meet the standard of having either an on-going, sustainable program review or a planning process. Moreover, the budget process continues to operate separately from the strategic planning process. While the College acknowledges the need to discuss, design, adopt, and implement a budget development process (see Planning Agendas, #3, in 2009 Self Study) that aligns better with the strategic planning process, this was part of the 2003 recommendation. The College, at this time, has not met this recommendation (I.B.4).

However, the planning agenda for I.B.4 makes clear that the College needs to identify ways to improve the Annual Implementation Plans, especially with regard to funding priorities. Discussions with the various planning committees indicated that the College is moving toward using Institutional Review and Planning reports, rather than the Annual Implementation Plans, and these Institutional Review and Planning reports are at most only one year old. Moreover, the budget process still remains separate from the planning process (I.B.4).

The College currently relies on the Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC) data, *Institutional Effectiveness Reports*, Strategic Planning website, progress reports, and annual reports (the links are provided above), the *Fact Book*, and other reports to communicate issues of quality assurance to the College community, including the Governing Board, local community, and state and federal agencies. However, there is no assessment of the data with the exception of the ARCC report provided by the state. The College has a data rich reporting structure. The College also has an extensive planning structure. The team is concerned that with the number of councils in place and operating, the wealth of data provided and comments both in the Self Study and during interviews with team members, that the College community does not see significant value in participating in the shared governance processes.
The team appreciates that the College has identified this as an issue that it needs to resolve and encourages it to proceed rapidly to resolve these concerns while also combining evaluation of data and evaluation of decisions into the cycle of planning (I.B.5).

The College has reviewed its planning cycles, particularly the Strategic Planning Council, Program Review and Planning, as well as the full-time faculty hiring prioritization process. A survey of participants on the effectiveness of the Annual Implementation Plan

has shown a decline, with concern over the number of objectives and the underdevelopment of linking resources to the AIPs (I.B.6).

The College's practices in assuring the effectiveness of its ongoing planning and resource allocation processes are somewhat effective, though only some areas, such as the full-time faculty hiring prioritization process, have resulted in improvements. Given the importance of the Annual Implementation Plan as a guide to link planning and budgeting, the College recognizes the need for improvement (I.B.6).

As stated earlier, the College relies on indirect data regarding student learning. The description mostly focuses on what the College does, but not what it evaluates or how it evaluates its effectiveness. For example, the use of CurriCUNET to ask faculty to reflect upon and evaluate what is changing or improving does not seem to be very widespread. A cursory sampling of various courses and instructors shows the course outlines of record, but very little in the way of SLOs or Assessment. In short, there are instances of improvements based on evaluation of effectiveness, but it does not appear that assessment of evaluation mechanisms in the area of instructional programs, student support services, and library and other learning support services is systematic, widespread, or comprehensive (I.B.7).

Conclusions:

The institution embraces on-going planning. In fact, the College seems to have more planning councils, processes, and cycles than might be found typically at many Colleges. Planning processes are cyclical, utilizing the Annual Implementation Plans, which supposedly link planning efforts but do not include resource allocations in most cases and are not used to establish priorities funded through the budget process.

Overall, the Self Study is on the right track pointing out that the college "has made significant improvements in the Strategic Planning process" since its previous visit (p. 133). There are several factors considered by the team when concluding that the College does not meet the requirements of the Standards and is considered to the in the Development level of implementation on the Commission's *Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness-Part II: Planning*. The factors and conditions that have resulted in this conclusion by the team are:

> 1) The strategic plan update that would otherwise have occurred in 2009 was held in abeyance to prepare the accreditation self study report.
> 2) Strategic Plan 2005 and Strategic Plan 2009 contain identical goals.
> 3) Only a few departments are required to set goals for the year.
> 4) While the processes are in place they are not distributed sufficiently across the College to conclude that planning process are extended far enough into all of the College's operations. In fact the largest portions of the College operations are not included in planning activities as evidenced by the small number of objectives/activities identified on the AIP.

It is undisputed that the mechanisms of planning are in place and have been for some time. Planning does not extend to all parts of the College's operations each year leading the team to conclude that while the structure of planning is in place and operational there is little processed through the planning. The College is not meeting the spirit or intent of Standard I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3 and I.B.4. Recognizing the limited range of importance of strategic planning to the College's total operations has in large part led the team to conclude there is insufficient action occurring from planning, and the results have very little impact on the College.

Overall, when looking at their planning bodies, annual reports, planning processes, etc., the College has the mechanisms in place to improve its institutional effectiveness. Because many of these processes are fairly new, such as the linking of program review and planning into the overall planning process, it appears that this is all a "work in progress." The College does a good job of using surveys and other means to find out how the College community feels and what it knows and understands, using the information to make and suggest improvements in some cases. It is less clear whether or not they are effective, especially in the area of making student learning the central concern, largely because they are not using SLOs and assessment to make improvements. Moreover, the College has not reached a point where planning drives resource allocation.

It is the team's conclusion that Palomar College is not where it should be in making progress on Student Learning Outcomes.

Recommendations

Recommendation #2 (2009)
Integrated Planning, Evaluation, and Resource Allocation Decision Making
In order for the College to meet standards and ensure an ongoing, systematic, and cyclical process that includes evaluation, planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation, the team recommends the following plan development, implementation, evaluation and improvement steps:

1. Develop a comprehensive and an integrated long range Strategic Plan including measurable goals that can be used to influence resource allocation decisions on an annual basis. The Strategic Plan should incorporate the priorities established in all of the college's major plans to include its:
   a. Technology Plan
   b. Facilities Master Plan
   c. Educational Master Plan including the addition of the planned expansion of facilities to the northern and southern areas of the College's service area
   d. Human Resources Staffing Plan (I.A.4, I.B.2, I.B.3, 4, III.A.2, III.B.2.b, III.C.2, III.C.1.d).

2. Modify the budget development process in a manner that will place the college's strategic plan priorities at the center of its resource allocation decisions (III.D.1, 1.c).

3. Develop mechanisms to regularly evaluate all of the college's planning and resource allocation processes as the basis for improvement (I.B.6, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, III.D.3, IV.A.5).

4. Develop an updated Technology Plan to address such major concerns as disaster recovery, data security and on-going equipment replacement (III.C, III.C.1.a,c,d, III.C.2, III.D, Previous Recommendation #5)

5. Develop a comprehensive Human Resources Staffing Plan to address the College's stated interest in increasing the number of full-time faculty and to increase diversity among the workforce at the College (III.A).

Recommendation # 3 (2009)
Student Learning Outcomes

In order to meet standards by 2012, the team recommends that the College identify assessment methods and establish dates for completing student learning outcomes assessments at the institutional level and for all of its courses, programs and services. This process should also include the development of performance measures to assess and improve institutional effectiveness of all programs and services. The College should disseminate the outcomes widely and use these results in the strategic planning and resource allocation process. (II.A.1.a,c; II.A.2.a,h; II.B.4; II.C.2 III.A.1.c).

Recommendation # 4 (2009)
Program Review and Planning Processes

In order to meet standards and for the College to derive the benefits expected of comprehensive robust, broad-based and integrated program review and planning which are now to be further enhanced through use of Student Learning Outcomes, it is recommended that the institution substantially expand the number of departments participating in program review and development of Annual Implementation Plans. Existing efforts extend to a small fraction of the total number of departments at the College which has resulted in refined mechanical processes that yield little benefit and certainly nowhere near the level of benefit that will be derived when the entire College is involved in program review and planning activities. To comply with the spirit, intent and requirement that planning efforts be broad-based the College should:
1. Significantly increase the number of departments and programs undergoing program review on an annual basis.
2. Improve the quality of analysis included in each department's program review. Use of data in support of conclusions is expected.
3. Establish goals that are measureable with stated desired outcomes listed and linked to the resource allocation process and student learning outcomes (I.B.1,I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4,I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7).

STANDARD II
Student Learning Programs and Services

A. Instructional Programs

General Observations:

The College understands the diversity of the community it serves. Through a variety of research activities, the College uses data to review the changing demographics and responds to the needs of its community. A variety of programs are offered in the areas of transfer, career and technical education, non credit, fee based, apprenticeship and lifelong learning programs. Student support services include tutoring, a disability resource center, writing and mathematics assistance and special topic workshops (College Catalog, Community Education brochure, Workforce and Economic Development website.) (II.A).

The *Palomar College Fact Book* is published as an annual research document and includes an overview of the College and its governance structure, student enrollment data, demographics information for its service area, employee demographics, program level retention, success outcomes, and program awards data. This information is available to departments and divisions to assist in institutional and program planning as well as scheduling activities (II.A.1.a).

All non exempt students are required to take a standardized placement examination, and the College uses that data to determine the needs and educational preparation of students. The College primarily relies on the Faculty Senate, the Curriculum Committee and the Program Review and Planning processes to systematically review its courses and programs. The program review and planning process assesses enrollment trends, completion rates, resource needs, and discipline-based planning. It is unclear how the College consistently evaluates distance education in relation to its programs and delivery methods (II.A).

Students are surveyed to determine their needs. The College relies on the faculty to lead in the development and implementation of programs of study. The *Fact Book* includes data on completion rates for individual programs and shows a high rate of student retention throughout the educational programs. Career and technical education programs appear to have the highest success and retention rates reflecting students' successful completion of their programs (*2007-08 Fact Book* pages 42-44).

Lecture and laboratory courses are the primary modes of instruction at the College; however, there is a growing distance education program that utilizes courses via cable television or the Blackboard computer platform. Programs are assessed for currency through the course level and program level review processes. Faculty and academic administrators work together to hone course offerings and to promote student success. The College relies on the course and program review and planning processes to ensure programs are current and meeting the needs of students. Career and technical education

courses and programs are reviewed every 2 years. Academic courses are reviewed on a 5-year cycle and programs on a 2-year cycle. The College has begun to utilize its curriculum management system to document stated course level student learning outcomes and assessment activities. (II.A.2.b)

Palomar College offers a broad variety of staff development activities and has revised the tenure review process to ensure faculty is oriented to various instructional delivery systems and modes of instruction. The College has processes which systematically gather data on educational programs. More specifically, data regarding student success rates in the areas of general education, basic skills, and career and technical education programs has been assembled and reported (II.A.2.d-e).

The College serves a large and diverse geographical area. The range of diversity will mean a continuing change within the student population served by the College. The Student body is 49 % ethnic minority. The Hispanic student body has increased from 24% in 2004 to 28% in 2007. Local census information reflects that over the next 15 years the Hispanic population will increase by 66 percent within the College's service area. Many of the College's students are first generation college students and come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

A student satisfaction survey is used to learn directly from students about their educational needs. The College offers over 200 degree and certificate programs in addition to offering non credit and lifelong learning programs. The *Palomar College Fact Book* is prepared annually and includes such statistics as student demographic information and student success and retention. The fact book also includes information about the organizational structure of the College. Faculty members use this information to review courses and programs on a systematic cycle using the College's program review process. The College also utilizes initiatives such as the State's basic skills initiative to further study the needs of its students. Many of the career and technical education programs conduct employer satisfaction surveys to ensure graduates are meeting the workforce and economic develop needs of the local community's employers who have hired Palomar College graduates.

Recently, a Culture of Success Team was formed. The Culture of Success Team partners faculty members with students to discuss mutual concerns, to provide a platform for dialog about student responsibility, and to engage students in the learning process. This activity further reflects the commitment of the College to continually inform itself in relation to the needs of students and the community.

Findings and Evidence:

To ensure high quality instruction is being offered, the College uses departments, the Curriculum Committee, the Faculty Senate, Program Review and Planning and the Office of Institutional Research and Planning to receive feedback about the instruction offered. Additionally, internal committees such as the Basic Skills Committee and external advisory committees that provide additional input to program development or curricula

updates are used to obtain additional feedback about the instruction offered by the College (II.A.2).

New courses and programs originate at the individual faculty and department level. Career and technical education programs also originate by request from community agencies or an advisory committee of an existing program. In order to ensure that new programs align with the mission of the College, in 2006 a formal process was developed (Process for New Instructional Program Approval, faculty senate minutes 11.6/06). Once a program is approved, course curriculum is developed. Effective spring 2009, course level SLOs are prepared at the time the course is developed (II.A.2.i). Over time, all courses will have SLOs. In the meantime, until existing courses can be updated to include SLOs, the College has acted to ensure all new courses developed will be prepared with SLOs at the time the curriculum is written.

At the department level, there is well documented data relative to students attaining employment and pass rates for those disciplines that require certification or licensure. The College also documents the degrees and certificates awarded. Transfer information is also included in the fact book (*Palomar College Fact Book*, Page 47) (II.A.2).

All credit and non credit courses and programs are reviewed through course and program planning and review processes (Curriculum Webpage, Program review and planning documents). Courses are initiated by faculty and reviewed by the Curriculum Committee that will complete several steps. The Curriculum Committee will ensure that:

- o   The course supports the mission of the College.
- o   The method of delivery being proposed is adequate.
- o   The type and the number of credit units to be awarded is appropriate.

The College also offers developmental, pre-collegiate, study abroad, short term training, contract education, and community and continuing education. It is not clear how this alignment is considered in the existing course approval process.

The program review and planning process was modified in 2007 to a two-year cycle. In 2008-09, the first cycle was completed. At the time of the evaluation team's visit, the level of completion of this cycle was unclear due to the timing of the site visit and the due dates for the program reviews. Some program reviews are available on the website (wwwpalomar.edu/irp/IRAMBCdata.htm). The program review and planning documents include information regarding enrollment trends, resources necessary for program success, program planning connections to strategic plan, student learning outcomes, and program accomplishments (II.A.2.f).

Minutes of the Curriculum Committee are available online. A review of the curriculum website and CurriCUNET system demonstrates the required aspects of curriculum including SLOs, level of offering and the number of units granted. Courses are reviewed every 5 years (academic) or every 2 years (career and technical education programs). Course sequencing is completed using a collaborate process at the division and

department levels. Academic administrators and department chairs consider "time to completion" in the overall schedule development process (II.A.2.c.)

New courses and programs are approved in alignment with the State Chancellor's Office California community colleges guidelines. Faculty members determine competency levels at the course level. Career and technical education programs utilize industry employers and advisory committees to assess degrees and certificate programs. The quality of courses is determined through the course review cycle. The course approval process which includes a validation by the College's articulation officer further ensures appropriate course level transfer to local university partners (II.A.2.b).

The College offers a variety of contract education programs which are approved at the department level and are offered in accordance with the State Chancellor's Office California community colleges guidelines and the California Educational Code. The workforce and economic development department works closely with business and industry partners as well as subject matter experts to develop programs to meet the needs of the local workforce and economy (II.A.2.b).

With the addition of student learning outcomes and assessment activities to the course review process, several resources have been made available for faculty on the College's curriculum website. Frequently asked questions, a user's guide, and links to technical assistance are available on the web site. Faculty members determine each student's progress towards the completion of stated student learning outcomes (II.A.2.h).

The team did not find evidence that the College is using departmental course or program examinations to validate the effectiveness of faculty in measuring student learning and minimize test bias should that be occurring (II.A.2.g).

The CurriCUNET program allows students, staff, faculty, administrators, and community members to access the official course outline of record and the stated student learning outcomes. The Curriculum Committee evaluates all courses to ensure each course includes a proposed method of assessing student learning outcomes. At the course level, individual faculty members evaluate student performance in achieving student learning outcomes through various performance assessment modalities. Course outlines include methods of instruction used, critical thinking activities involved, sample assignments, and methods of assessment that may be involved in determining the performance of students (II.A.2.b).

The College has recently revised its tenure evaluation, and review process to ensure faculty are thoroughly oriented to the College, the student body it serves, and resources available to faculty (new faculty orientation agenda, August 2007). Full-time faculty members complete a four-year tenure review process prior to being recommended for tenured employment (Appendix K, PFF Agreement). Part-time faculty members are evaluated during their first year of employment and are then placed into a triennial cycle for evaluation at least every six semesters (PFF Agreement, page 92) (II.A.2.b).

The College represents itself to students, the public and employees through the college catalog, the class schedule and the website. The catalog outlines the requirements and transfer policies of all academic and vocational degree programs. Faculty members are relied on to determine the appropriateness of each course in the general education curriculum. Although the College regularly reviews its course policies, procedures and course outlines, completed student learning outcomes have yet to be loaded into CurriCUNET and could not be found at the time of the team's visit to the College.

The degree requirements for general education for the students who complete the Associate of Arts degree or career and technical education degree include the following:

    a. An understanding of the basic content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge: areas include the humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences

    b. A capability to be a productive individual and lifelong learner

    c. A recognition of what it means to be an ethical human being and effective citizen: qualities include an appreciation of ethical principles; civility and interpersonal skills; respect for cultural diversity; historical and aesthetic sensitivity; and the willingness to assume civic, political, and social responsibilities locally, nationally, and globally (2008/09 College Catalog, Page 48) (II.A.3)

Palomar College offers a wide range of courses within language and rationality, natural sciences, humanities, social and behavioral sciences and integrated self and lifelong learning. According to the College's Educational Philosophy, the General Education (GE) program offers equal opportunities for all. The College helps its students to realize their potential so that students' talents become available to the community, and the students' participation in society becomes more effective (II.A.3).

There are 30 courses in language and rationality, 62 courses in natural sciences, 176 courses in humanities, 92 courses in social/behavioral science and 27 courses in self improvement and lifelong learning offered by Palomar College. To complete the General Education requirements of an Associate degree program, students must complete at least three units in each area of study listed in the opening sentence of this paragraph. All courses are approved by use of the curriculum approval process established by the Curriculum Committee. The College catalog lists the courses in the major areas of study. CurriCUNET has outlines and course materials for all GE courses. Faculty members submit new curriculum through CurriCUNET via a template that prompts authors for all required information needed to obtain approval (II.A.3.a).

Students completing GE requirements at Palomar must complete courses in reading and written communication, mathematics, American History and Institutions/California Government, health and physical education, and multicultural requirements. There are many course offerings listed in the catalog that provide this knowledge base. The College does not require a technology/information competency or literacy requirement; however,

technology is woven throughout the curriculum and is used frequently within the classroom (II.A.3.b).

The College's mission statement addresses the promotion of leadership and civic responsibility. The GE pattern requires students to have an understanding of diversity. There are student clubs on campus supporting various interests. There are Board of Trustees' policies in place to address student participation in campus life, free speech, student rights and grievance and student conduct. The team could not find specific SLOs addressing ethics and effective citizenship although the College cited its institutional goal of critical thinking as supporting the concepts of this standard in the self study report. The College offers multicultural studies and evidences a growing international program. There are a number of student life opportunities on the campus. Many campus clubs that include hobbies, cultural, religious and various intellectual interests are offered for students (II.A.3.c).

All degree programs include a focused study in at least one established area or interdisciplinary core. Palomar offers over 100 career and technical programs preparing students for the workforce. CurriCUNET outlines the program approval and review process. CurriUNET supports the requirements of student learning outcomes and the resulting assessment. Some courses are directed specifically to the completion of vocational and occupational certificates. An example is Microsoft Certified System Engineer. The majority of degrees and certificates listed in the catalog do not specify if employment competencies are met (II.A.4 and 5).

Conversations with faculty, staff, and administrators reflect an acknowledgement that the actual documentation of course outcomes started about a year ago and assessment has not yet begun. Most of the College courses have neither SLOs nor assessment listed in CurriCUNET at this time. The part-time faculty evaluation process includes the criteria "Course objectives and requirements are clearly stated in the class syllabus and communicated to the class" Conversations with students verify the presence of course objectives in their syllabus but students are not familiar with student learning outcomes (II.A.6).

The College catalog contains clear and accurate information on course requirements, transfer credit, related college information about programs and is widely published and available. The catalog is provided to all California community colleges, California State Universities (CSUs), University of California universities (UCs), local high schools and private universities. Transfer policies are stated in the catalog, and copies of articulation agreements are available in the counseling office and the transfer center. Articulation agreements are updated as approval for general education transfer courses are approved or when requested by the transfer institutions. In addition, high school 2+2 articulation agreements are developed and maintained with the over 40 local feeder high schools in the service district. For transfer credit, official transcripts are required and evaluated, including foreign degrees that have been evaluated. Palomar College has over 400 articulation agreements available in hard copy form (II.A.6).

All transfer credit requests from regionally accredited institutions, degree-applicable, lower-division courses are accepted. Other transfer credit requests are evaluated individually for comparability to Palomar College courses (II.A.6.a).

Elimination of programs or program requirements follows a process to minimize disruption for students. The catalog rights policy allows students to use their "exit" catalog for completion of a degree or certificate. Students are counseled on instructional program completion requirements when changes occur in degree or certificate requirements (II.A.6.b).

Although the College has a flowchart addressing a program discontinuance process, there is no board policy or related administrative procedure on program discontinuance. The team suggests a policy and related administrative procedures be developed and made available to the campus community (II.A.6.b).

The catalog is reviewed and updated annually. The catalog update follows a schedule for academic division offices and educational programs and services offices to participate in the review of the accuracy and information included in the catalog (Catalog Revision Timeline). The timeline for revision is published and the revision process includes broad College-wide participation (II.A.6.c)

The curriculum process is in place for new programs and new, approved, and revised courses. The catalog is available in print and on the website in as the class schedule and related program information. Course outlines, which are to include student learning outcomes, are available by accessing CurriCUNET through the College website to students and the public. The team found no evidence of a formalized expectation to include course or program level student learning outcomes on the syllabus for each course (II.A.6.c).

Board Policy 4030 on academic freedom was updated in May 2006. The policy was written by the College's Faculty Senate and includes a distinction between personal convictions and the commitments of the College. The team did not find evidence the policy was published in the College catalog or any other publications. It is not available on the College website (II.A.2.7).

Staff development training on the Academic Freedom Policy is offered by the Faculty Senate to faculty and staff who may be interested in that training. The catalog and student handbook provide information about the student grievance policy. All policies are published and available to the public. The policy on student academic honesty appears in the catalog, and is posted on the website. Additionally, the student handbook is given to most students at the College's mandatory assessment and orientation events. The College does not require conformity to specific codes of conduct of staff, faculty, administrators, or students or seek to instill specific beliefs or world views (II.A.7.a, 7.b, 7.c).

The College does not offer curricula in foreign locations (II.A.8).

Conclusions:

The College understands its student population and the demographics of its service area. A broad range of research reports have been generated to inform the College about discipline and department productivity rates, student success and retention rates, as well as the potential future demands for instructional programs. These are available to faculty and administrators to consider in the development of new courses and programs and for use in the regular schedule development processes.

Although the College has a published mission statement, it is unclear how the development of instructional programs is aligned with the mission. For example, College employees were unable to articulate the institution's priorities for instructional program development and growth. Specific examples include a lack of clarity of the role and emphasis on the development of non-credit courses and certificates to align and support student matriculation into credit instructional programs. Additionally, the team could not identify where the College's priorities were stated in relation to meeting the demands of local workforce needs as well as the development of transfer programs. Because the College does not have a formalized structure for broad dialogue on enrollment management considerations, it appears that discussions occur within individual departments on the San Marcos campus.

The College offers a broad range of degree and certificate programs to meet students' needs. Students report satisfaction with the diversity of offerings and the College relies on faculty for expertise in the development of the College's curriculum. Although the College has a growing distance education program, it appears as though there are inconsistencies in assuring the quality between delivery modes of the College (traditional face-to-face offerings versus distance education).

The College does not have a process to validate the preparedness of faculty who teach using the distance education modality. A subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee was recently created to evaluate methods of instruction for distance education courses. Because the College does not have a policy to define regular and effective contact for distance education courses, it lacks a standard to measure the effectiveness of the distance education program. There is insufficient evidence available to assess how effective distance education courses are as a teaching modality at Palomar College.

Palomar College has made little progress ensuring student learning outcomes are developed at the course, program, and institutional level. Although an initial effort was made to establish a philosophy of assessment and development of institutional learning outcomes several years ago, the process stalled, and work was redirected to focus on the development of course level outcomes. To date, the team found evidence that course level outcomes have been developed for approximately 400 of the College's 1700 courses, or approximately 25% of the college's active courses. Student learning outcomes are evident for programs which are career and technical education in nature but not evident across the College's curriculum. Also, the College has not developed outcomes at

the general education, or institutional levels. This limited progress on development of outcomes has prevented the college from focusing on assessment strategies (II.A.1.c).

The College offers diverse course offerings and requires all courses to be systematically reviewed every five years through the course review process (two years for career and technical education courses) and all new curricula are developed through the CurriCUNET template (II.A.3.a).

The College partially meets the requirements of Standard II.A. The team makes the following recommendations:

Recommendations:

See Recommendation # 3 (2009)
Student Learning Outcomes

Recommendation # 5 (2009)
Distance Education- Ensure Comparable Quality of Instruction
To meet the standards, the team recommends the College focus efforts on identifying processes to ensure the quality of instructional programs, especially the increasingly popular distance education courses, are consistent regardless of the location or delivery mode (II.A.1).

Recommendation # 6 (2009)
Board of Trustees Policies
To comply with the Standards, the team recommends the Board of Trustees review, enforce and when necessary prepare policies to set direction on the following areas:

1. Prepare a policy to addresses significant changes in programs or elimination of programs (II.A.6)

2. Publish the updated policy on Academic Freedom BP 4030 approved in May 2006 (II.A.7)

3. Prepare a Board of Trustees Policy or enforce existing requirements to protect administrators from retaliatory and race based comments when being evaluated (III.A.3, 3.a, 3.b, III.A.4, 4.a, 4.c, Commission *Policy on Diversity*).

4. Comply with existing policies related to:
   a. Professional development and new member orientation. In order for these activities to be complete and comprehensive, the College is encouraged to prepare a formal structured orientation where modules covering every significant aspect of the responsibilities of a trustee are covered (IV.B.1.f).

5. Reassess the appropriateness of BP 7100 and consider enhancing the policy entitled "Commitment to Diversity" as the current policy has been insufficient in ensuring the College complies with the Commission's *Policy on Diversity*.

6. Establish a policy that denies access to the Board of Trustees by members of the Faculty Senate unless due process rights of any employee subject to a discussion about their performance are provided with due process rights (IV.B.1.e).

STANDARD II
Student Learning Programs and Services

B: Student Support Services

General Observations:

Palomar College provides an extensive array of comprehensive student support services from a highly trained and dedicated professional staff. These services include:

- Admissions and Records
- Articulation Services
- Assessment
- Orientation & Advisement
- Career Services
- Counseling Services
- Disability Resource Center
- EOPS, CARE, CalWORKs
- Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Grant Funded Student Programs
- Federal TRIO programs
- Student Support Services
- Health Services,
- International Education Services
- Student Affairs
- Associated Student Government,
- Transfer Center
- Veterans' Services
- Palomar College Police Department

Student Services faculty, staff, and administrators work closely and cooperatively with Instructional Services through the two Planning Councils (Student Services Planning Council and Instructional Planning Council); and the President's Cabinet in order to provide integrated services to all students.

The Program Review process is newly redefined and is in its first cycle after the latest process revision. The Office of Institutional Research & Planning provides data and support in order to assess student services. Each program area in the Student Services Division is represented in the Student Services Planning Council which is chaired by the Vice President for Student Services.

The Vice President is also a member of the Strategic Planning Council (the Shared Governance Council) where all institutional planning councils feed into. In preparation for this Self-Study, the College was required by the California Community College Chancellor's Office to participate in a Self-Evaluation in 2006 to determine the effectiveness of state categorical programs. With the assistance of the Office of Institutional Research & Planning, Student

Services completed a tracking study looking at retention, persistence, and success rates of participants from these programs compared to the entire student population at Palomar College.

The results indicated that in all areas of comparison, these Student Support Program participants were more successful in these outcomes over the general population. Most of the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Service Area Outcomes (SAO's) in Student Services are at the awareness stage, with a few programs, such as Counseling, at the developmental stage. The program review documents are designed to yield data for evaluation, leading to the development of improved services.

Student Services staff work cooperatively with other areas (i.e. Instructional Services, Office of Institutional Research & Planning, etc.) to ensure its publications are correct, complete, and up-to-date providing all students with valuable college information. These publications include the College Catalog and the Student Guidebook, which include policies such as the Student Code of Conduct and Student's Rights and Responsibilities. Student Services routinely conducts research on the needs of students in order to provide the most appropriate services to students. The College has twice conducted the Community College Survey of Student Engagement and shared the results with student services staff to plan for improved services.

In addition to these comprehensive services, Student Services at Palomar College offers many personal and social venues, workshops, and activities, to add value to the educational experience of each student. Several functions and activities also engage students in areas of civic responsibility such as, Habitat for Humanity, Book Drives, Voter Registration Drives, Food Drives, Walk-A-Thons, etc. Activities that expose students to rich cultural diversity include, Black History Month, Noche De Cultura, Native American Heritage, Asian Pacific Heritage, Women's History Month, etc.

Student Services at Palomar College are exemplary and a model for other colleges in the State. The commitment to student success is quite evident.

Findings and Evidence:

While Palomar College's Self-Study clearly states that it recruits and admits students who have the ability to benefit from its programs, it does not cite evidence on how it makes this determination; however, after review of the Institutional Policies and Procedures found on the website, the policy and procedures under the student services section clearly describes the Ability To Benefit (ATB) and the policy used to make ATB determination.

At Palomar College ATB is determined at each application level. Through this process, students are determined exempt or non-exempt for matriculation. Non-exempt students are directed to assessment to determine placement in English and Math, as well as to determine whether or not the student has the ability to benefit from its program offerings for financial aid eligibility purposes. The ATB statement and description is stated in financial aid information, but not in publications like the College Catalog. It is suggested that the ATB statement be included in the College catalog.

The College's Self-Study points out that Student Services programs have a commitment to continuous improvement to assure that services are consistently relevant and effective. College-wide discussions have occurred and take place in the Strategic Planning Council, and at each of the Planning Councils. In the Student Services areas, discussions within the program meetings regarding student access, progress, learning, and success take place routinely and are well documented within agendas and minutes reviewed by the team (II.B).

In review of the information provided in the catalog, it is noted that Palomar College offers a wide range of services and an array of State and Federal Student Support Programs. The Institutional Research and Planning department provided data to show how students who participate in Support Services Programs (i.e. Student Support Services, EOPS, CARE, etc.) have a higher retention, persistent, and success rates when compared to the general student population that does not participate in these programs (II.B.1).

Palomar College's General Catalog is available both in print and on the website. While the College Catalog provides precise, accurate, and current information on all of the required general information, requirements, major policies affecting students, and locations where publications of other policies may be found, the College's Academic Freedom Statement was not found in the 2008-2009 publication; however, a review of the Institutional Policies and Procedures revealed that the College did have an Academic Freedom Statement published and is located on the website (II.B.1).

It is suggested that the College add the Academic Freedom statement in the next publication of its catalog. While the non-discrimination statement was found in the college catalog, it was attached to the Policy on Diversity section. It is suggested that the non-discrimination statement be included in the next publication of the catalog under its own heading to ensure current and prospective students clearly identify it. The catalog also provides a History of the College, the Vision, Mission, and Educational Philosophy of Palomar College. The catalog is well organized and divided into sections for easy reference and review (II.B, 2.a, b, and c).

Palomar College's General Catalog is reviewed annually for accuracy and completeness by a team from both Student and Instructional Services. Instruction on the curriculum side is responsible for the core of academic offerings. The Director of Enrollment Services is responsible for all the program descriptions and rules, etc. after consultation with each area covered in the Catalog.

As previously mentioned, the Catalog is available in both print and on the Colleges' website to provide access to all students, within and outside the areas encompassing Palomar College. Other publications such as the course schedule, Board of Trustees Policies and Procedures, Student Guidebook, which includes the Student Code of Conduct and Student's Rights and Responsibilities, are also found in both hard copy and online. As previously stated in this report, the catalog is generally complete, clear, easy to understand, easy to use, and well constructed.

The Student Affairs Office handles all Student Conduct and student grievance issues. The policy regarding such complaints is found on in the College's policies and procedures section of the Catalog. The Director of Student Affairs, who is also responsible for Student Discipline, is first contact point for student complaints. Students wishing to file a complaint/grievance may file the complaint using the Student Complaint form found in the Student Affairs Office. Counselors may also refer students to this office to discuss or file complaints as appropriate. The steps to resolution are clearly articulated in the policy and procedures (II.B.2.d).

Palomar College's Self-Study described a process to conduct routine and regular research that is self-reflective and evaluative in identifying the learning support needs of students. The Student Services areas have participated in Program Review and routinely use data to evaluate and refine or re-define student needs. The Self-Study described a collaborative process between Student Services and Instruction to develop a balanced and comprehensive class schedule that supports students at all levels of their educational programs. This was confirmed through agendas and minutes of the Student Services and Instructional Planning Councils. Assessment results are also shared with the English and Math faculty in order to plan for appropriate course offerings. The Self-Study provided two examples of data-driven decision making and a cycle of evaluation and planning (II.B. 3).

Palomar College offers courses and provides services at the main campus, as well as the off-campus centers and sites. The needs noted above indicate that the evaluation of student needs occur holistically for the entire student population, but is also displayed by distinct service area locations. After a visit to the Escondido site, it was determined and verified that all student services, including admissions and records, financial aid, counseling, cashier, tutoring, Upward Bound and EOC TRIO programs, health services, bookstore, food services, library, language, computer and skill labs, campus police, and child care services available at the main campus site were also available at the Escondido site (II.B. 3).

A visit to the Camp Pendleton site showed services are provided although a need to increase student services was indicated. The staff at the Escondido site report to the programs and departments off campus. In addition, they attend regular staff meetings at the main campus site, and conversely, main campus employees visit the center on a regular basis. Currently, the College is working on a Facilities Master Plan to include renovations needed at the Escondido site, however, most of the planning takes place at the main campus site (II.B. 3).

Evaluations of student services are conducted using student survey instruments. Data from the Escondido site is collected through the College's Research and Planning department. At least in the Student Services area, resource needs are determined based on the number of students who use the services at the site (II.B.3.a).

The Student Services department encourages all College constituencies to engage in on-going dialogue regarding the impact of services on the learning environment through the

Strategic Planning Process, the Annual Implementation Plan process, and the Program Review and Planning process. Various academic and non-academic activities were described in the Self-Study, such as Campus Explorations, Political Economy Days, Cultural events, Transfer and Career Fairs, etc., to create an environment where students can exercise civic and social responsibility, as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development. Student surveys are used to evaluate these activities for continuous improvement of this standard (IIB, 3.b).

A comprehensive array of student services was described in Palomar Colleges' Self-Study. Weekly district-wide counseling meetings and monthly meetings with the Dean of Counseling Services provide for on-going dialogue regarding the effectiveness of the services in meeting student needs. These meetings also serve to provide up-to-date training to counselors to keep abreast of changes affecting student advising (II.B, 3.b).

All full-time and adjunct counselors must meet the minimum qualifications in order to provide service as a Counselor at Palomar College. In addition, new counselors go through rigorous training and are assigned a mentor to work with them for the first year of employment. Some of the training topics include use of People Soft software, Articulations, course patterns, GE requirements, etc. (IIB, 3.b).

In order to keep abreast of any changes in advising content, all counselors attend a monthly in-service training meeting. Full-time counselors, through a tenure review process, are required to be evaluated by their peers on the first, second, and third year of employment prior to being recommended for tenure. Once tenure is conferred, regular counseling evaluations are conducted on a three-year cycle. Adjunct counselors follow the same evaluation and review model as full-time counselors although they are not tenured track employees of the college. Counselors are expected to complete personal development plans on an annual basis. Program reviews and data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning are to be used to continuously review and improve services to students. Annual Counseling retreats focus on the creation of Student Learning Outcomes and Service Area Outcomes for counseling (II.B, 3.c).

As described above, various academic and non-academic activities are provided to create an environment where students can exercise civic and social responsibility, as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development. Various clubs and programs through the Student Affairs department promote student understanding and appreciation of diversity. Students seeking an Associate Degree are required to complete a multicultural course in order to graduate. Twice the Community College Survey of Student Engagement was administered to measure student satisfaction with services to students. Results have been used to improve services.

The Student Affairs Office has the responsibility of overseeing all campus clubs and activities. The Director is also responsible for campus events and student forums. On a regular basis, the Director meets with various clubs to elicit ideas for activities provided to students. This process of bringing diverse activities to the campus is student driven. Several examples of on-going activities were cited. Evaluations of activities are provided

with the use of student surveys and evaluation forms from the club student leadership (II.B.3.d).

The Admissions Office does a comprehensive review of its practices through a variety of methods. Student Satisfaction surveys are used annually to determine the effectiveness of services. International Student Programs are also evaluated using surveys. Data is provided by the Research and Planning office to determine effectiveness of services and departmental goals found in the Program Review documents. Assessment tests used for placement into Math and English courses are on the Chancellor's Office list of approved placement instruments. According to Palomar Colleges' Self-Study, validation studies are conducted as required to ensure validity of the instrument and to establish appropriate cut scores for placement in various Math and English courses. A review of the validation studies and disproportionate impact studies ensured that these instruments were free of bias and provided for appropriate placement based on multiple measures (II.B, 3.e).

Palomar College has policies that are published and conform to FERPA, California Education Code, Title 5, and Governing Board policies regarding release of student information. It also has procedures in place to safe guard access to records by appropriate personnel. All records prior to 1983 have been microfilmed or scanned. All new records after 1983 are in the computer system and are maintained by backup systems. Permanent records are secured in the college bank and in a vault in private storage. Procedures for access are online for students. Access is limited to those who need it internally. The College follows all Title V record retention requirements. The policy is found in the Board Policy and Procedures manual. The Admissions and Records office has recently updated its record retention policy and is in the process of going through shared governance before it goes to the Board for approval (II.B, 3.f).

Palomar College states that systematic and regular reviews of student services are conducted by the Office of Research and Planning. Student Satisfaction surveys are also conducted on an on-going basis. Program reviews are used to evaluate services as well. All these evaluative methods are used for continuous improvement of student services. Student Learning Outcomes are at the awareness stage in most student services programs and at the developmental stage for counseling services. On-going dialogue continues to determine the appropriate assessment of achievement of SLOs as they are developed (II.B.4).

Conclusions:

Palomar College meets the all of the requirements of Standard II with the exception of not having fully implemented and assessed SLOs. The College provides extensive student services programs to meet the needs of its students, including those from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. The staff are highly trained and committed to student success. The team offers the following commendations:

Recommendations:
See Recommendation #3 (2009)
Student Learning Outcomes:

Standard II
Student Learning Programs and Services

C. Library

<u>General Observations:</u>

The College provides instructional support through library and tutoring services on its Palomar and Escondido campuses. Since the last self-study, Palomar has reorganized the library. Shortages of faculty, staff and lack of space have given the College concern. In addition, these shortages have added to the concern for tutorial services—especially proctoring of online student exams. A new facility is scheduled to open in 2011. At that time, the college hopes to have a plan in place to support staffing and student needs Recent economic downturns in California have placed constraints on state funds needed for the new library facility. Since 88% of these costs were to be funded by a state bond and only12% by Proposition M (the College's voter approved facilities improvement bond) this has resulted in a delayed start date for construction.

Web sites for library, tutoring and support services are easy to navigate and contain a wealth of information for faculty, staff, students and community. It appears that the College has made an effort to relieve staff shortages by providing as many online services as possible.

Currently each learning module offered by the library at both the Palomar and Escondido sites have learning outcomes associated with it. Assessment of these outcomes is anticipated within the next 18 months. Librarians recognize that much assessment is already in place and simply needs to be worded in such a way that it meets the standards for SLO assessment.

Online library support is provided to the Palomar and Escondido campuses through access to data bases. Faculty often include library usage instruction as part of their course requirements. Distance education students also have access to the online data bases provided through the library web site. A Blackboard course has been developed to allow on-line instruction of library services by linking the course to instructional courses using Blackboard.

The Accreditation Employee Survey 2008 supports the claim that libraries and other learning support services are sufficient for faculty needs. This has been substantiated for both tutoring and laboratory support. Student surveys were verified for fall 2007 and spring 2008. The Palomar library maintains data to substantiate community satisfaction of services offered.

<u>Findings and Evidence:</u>

The College's self study indicates that it uses surveys to evaluate student and faculty satisfaction with the library collection of books as resources. More than half of the

students and faculty surveyed found the book collection to be adequate for their needs (II.C.1).

The Accreditation Employee Survey 2008 shows instruction for library and other support services to be available at no charge. The statistics provided show they are heavily used by all. Satisfaction was evident for faculty and students in the following areas:

- o Able to find library resources: 74.8% of respondents
- o Satisfied with hours of operations: 68.2% of respondents
- o Support services contribute to student success: 84% of respondents
- o Accommodate a wide-ranging need: 83% of respondents
- o Aware of the support services available: 92.4% of respondents
- o Satisfied with number and scope of library resources: 70% of respondents
- o Satisfied with helpfulness and knowledge of staff: 83.8% of respondents
- o Arranged for instruction for their class survey: inconclusive
- o Satisfied with scope and quality of library services: 95%

Faculty and students have access to reciprocal borrowing agreements, resources through a media consortium that allows borrowing of books and media from the San Diego County Office of Education, and from an interlibrary loan agreement from other lending institutions. Based on the wide support available, students, faculty, staff and community have a tremendous opportunity to enhance knowledge, information skills and aesthetic appreciation which are qualities identified by the mission statement of Palomar College (II.C.1.a).

Library faculty and staff have been leaders in the College's efforts to provide students learning opportunities to develop information competency skills. Information competency means that students will be able to analyze information, determine the type of information that might be useful, effectively access this information, understand and evaluate the information, and then use that information appropriately and effectively (II.C.1.a).

Librarians attend meetings throughout the campus working with various divisions and departments, which enables them to inform faculty of new services and technologies available through the Library. Regular attendance at these meetings also affords librarians an opportunity to learn the needs of each discipline. Each full-time librarian is assigned as a liaison to specific departments in order to facilitate an on-going dialogue and rapport with Library Services (II.C.1.b).

Currently space at both facilities is insufficient to accommodate all materials and users. The College's full-text electronic resources are available through internet access 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. With online accessibility, there is equal access to all students. However, the self study noted that in both the Palomar San Marcos campus and the Escondido Center there are problems with noise and lack of office space. Computers and the wireless network are sufficient but can conflict with classes and other instruction activities. The issues identified for the Escondido campus will be resolved within the next six months. Reallocation of facility space will alleviate the problems identified. Part of

the construction efforts is being made with private funding earmarked specifically for the Escondido campus (II.C.1.b).

Additional funds are available through the Languages and Literature division by means of BSI and HSI grants which are available initially for the Escondido site. After successful implementation of the programs, other campuses will be included. Camp Pendleton site students use the base library, and although it is not an academic library, the site augments learning resources materials. Camp Pendleton has a need to increase tutorial services beyond one volunteer.

The Tutoring Center at San Marcos is open 47 hours a week but hours are limited at the Escondido Center. A recent decision to develop a teaching and learning center at the Escondido Center is expected to further support students. Labs are open at both the San Marcos campus from 8:00AM to 10:00PM six days a week and the Escondido campus from 8:00AM to 10:00PM Monday through Thursday and until 4:00PM on Friday. All labs offer online services and access to the web. (II.C.1.c)

Security in both campus libraries is maintained with key access. The library's collections are secured with 3M brand security strips and 3M brand security gates. A proxy server allows for restricted access to e-books. The campus maintains the reliability and security of the system network server and other computer network software. Information Services troubleshoots desktop computers. The Library building and its contents, physical and electronic, are maintained securely. (II.C.1.d)

The institution takes responsibility for and assures the reliability of all services provided either directly or through contractual arrangement.

Services include:

- North County Higher Education Alliance (NCHEA)
- Community College Media Collection and Information
- Community College Library Consortium (CCLC)
- Council of Chief Librarians of the California Community Colleges (CCL)
- San Diego and Imperial Counties Community College Learning Resources
- Collaborative (SDICCCLRC)
- Technology and Telecommunications Infrastructure Program (TTIP
- Online Computer Library Center (OCLC)

The College maintains a contract with SIRSI Dynix for the provision of a database for student access to catalog records for library materials. A variety of modules that are upgraded annually are utilized for circulation, cataloging, and statistical reporting. The new library will also use the SIRSI Dynix system as well. To evaluate their contracted services, the College uses the statistical reporting module of the SIRSI Dynix and also relies on student and faculty surveys. The College also maintains a contract with the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) for use in cataloging new acquisitions (II.C.1.e).

The Library evaluates its collections, programs, courses, and services by collaborating with faculty from various departments. Faculty may earn Professional Development hours by evaluating relevant sections of the Library's collection and making suggestions for purchases and deletion.

In spring 2008, librarians began to look at formal assessment methods to determine how well student learning outcomes have been met. Currently, librarians are developing and testing assessment instruments and gathering assessment evidence. Implementation of a more systematic approach to assessment of student learning outcomes is planned for fall 2009. In addition librarians created learning outcomes for information competency.

Tutoring Services seeks feedback and suggestions for improvement by asking tutors and students to fill out a survey assessing their experience in the program. The respondents are asked to indicate their agreement with a number of evaluative statements. This information is requested to identify any area that needs to be revised. (II.C.2)

Conclusions:

The self-study and the Library/Learning Resource Center PAR reports both consider the lack of staff and appropriate space as obstacles to fulfilling the mission of the department. Further expansion of the Palomar, Escondido and Fallbrook campuses will exacerbate this situation. Alternate ways of meeting perceived needs through website delivery of some services and CurriCUNET linked courses will provide some assistance.

It appears from the Self-Study that students, faculty, and staff are, for the large part, satisfied with library services and information availability based on the responses to surveys. Student learning outcomes are in place for the libraries but the cycle of assessment for these outcomes and improvement based on those assessments has not begun. Currently models of assessment are being reviewed and hope to be in place within the next 18 months.

Recommendations:
See Recommendation #2 (2009)
Integrated Planning, Evaluation, and Resource Allocation Decision Making

See Recommendation #3 (2009)
Student Learning Outcomes

STANDARD III
Resources

A. Human Resources

General Observations:

Palomar College has robust procedures and policies in place to ensure the hiring of qualified faculty, administrators, and staff. It has a thorough process, beginning with a needs assessment for appropriate personnel to hire, job descriptions, job announcements, advertising, and the formation and training of hiring committees through the screening and interview stages. Addressing a previous recommendation from 2003, the College has instituted mechanisms to ensure the cyclical evaluation of its employees, though the figures provided in the Self Study and by the College reflect that it has not fully reached its goal. Recommendations 3 and 4 from 2003 have not been fully implemented. The team prepared new recommendations to address the portions of the recommendations that have not been implemented. See 2009 Recommendation 7 and 8.

There are several other weaknesses in the area of Human Resources. Not all of the constituent groups have a written code of professional ethics, which the Self Study noted and has listed as an item of the Planning Agenda in the Self Study report. Only the full-time instructional faculty members are being evaluated with regard to Student Learning Outcomes. The College is concerned with the full-time to part-time faculty ratio, indicating a perceived lack of full-time faculty to do the needed work. And despite its commendable efforts to diversify its faculty ranks, the College needs to continue to pay attention to this endeavor as practices put in place have resulted in virtually no change in the percentage of minority/under represented employees at the College.

Changes have been effective in increasing the number of minority applicants receiving interviews for employment at Palomar College. However, minority applicants fail to be recommended for hire (or they refuse offers of employment) resulting in an overall lack of diversity that remains a concern even after six years of effort on the part of the College. In order to achieve the diversity listed as desired by the College offers of employment must be extended to applicants of minority groups.

In FY 2003-2004, 80.9% of the employees were Caucasian. In FY 2007-2008 the total number of white employees was 79.9%. There is no noticeable change in the demographic composition of the College. Efforts were made to recruit more minority applicants for employment by the College. Data available shows a representative proportion of minority applicants were hired by the College. For example, 25% minority background applicants applied for positions with 25% of total hires being minorities. In order for the College to significantly improve the diversity of the employees to be more consistent with the community and student body demographics, the College will need to greatly increase the percentage of minority applicants hired for positions; all of this without providing preferential treatment to any category of job applicants.

Finally, the evaluation team was alarmed to read comments in the Self Study Report, confirmed during the evaluation visit, that the Faculty Senate conducts an evaluation process of administrators that is not authorized in either College policies or Faculty Senate policies. The evaluations are conducted without the participation of administrators being evaluated. Upon completion of the evaluation, the Faculty Senate discusses the results of its evaluation with the Board of Trustees. Additionally, comments collected during the survey of faculty members are discussed by the Faculty Senate in open meetings. The practice created by the Faculty Senate constitutes an open personnel evaluation where the identity of the administrators is disclosed along with comments including such harmful statements, in one case, indicating the employee was only hired because of the heritage of the individual. This practice goes against the requirements of Standard IV.A.3, among others.

Findings and Evidence:

Palomar College relies on its *Governing Board Policies and Procedures*, Chapter 7 – Human Resources, to ensure qualified candidates are selected for employment. Using the Program Review and Planning process, as well as the planning councils, the data are used to prioritize staff needs (III.A.1).

Human Resources Services plays an active role in overseeing and coordinating all aspects of the hiring process in an effort to ensure that qualified candidates are selected and equal employment opportunity processes are followed. In terms of new faculty hiring, faculty members play a major role in the process. The faculty hiring committees ask questions that determine candidate expertise in the academic discipline, academic preparation, and teaching strategies. Candidates for teaching and librarian positions are required to have a live teaching demonstration to determine their knowledge and teaching style and effectiveness. It is unclear how the College defines and determines "effective teaching," since faculty hiring rests largely in the hands of the departments.

In response to Recommendation #1 in the 2003 accreditation report, the district developed more extensive and ultimately more effective advertising strategies resulting in more diversity in applicant pools. Human Resources Services screens applications to ensure applicants meet legal requirements for employment. The Faculty Senate Equivalency Committee determines equivalency. The College believes its processes have led to highly qualified employees. Having trained compliance officers assures consistency in hiring procedures. The College acknowledges that the hiring of part-time faculty is more decentralized, with Human Resources Services recommending a new more centralized hiring process (III.A.1.a).

Recommendation #4 from 2003 directed that classified staff, administrators/managers, and part-time faculty are regularly evaluated. From the Self Study (p. 268), the percentage of classified staff, administrators/managers, and part-time faculty evaluated has risen significantly, but has not been fully realized. The district has developed policies and evaluation forms that assess the effectiveness of personnel and encourage performance improvement and includes goals and objectives for the next review.

However, there is no evidence of a connection between personnel evaluations and institutional effectiveness and improvement.

While members of the faculty have engaged in discussions on the development of Student Learning Outcomes, it has not been widespread considering the percentage of courses that have SLOs is lower than 30%. Part-time faculty members have not been fully integrated into these discussions. Assessment measures have not been widely adopted. While there is evidence from the Professional Development activities that pockets of the College are involved with teaching methodologies to improve learning, it is not evident that it is a College-wide endeavor. The Career Technical Education programs undergo curriculum and program review every two years while all other instructional programs undergo program review every two years and curriculum review every five years (III.A.1.b, III.A.1.c).

In line with the evaluation process is the issue of whether or not "faculty and others directly responsible for student progress" in achieving stated student learning outcomes have "as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes." In the Self Study, it is clear that only full-time instructional faculty have one evaluation item focusing on student learning outcomes. An examination of the evaluation forms for all full-time faculty shows that only full-time instructional faculty are evaluated for establishing appropriate learning outcomes for each course and consistently assessed for those outcomes. The full-time library and counseling faculty do not have this item in their evaluation. The part-time faculty are also not evaluated in this manner. The evaluation forms for all other employees, including classified staff and administrators, some of whom might have a direct responsibility for student progress in achieving student learning outcomes, do not have an SLO component in their evaluation. In this area, the College has not met the standard (III.A.1.b, III.A.1.c).

The Board of Trustees, the Faculty Senate, and the Administrative Association have a written code of professional ethics. The Council of Classified Employees and the Confidential and Supervisory Team do not. The College only partially meets this standard (III.A.1.d).

The College has a planning process in place that uses the Program Review and Planning reports and Institutional Review and Planning reports to assist in determine appropriate staff levels across the College and in determining the structure of the administration. As with many colleges in California, Palomar College is struggling with freeing up resources or acquiring additional resources to hire more full-time faculty. Despite the fiscal challenges, the College has decided to pursue an objective of achieving a 75% full time versus adjunct faculty ratio and is relying on the work of the "75/25" Workgroup to form a process to assist in achieving this objective.

The College has a planning agenda in its Self Study report that is expected to develop a plan and a process to identify and plan for staffing levels in all areas to support students. This Workgroup is operating outside of the already-defined College routine planning bodies. The "75/25" Workgroup was defined and membership confirmed by and drawn

from the Strategic Planning Council on September 2, 2008. A "workgroup" is defined on page 4 of the College's _Governance and Administrative Structure Handbook_ as an Ad Hoc Committee: A working group or sub-group created by a council or operational committee to address and make recommendations on a particular subject.

Based on interviews with College personnel the team learned that the budget process also operates outside established routine planning processes. A workgroup to develop a course of action to increase the full time faculty ratio is also expected to address a process that requires dedication of increased resources over a period of time to accomplish the intended objective. Given that staff has expressed concern to team members that governance processes have been more informational in nature where decisions are announced as a way of communicating decisions to constituency groups along with comments that the budget allocation decisions also occur outside the purview of the routine governance process has lead the team to conclude that the College appears to be creating new processes when non-routine activities are being pursued. In two cases: budget allocation decisions and the 75/25 Workgroup appear to have been formed to operate outside the routine governance structure. The College correctly points out that a workgroup is available under its governance model. These actions are surrogate indicators that the governance processes used may not be effective in addressing major concerns of constituency groups. The College has correctly identified the need to evaluate roles of constituency groups in the governance processes. This is a problem identified by College personnel to the team. The planning agenda prepared by the College in the Self Study Report comments that the College intends to address roles and responsibilities of constituency groups in the governance processes. At a minimum this should provide the College a forum to assess the effectiveness of the governance structure. Currently the resource allocation decisions and the work to determine what will occur to increase the number of full-time faculty appear to have been isolated from the on-going governance processes and are treated differently than routine decisions (III.A.2).

Personnel policies and procedures are updated and are generally available on the College's website. The process happens in many areas, including Human Resources Services, the Human Resources Services Planning Council, and in consultation with the Faculty Senate. The College has hiring and personnel policies in place and is working on a Model Equal Employment Opportunity Plan that is a requirement of the State Chancellor's Office (III.A.3).

The College has taken care to secure and maintain the confidentiality of the personnel records, while allowing access only to employees in accordance with the law. The only exception to this general statement relates to the Faculty Senate's practice of conducting evaluations of administrative personnel. In that scenario, multiple pieces of information about an individual's performance are generated and may be located in several areas: Faculty Senate's offices, Superintendent/President's office, with members of the Board of Trustees and the Director of Institutional Research. All documents related to an individual's performance should be retained in the College's official personnel file. The evaluation team is recommending this practice be eliminated which would also eliminate

the College's need to address the concern about multiple personnel related files being maintained outside the official personnel file (III.A.3.b).

The team was alarmed to learn from conversation and also from comments in the Self Study report that the Faculty Senate was conducting its own performance evaluations of administrative personnel. Survey were conducted, summarized and then made available to the Faculty Senate (an organization that is required to conduct open public meetings). The results of the surveys were discussed between the Faculty Senate and members of the Palomar College Board of Trustees (III.A.3.a, b).

The surveys were anonymous and include both a comment section and scale section for ranking purposes. This practice provided members of the Faculty Senate with a forum to make harassing and disparaging comments. One of the most alarming aspects of this process was that the unprofessional conduct of one or two individuals was allowed to go forward to the Board of Trustees uncensored (III.A.4, III.A.4.a, b, c).

Even though the survey was anonymous, the team was disappointed by the fact that when unprofessional statements were made, instead of censuring out the comments, they were codified in a typewritten report and published for many to see. The team was surprised by the manner in which this information was disseminated (III.A.4, III.A.4.a, b, c).

The summary survey data and comments from the surveys were provided to the Board of Trustees during a closed session discussion with Faculty Senate members. The individuals being evaluated play no role in the process and have no due process rights. The practice is out of compliance with Standard III.A.1.b, III.A.3, III.A.3.b, III.A.4, III.A.4.b, III.A.4.c.

The College demonstrates its "concern for issues of equity and diversity" by using the Model Equal Employment Opportunity Plan and its use of Diversity Funds for student and employee activities which promote equity and diversity. However, the College does not evaluate whether or not such efforts foster an appreciation for diversity or an understanding of equity and diversity issues. At least in one instance related to administrator evaluations, the team validated that there was not an appreciation for diversity or an understanding of diversity issues. It is unclear to the team whether the College has other programs, practices, and services that support its personnel needs. The team recognizes that one example of an unprofessional nature is not necessarily indicative of the beliefs of the employees of the College as a whole. At the same time, the team cannot downplay the significance of what has occurred regarding the administrator evaluation process. College employees have informed team members that the items noted by the evaluation team are not the only comments of this nature made during the administrator evaluations (III.A.4, III.A.4.a, III.A.4.b).

The evidence shows that the College has made improvements in its recent hires, but it should continue its commitment to improve the diversity of the faculty and staff. While the College meets the standard that it assesses its record in employment equity and

diversity, it has not determined whether or not there is a need to go farther (III.A.4, III.A.4.a, III.A.4.b).

The College has both nondiscrimination and sexual harassment policies and provides training about the contents of those policies. It is the team's opinion that the Faculty Senate's practice of evaluating administrators is discriminatory and has allowed inflammatory statements to be introduced to the College (III.A.4.c).

The College provides a wide variety of professional development activities for faculty, including sabbaticals. The College has a unique way to deliver a variety of professional development activities, including a plenary, in-person workshops and on-line programs, which have been particularly successful with part-time faculty. The activities themselves are a result of a Professional Development Needs Assessment Survey. Furthermore, the activities are available over the course of a semester. An examination of their spring 2009 activities reflects a wide variety of offerings that are tied to teaching and learning. Each of the activities has an evaluation to determine its effectiveness. Classified employees are also welcome to participate in these opportunities, and permanent employees have access to develop Professional Growth plans. The Professional Development activities have included SLO workshops at least since 2005. The *Accreditation Survey* reflected general satisfaction with the offerings. However, it is unclear as to whether or not improvement in teaching and learning has occurred (III.A.5, III.A.5.a, III.A.5.b).

Human resource planning has been developed through the current planning process, beginning at the department/program level and the use of the Program Review and Planning process which generates requests for needs. The classified, confidential, and supervisory positions are also reviewed at the department level, as well as a first-level administrator. These needs are directed to the planning bodies, including the Instructional Planning and Human Resources Services Planning Councils. However, some concerns are not being addressed adequately which appeared to be the case that resulted in the emergence of the "75/25" Workgroup that is seeking ways to hire more full time faculty. Despite these protocols, the College recognizes its need to integrate human resources planning with institutional planning more effectively (III.A.6).

Conclusions:

The College continues to struggle to accomplish two recommendations from its 2003 Accreditation report. In this regard, the College needs to continue its efforts to add diversity to its workforce, and it needs to monitor the status of annual employee evaluations. The College has not implemented either of the two recommendations from 2003 related to increasing the diversity of the workforce and consistently evaluating the performance of employees. See pages 14, 15, 17 and 15 of this report for more detailed information about the progress of the Recommendations 1 (2003) and 4 (2003).

For the most part, the College does not meet the requirements of Standard III.A of Commission Standards. The following paragraphs provide a short summary and a

conclusion about the team's assessment of the College's compliance with the requirements of the Standards.

The College has a comprehensive screening process that is used for faculty and administrative positions as those positions are filled. The College has published minimum requirements that are clear, widely published and include faculty members in the screening of job applicants to ensure that faculty employees being hired meet qualification criteria for the applicable academic discipline. The College meets the requirements of Standards III.A.1 and III.A.1.a.

Employee evaluations are not completed on a regular and consistent basis and are not conducted in conformity with established College policies. As a result the College does not meet the requirements of this Standard III.A.1.b as stated in more detail within this report.

Faculty member evaluations include among other things an assessment of their effectiveness in achieving outcomes of the SLOs for courses. The College meets the requirements of Standard III.A.1.c.

The Council of Classified Employees and the Confidential and Supervisory Team employees do not have a code of ethics while faculty, administrators and the Board of Trustees has a written code of ethics for members of those groups. The College does not meet the requirements of Standard III.A.1.d.

The College has established a plan to hire more full-time faculty. The team, for purposes of this standard, has concluded the College meets the requirements of this Standard even though no assessment was conducted to demonstrate that the College does not have sufficient faculty. No data was prepared to justify the need for more full-time faculty, and as a result, the team assessed participation in governance matters to conclude there is an adequate number of full-time faculty (III.A.2).

The College partially meets this Standard. Policies are current and widely publicized. There is disparate treatment of administrators in the evaluation process, and therefore the policies are not equitably applied. Personnel files are confidential with the exception of administrator evaluations that are available to everyone at the College (III.A.3, III.A.3.a, and III.A.3.b).

The College does not comply with Standard III.A.4 as described in this section of the report. The College has an outstanding professional development program available to its employees and complies with this Standard (III.A.5).

The College does not integrate plans to hire additional employees with resource allocation planning (III.A.6).

Recommendations:

See Recommendation #2 (2009)
Integrated Planning, Evaluation, and Resource Allocation Decision Making

See Recommendation # 3 (2009)
Student Learning Outcomes

Recommendation # 6 (2009)
Board of Trustees Policies

Recommendation #7 (2009)
Improve Human Resources Practices:
In order for the College to comply with the Standards and improve practices in the area of Human Resources, the team recommends:

1. Instructional and non-instructional faculty and all others directly responsible for student progress in achieving stated SLOs need to have an evaluation component included in performance evaluations regarding each faculty member's effectiveness in producing SLOs (III.A.1.c).

2. Ensure that all employee groups prepare, be trained in and adhere to a Code of Ethics (III.A.1.d).

3. Develop a comprehensive staffing plan in concert with the efforts of the 75/25 Work Group to provide appropriate consideration for support services necessary and link plan to budget development activities (III.A.2).

4. Eliminate multiple personnel files that exist for administrators. Only one personnel file should exist for any employee and that file should be housed in the Human Resources Department thereby providing security of personnel documents and affording access to the file by employees. (III.A.3.b)

5. Establish and monitor a follow up system to ensure all employees are evaluated annually or less frequently when agreed to by employment agreements as was noted by the 2003 team in Recommendation #4 (III.A.3.a)

Recommendation #8 (2009)
Conduct additional training to prevent Harassment, Discrimination and Disparaging comments against employees.
To meet standards the team recommends that the College engage in the following activities:

1. Develop a policy to discourage the use of discriminatory, racial, harassing and unprofessional comments when participating in any evaluation process (III.A.4).

2. Obtain professional training on prevention of harassment and sensitivity to issues of equity and diversity (III.A.4).

3. Adopt a Resolution to reaffirm its commitment to programs, practices, and services that support the diverse employees and students of the College (III.4.a)

Standard III
Resources

B. Physical Resources

General Observations:

Palomar College has worked closely with its communities to anticipate future educational facilities requirements and to create a structure for addressing them through the acquisition of land for branch campuses, as well as the development of a Facilities Master Plan that is supported by a successful bond act. The aggressive positioning by the District for state construction funding has made some key campus capital projects possible, and judicious use of additional local and scheduled maintenance funding has created a strong foundation to support student academic success at the institution.

Findings and Evidence:

Palomar College has a Safety & Security Committee with representation from constituent groups at both the San Marcos campus and the Escondido Center. The committee serves as a hub for coordinating College safety-related matters ranging from the management of staff-initiated requests for maintenance, safety planning from a preventative and crisis response perspective, and the promotion of safety awareness (III.B.1).

Safety criteria are established by internal committees and external agencies. Internal committees include the District Safety & Security Committee and the Emergency Preparedness Workgroup. Departments include Environmental Health and Safety and Facilities. External agencies include the Districts liability insurance and worker's compensation carriers. The processes used include inspections conducted by both internal and external groups, Incident Report Forms submitted by the campus community, and discussions and recommendations from the District Safety and Security Committee (IIIB.1).

The College has a Facilities Master Plan, titled "Master Plan 2022" that was developed in 2003 as a foundational facilities planning tool for all educational sites and campuses within the District. Data that was used to assist in development of the Facilities Master Plan prepared in 2003 includes demographic and economic forecasts as well as division and campus-specific trends, goals, and needs. This big-picture work is operationally complemented by on-going dialogue and coordination efforts under the auspices of the Strategic Planning Council. As part of the strategic plan update, facility improvement objectives are outlined with periodic status reports provided to the Strategic Planning Council (III.B.1).

To ensure that facilities are maximized, a class scheduling and facilities usage process is used by Instructional Services to review room usage and to link course enrollment maximums with room capacity (III.B.1).

The institution works effectively to meet its facility needs by coordinating facility development work across the District. The District was successful in passing a $694 million bond (Proposition M) for the renovation of the San Marcos campus, improvement the facilities at the Escondido Center, and development of new education centers in Fallbrook and the southern part of the District (III.B.1).

In compliance with Proposition 39, the District has created a Bond Oversight Committee to ensure that all resources are appropriated according to the provisions of the November 2006 ballot measure. The Board of Trustees regularly approves related reports, contracts, and other facilities-centered contracts, studies, and agreements. Although the main campus and the off sites blend owned facilities with leased facilities, for purposes of addressing safety issues, all assessment and response is channeled through the main campus to expedite response time and ensure as much College wide involvement as the different sites allow (III.B.1).

Palomar College conducts regular facilities evaluations and has a process through which College programs can request improvement ranging from requesting new construction to minor facilities remodeling. The safety of equipment is monitored at the program or unit level and a similar request process advances to a division planning council (III.B.1).

In addition to its Facilities Master Plan, the institution has a number of planning documents that chronicle priority projects College wide and document the allocation of state and local resources to those priorities. The first is the Five Year Maintenance Plan, encompassing the period from 2010-2014 which details projects funded and anticipated throughout the District utilizing dollar for dollar matching resources for scheduled maintenance, instructional equipment, and library materials. The second is the Five Year Capital Construction Plan encompassing the period 2010-2014 which details capital projects funded and anticipated throughout the District showing both state and local funding sources.

Leased facilities generally meet the same standards as on-campus locations although more temporary equipment is utilized at off-campus sites. Emergency facility situations are handled by the local school districts. Other emergencies are handled by staff contacting the local police or the San Diego Sheriff's Department first and then contacting the College police department. The institution ensures access to its facilities by meeting all federal accessibility regulations and by making additional improvements as scheduled maintenance and bond funding allows (III.B.1.b).

The institution assesses the use of its facilities on a regular basis, with a process for prioritizing room assignments that is designed to maximize their effectiveness. This process is grounded in the academic and student services divisions and centered on the type of instruction or services planned. College employees conduct an analysis of classroom utilization data to maximize the District's eligibility for state facilities construction subsidies (III.B.2).

Palomar College presently uses a combination of internal planning mechanisms at the program and unit level combined with demographic forecasting data and consultant analyses of opportunities to acquire, renovate, update, and construct facilities to create long-range capital improvement plans for the College. These plans encompass the strategic assessment of assets as well as regional needs across the District (III.B.2.a).

The physical resources development process begins at the department level. Regional demographic and economic analyses are evaluated along with the department-specific requests to formulate the plans included in the Facilities Master Plan.

Through the Planning and Review process, College departments have the opportunity to identify space needs. These requests are aggregated at the unit and division level and are prioritized by the vice presidents in conjunction with program leaders in their units. Final recommendations for space allocation, renovation, and other physical resource needs are made at the Strategic Planning Council level through dialogue among the facilities department and the division planning councils (III.B.2.b).

Some planning processes are strong at the unit and division level planning councils where they are tied to PRP's and informed by institutional data, but weaken as they advance for final consideration at the Strategic Planning Council level since there is not a process through which they are visibly tied to the institution's strategic priorities (III.B.2.b).

Conclusions:

This area meets all accreditation standards except for requirements associated with planning and resource allocation (III.B.2.b).

Recommendations:

See Recommendation #2 (2009)
Integrated Planning, Evaluation, and Resource Allocation Decision Making

STANDARD III
Resources

C. Technology

General Observations:

Palomar College's resource commitment, in technology, staff support and training is impressive. Faculty and staff awareness of, deployment of, and satisfaction with the training in the use of technology are all high. In a recent survey of faculty and staff (published March 2008), the majority of respondents generally indicate high expectations for the use of technology and general satisfaction with the availability, training and use of technology. However, the College has provided no evidence that technology planning and decisions are based on assessments of the impact of such systems on student learning. With the exception of a 2001 evaluation of on-line courses imbedded in the 2005 Technology Master Plan, the College has provided little evidence that it has actually assessed the impact of technology solutions on student learning.

Findings and Evidence:

Staff indicated that the College has developed a robust technology infrastructure. Support staff personnel are trained and responsive. Several technology initiatives are currently underway to integrate and make technology more ubiquitous – a campus-wide deployment of Voice-Over-IP (VoIP) as well as a campus-wide wireless access infrastructure should increase access and contain support costs in future years. Technology support needs at all education sites are generally being met in a timely manner. The Accreditation Employee Survey 2008 indicates that "In general, respondents were satisfied with academic technology and information services in terms of both the technology available and the support of that technology"(III.C.1).

According to the 2008 Accreditation Employee Survey, 82 % of "the faculty believe technology resources to be a necessary part of instruction." In a recent survey of faculty and staff (published March 2008), the majority of respondents generally indicates high expectations for the use of technology and general satisfaction with the availability, training and use of technology. The College employs the Blackboard course management system although staff recognizes that instructional faculty participation could be increased and communication expectations among faculty members, staff, and students can be standardized. Adoption of the Blackboard system for teaching by faculty members has been reasonably high and is increasing (III.C.1.a).

The College has adopted PeopleSoft as the primary student record-keeping and administrative services system providing students with 24/7 access to admissions and enrollment functions. This system has been integrated with other district systems such as Blackboard and the Exchange email system to ensure seamless transition between information systems and to leverage the integration of data for decision-support such as class schedule development. Educational television has declined as an instructional

modality, but online classes have increased. Palomar College Television (PCTV) staff have transitioned services to create custom video applications, and leverage streaming media to compliment on-line instruction. Employees interviewed indicate that PCTV resources can be better utilized to support academic programs and to serve the College. Accreditation Employee Survey responses also indicate satisfaction with the management, maintenance and student support of instructional computer labs (III.C.1.a).

The College has identified the future staffing need of a Security Administrator. The College has also identified the need to centralize various servers for safety and security, to develop redundant capabilities of back-up power, an off-site data center and a comprehensive program for disaster recovery. The College's 2007-2008 annual audit identified two findings related to information technology. First that the College's internal controls over information technology, particularly user access rights and monitoring, were inadequate. Second that although the College has backup procedures, there is no formal comprehensive disaster recovery plan to address significant interruption of information systems. Interviews with department staff reveal that while some steps have already been taken to address these audit findings, the College still lacks comprehensive security and disaster recovery and business continuity plans and has not yet addressed the planning and resources necessary to ensure uninterrupted availability of critical technology services (III.C.1a.).

The College's Professional Development office is primarily responsible for organizing technology training; training is presented in various formats including online, self-paced, in-person, and individualized. Academic Technology Training is generally conducted by Academic Technology Resource Center (ATRC) staff in a classroom lab setting although ATRC staff have begun replicating these training workshops in an on-line format making them more accessible to staff. In addition to the campus-based training, the College subscribes to self-paced, online classes through Lynda.com, www.cccone.org, www.4faculty.org, www.3cmediasolutions.org, and www.cccetc.org. The College does not offer formal, systematic computer training for students; however, many academic departments provide specialized technology training as an orientation for respective instructional labs. Per the 2008 Accreditation Employee Survey, the majority of respondents indicate satisfaction with the accessibility and adequacy of technology training (III.C.1.b).

The College has developed a prioritized plan for computer purchases based on equipment warranty cycles, placing newer equipment in the locations most heavily used by students and passing down older equipment to staff or student labs where workstation hardware requirements are not as demanding. This process will be resourced for the next five years by funds from a local bond measure; otherwise, technology procurement and replacement is normally funded through state grants, and the operating budget of Information Services (IS) and various departmental budgets. Maintenance contracts with technology vendors provide short-term maintenance for computing and telecommunications equipment. Interviews with staff indicate a desire for the College planning process to annually budget equipment replacement funds in pace with life-cycle needs; however, no process was identified by which to achieve this resource allocation (III.C.1.c).

As previously described, the institution boasts an impressive deployment of administrative and academic technology. College technology employees in various disciplines support the development, maintenance, and enhancement of College's technology resources. Technology support departments include - Help Desk and Telephone Operations, Administrative Applications, Network Infrastructure, Information Services, Systems Module Functional Specialists, Academic Technology support staff, Audio Visual Support staff, and Educational Television Support staff. However, apart from the observations of general staff satisfaction with technology services, per the 2008 Accreditation Employee Survey, the College provided no evidence that it has assessed whether the distribution and utilization of technology resources support the development, maintenance, and enhancement of its programs and services (III.C.1.d).

The College's long-term technology planning is reflected in the Technology Master Plan 2005 although the College did not provide any evidence of systemic integration of this planning process with the strategic planning process. According to the College's Technology Plan 2005, the College was to conduct a planning effort to review/revise its technology initiatives during the 2008-09 year.

In interviews with information systems staff, there was no indication that the College intends to conduct this planning; the College is committing substantial resources out of the local bond program without any clear planning or integration of those decisions with strategic planning. The College's short-term technology planning is addressed primarily through the Program Review and Planning (PRP) process. The PRP documents identify short-term technology needs that are funded or receive a modified allocation based on available technology funds, primarily State block grant funds and Carl D. Perkins career/technical program funds.

The College's Information Technology team interacts with operational services leaders to chart and prioritize technology upgrades needed in classrooms and related infrastructure support for current and future operations. Technology resources are managed through Information Services which is responsible for networking and communication infrastructures, and the Academic Technology Resource Center, which is responsible for all areas of technology related to instruction.

A critical infrastructure need is for a reliable backup power system and the installation of a backup generator is planned for Fall 2009. A set of technology related standards for infrastructure in classrooms has been drafted by the District to use as a facilities planning and upgrading tool. All new construction is incorporating this standard, and classrooms are being converted as funding allows. The design teams meet with users to identify program facility needs including equipment.

Palomar College has experienced rapid growth in distance education enrollment and is mobilizing resources to ensure the success of this growing cohort of students. The Academic Technology Resource Center is responsible for all areas of technology related to instruction including support for both students and staff. This includes the Blackboard Learning System and other online teaching materials. The College is making progress in

addressing the equipment needs of distance education and campus-based education, but lacks the funding needed to fully address equipment needs College wide at the present time (III.C.1).

The College is leveraging funds from a recently passed local bond measure to replace all lab computer equipment on the main campus and at various centers. The College intends that when fully implemented, the Program Review and Planning processes will also address short-term technology planning. (III.C.2)

Conclusions:

The College has done excellent work in preparing a vision for technology use and in the deployment and use of technology in support of instruction and in support of administrative operations. The level of resource commitment, particularly in the form of technology systems, staff support and staff training is impressive. Faculty and staff awareness of, deployment of, and satisfaction with the training in the use of technology are all high.

However, the College has not demonstrated that technology planning and decision-making is based on the assessment of the impact of technology solutions on student learning. The College's Technology Master Plan is outdated and there is no clear integration of technology planning and decision-making with College strategic planning and implementation. Furthermore, there is a significant absence of comprehensive security and disaster-preparedness/business-continuity programs for these critical technology services. Through its aggressive technology deployments, the College has placed many key services at risk on systems with limited redundancy and single points of failure. The risk of catastrophic loss to the College is extremely high without these backup systems and secondary off site storage capabilities. The College partially meets the requirements of Standard III.C. The team makes the following recommendations for improvement:

Recommendations:

See Recommendation #2 (2009)
Integrated Planning, Evaluation, and Resource Allocation Decision Making

Recommendation #9 (2009)
Protect Electronic Data
In order improve and protect the wide range of data that is vulnerable to loss, the team recommends the following improvements be made as soon as possible:

1. Develop a comprehensive disaster recovery and business continuity plan and allocate sufficient resources to provide redundancy of key technology system to ensure uninterrupted availability of critical services and to protect the College from catastrophic loss of data (III.C.1.a, III.C.2).

2. It is recommended that the institution develop a comprehensive technology security program including policies, planning and internal controls to ensure the security of critical data and uninterrupted availability of critical services. (III.C.1.a, III.C.2)

The team noted that the College's external Certified Public Accountant (CPA) made two comments regarding weaknesses that could affect the college. The first weakness was that internal controls were in need of improvement and there was concern about inappropriate access to data files. Recognizing the importance of preventing unauthorized access to files especially if that access spreads to student and employee files, the College is encouraged to take immediate action to address the weaknesses in information technology. The second issue identified by the CPA firm was the same recommendation as Item 9.b of the team's recommendation.

Recommendation # 10 (2009)
Prepare a Comprehensive Technology Master Plan that is integrated with other College plans
In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College update its technology master plan and ensure that it is integrated with College-wide planning efforts and based on systematic assessment of the effective use of technology resources to assure that technology systems and support are designed to meet the needs of learning, teaching, College-wide communications, research and operational systems (III.C.1.a,c,d, III.C.2).

STANDARD III
Resources
D. Financial Resources

General Observations:

The Colleges adopted budget for 2008-09 is $108,652,416 in revenues. This amount includes a beginning fund balance of $7,297,498. Total expenses amount to $108,652,416 which includes a projected ending fund balance of 6,093,791 (5.6% of expenses). The difference in the beginning and ending balances is $1,203,707. The adopted budget includes all formula directed compensation increases and transfers to annualized debt service for the 1999 Certificate of Participation (COP). The College has an estimated unfunded liability of approximately $53 million associated with Other Post Employment Benefits offered to eligible employees who meet specific vesting requirements.

In November 2006, voter-approved general obligation bond measure (Proposition M) for $694 million was passed and has augmented the College's resources to allow for the renovation of the San Marcos campus, improve the facilities at the Escondido Center, and begin development of new education centers in Fallbrook and the southern part of the District.

Findings and Evidence:

The self study states that through the Program Review and Planning (PRP) process, financial planning is integrated with and supports all institutional planning. The PRP protocol has not been implemented across all departments. These requests go from the unit or department level to one of four College planning councils. Final review, prioritization, and resource allocation are ultimately made in the Strategic Planning Council. In interviews with College staff, it is not clear what criteria are used in allocating funds (III.D.1.a).

The College's institutional planning foundation is the PRP process. The self study indicates that the PRP process is used to set planning priorities which are funded using resources that are available. The team did not find evidence of this occurring at the College. As these requests are reviewed, prioritized, and funded at the Strategic Planning Council, it is not clear how the College establishes its funding priorities (III.D.1.b).

A summary of the outstanding College supported debt according to the June 30, 2008 audit report is as follows:
- o 1999 Certificate of Participation in the amount of $7,480,000 with interest rates ranging from 3.5% to 5% for the length of the issuance. Proceeds were used for the purpose of capital improvement and then leasing such items to the District and to refinance the 1994 Certificates of Participation. Annual payment for 2009 is $551,712.

- o Capital Lease in the remaining amount of $72,496 with a final payment due within one year.
- o 2001 Revenue Bonds in the amount of $3,095,000 with interest rates ranging from 5.0% to 5.625% for the length of the issuance. Proceeds were used to remodel and expand the Student Center. The source of revenue to pay off the debt will come from the Student Center Fee Fund. Annual payment for 2009 is $200,784.

In addition to the District locally supported debt service, the District also received voter approval for a $694 million general obligation bond (Proposition M) in November 2006. The funds are to be used to allow for the renovation of the San Marcos campus, improve the facilities at the Escondido Center, and begin development of new education centers in Fallbrook and the southern part of the District. In May 2007, the District issued General Obligation Bonds, Election of 2006, Series A in the amount of $160,000,000 with interest rates ranging from 4.25% to 5.0% for the length of issuance (III.D.1.c).

The College provides lifetime post-retirement health care benefits to eligible employees who retire from the institution. In 2007-08, the District paid $3,679,524 for retiree benefits from the Retiree Benefit Fund (Fund 69). In addition, the General Fund contributed towards the payment of the actuarial liability by transferring $3,317,209 to the Retiree Benefit Fund (Fund 69). **In 2007-08 these in and out transfers represent a net loss to Fund 69 of $362,315.** The estimated total gross liability, based on an actuarial study dated April 2008, is approximately $68.4 million. At June 2008, the District Retiree Benefit Fund had a balance of approximately $15 million for an unfunded liability of approximately $53 million. The College is now consuming a portion of its fund balance ($15 million) and will continue to do so anytime it pays less money into the fund than is paid out for actual retired employee benefits. The College is not paying an amount into the fund that equals the Annual Required Contribution (ARC) and as a consequence will be recording a liability for the portion of the obligation that is not funded on an annual basis. By drawing down the fund balance of the Retiree Benefit Fund the College is not paying the minimum annual cost of actual expenditures incurred during the year or what is referred to as the "pay-as-you-go" amount which is not a funding method but is at least an approach that pays for the yearly costs of these benefits.

Meeting Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) pronouncement # 45 will result in the College reporting approximately $4.5 million per year as an expenditure or liability in order to meet, according to the actuarial report, the Annual Required Contribution (ARC). If the College does not pay $4.5 million per year into a trust fund, it will accumulate an unfunded liability that will be reported on the College's financial statements. The 2008-09 Adopted Budget includes the in and out transfers but does not contain funding for this liability. The District is a member of the Community College League's Retiree Health Benefit Program JPA that assists districts in responding to GASB No. 45. However, the District has not transferred any funds to the JPA and, through its payments in FY 07/08, is starting to consume its ending fund balance.

The Independent Auditor's Report for the years ending June 30, 2006, 2007, and 2008 note that the District has received an "unqualified" report, that there were no "material weakness(es) identified" although there were "significant deficiencies identified not considered to be material weakness", and that the report issued on compliance for major programs was "unqualified" (III.D.2.a).

The audit report noted the following three (3) previous year's finding:
(1) Internal Controls # 07-01. A comprehensive listing of all fixed assets meeting the capitalization criteria is not maintained. The audit notes "significant improvement noted".
(2) Student Accounts Receivable #07-02 (original finding 06-2). There should be a listing of accounts receivable that is reconciled to the general ledger. The audit notes "Not implemented. See current year finding 08-01".
(3) Cash Disbursements #07-03. Various issues concerning cash disbursements. The audit notes "Not implemented. See current year finding 08-02".

The audit report also noted the following four (4) current year findings:
(1) Student Accounts Receivable #08-01 (prior year 06-02 & 07-02). The District notes "that every effort will be made to ensure reconciliation by June 30, 2009".
(2) Cash Disbursements #08-02 (prior year 07-03). The District response addresses a number of solutions being worked on.
(3) Information Technology Internal Controls #08-03. Various issues dealing with changing passwords and inappropriate access. The District is reviewing the process identified.
(4) Disaster Recovery Plan #08-04. There should be an information systems disaster recovery plan.

The audit report is submitted to the board for acceptance. Copies of the audit report are sent to bargaining unit managers and to individuals upon request. Budget updates are provided to the Strategic Planning Council during the year. Financial activity reports are sent to managers during the course of the year (III.D.2.b).

Board Policy 6250, Budget Management, states that the District targets an unrestricted "Governing Board Reserve" at 5% of the total unrestricted General Fund expenditures. The policy also identifies a "Designated Reserve" for funds designated by Board action and "Other Reserves" for funds to cover general and other unanticipated needs (III.D.2.c).

The District has not had to rely on Tax Revenue Anticipation Notes (TRANS) to meet its immediate cash flow needs. TRANS are short term (less than one year) debt that allows the College to borrow against expected tax receipts which are collected in different amounts over the course of a year. The self study does indicate, however, that if needed, the District can borrow from the County Treasure (III.D.2.c).

The College has joined two Joint Power Authority (JPA) organizations to manage its risk. The San Diego and Imperial County Schools JJPA provides employee health benefits.

The Protected Insurance Program for Schools JPA provides Worker's Compensation coverage. The State Wide Association of Community Colleges JPA provides primary property and liability coverage. The Community College League's Retiree Health Benefit Program JPA assists districts in responding to the GASB No. 45 accounting standards. These JPAs are not component units of the institution for financial reporting purposes. The JPAs are governed by boards consisting of a representative from each member district (III.D.2.c).

The Palomar College Foundation is governed by a Board of Directors and is a legal entity separate from the College. The foundation was formed in 1959. The foundation is independently audited annually by an external auditing firm (Wilkinson, Hadley & Co. LLP). The foundation has received unqualified opinions for the two years ending in December 2006 and 2007. The foundation's total assets as of June 30, 2007 are $6,913,654 (III.D.2.d).

The Palomar College Associated Student Government (ASG) is an agency auxiliary organization of the College. ASG financial activity is maintained by the District in separate funds of the District. The funds are independently audited each year and are included in the College's financial statements and annual audit report (III.D.2.d).

Auxiliary organizations at the College include food and bookstore services. Aramark Corporation manages and operates the institution's food services through a management agreement that ensures service without commission obligations to the District. Follett Corporation operates and provides services for the institution's bookstore through an agreement that provides guaranteed payment to the District. Both operations have shared governance advisory committees (III.D.2.d).

The College relies primarily on the financial software provided by the PeopleSoft system. The system provides the necessary analytical tools. Enhancements are planned for with two significant upgrades completed in the past three years (III.D.2.g).

The self study states the institution uses the Planning and Review process to ensure that the use of financial resources effectively supports the institution's educational mission. The PRP's are processed through one of four planning councils. Each council prioritizes the input from its areas. The results are then reviewed, prioritized and recommended to the Strategic Planning Council. However, it is not clear what criteria are used in resource allocation decisions. No assessment of previously allocated expenditures has been conducted to determine if the resource allocations have achieved the desired objectives. Additionally, there is no evidence to verify how resources were evaluated and then whether any evaluations were used as a basis for improvement. The College's self study report states that it will adopt and implement a budget development process that better aligns with and allocates funding for both short-term and long-term strategic planning priorities (III.D.3).

Conclusions:

The College is financially sound. It operates with a balanced budget and has adequate reserves to absorb unanticipated financial events should they occur. The lack of an integrated planning process prevents the team from verifying how well resource decisions influence resource allocation decisions. This area meets all accreditation standards except for requirements associated with planning and resource allocation, and assessment of resources allocated to determine whether resources achieved desired or anticipated outcomes III.B.2.b).

Additionally, the College has not implemented Recommendations #5 and #6 from 2003. See 2009 Recommendations 2 and 11.

Recommendations:
See Recommendation #2 (2009)
Integrated Planning, Evaluation, and Resource Allocation Decision Making

Recommendation #11 (2009)
Long-Term Health Fund Liability
In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the College identify and plan for the funding of the future retiree health benefits (III.D.1.b, III.D.1.c)

Standard IV
Leadership and Governance

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

<u>General Observations:</u>

The Strategic Planning Council (SPC) is the principal participatory governance committee for the College. The role of the SPC and other councils used to encourage active participation in the management and operations of the College are described in detail in the *Palomar College Governance and Administrative Structure Handbook* (Undated). In the handbook, the following councils are recognized as governance councils:

> **Strategic Planning Council (SPC)** - is the recognized participatory governance body of the college. The Strategic Planning Council reviews actions, recommendations, and requests of planning groups and task forces.

> **Finance and Administrative Services Planning Council (FASPC)** - annually reviews proposed budgets for all Finance & Administrative Services departments, ensuring alignment with the mission, goals, and objectives of the District Strategic Plan.

> **Human Resource Services Planning Council (HRSPC)** - is responsible for the development of the strategic plans of Human Resource Services. The responsibilities include appropriate support services, efficient and effective policy and procedure development in human resource services and guidance, direction and oversight provided for employee hiring, staff diversity efforts, development and coordination of staff training programs, and Americans with Disabilities Act compliance.

> **Instructional Planning Council (IPC)** – is responsible for developing, implementing, evaluating, and revising instruction's plans and initiatives both short-term and long-term.

> **Student Services Planning Council (SPCC)** - is responsible for the development of the strategic plans for Student Services to include determining the level, adequacy, and efficiency of student services necessary to support the College's strategic plan.

The College uses a strategic plan, currently entitled *Strategic Plan 2009*, to report its mission, vision, values and goals to the public and the college community. To implement strategic plan goals an Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) is prepared. The AIP lists the objectives/activities identified as areas where work should be performed during the year as determined by selected departments. Completion of the objectives/activities is expected to result in the College making progress toward attainment of the strategic plan

goals. The governance councils monitor progress on the AIP objectives/activities via written reports provided as updates on progress made to implement the objectives/activities three times during the year (IV.A).

The five strategic plan goals in *Strategic Plan 2009* along with a brief description of each goal as follows:

- o **Student Success**-Facilitate student learning and goal attainment by providing comprehensive educational programs and services in diverse, accessible formats and locations.
- o **Teaching and Learning Excellence**-Provide exemplary teaching and learning environments and experiences to meet student needs through relevant curricula, innovation, partnerships, technology, research, and evaluation.
- o **Organizational and Professional Development** –Improve internal operations through effective communication and inclusive governance structures; strengthen and maintain professional development programs.
- o **Resource Management** – Utilize existing human, physical, technological, and fiscal resources efficiently and effectively and increase external funding.
- o **Facilities Improvement**-Enhance the aesthetic appearance, functionality, cleanliness, accessibility, and safety of current facilities while effectively planning for future needs based on educational programs and services.

According to College personnel, the departments have the autonomy to decide what objective to include in the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) each year as long as the objective assists in accomplishing one of the College's five goals. The AIP consolidates the department objectives which then become the operational guide for the upcoming year. A limitation of the AIP is that the College selects a small number of activities (only 13 in 2007-2008) that it will accomplish in any given year. The goals are not measurable as they are currently stated. Not all departments have responsibility assigned to them to complete specific actions over the course of the year. This procedure has the appearance that only a small number of departments are working to accomplish College goals during the course of a year (IV.A).

The AIP includes the following categories of information on the form:

- o **Objective/Activity #** - Activities are listed in numeral sequence starting with number 1 and applying a number that is used to track status of progress made during the year.
- o **Goal**- The goal that is to be achieved by completing the objective/activity.
- o **Primary Person (s):** The administrator or Committee having responsibility for implementation of the activity.
- o **Assigned Groups:** This includes the name of any subcommittee or working group responsible for performing work to achieve the objective/activity.
- o **Estimated Costs:** When resource allocations or costs of completing an activity are available the amount is included in the "Estimated Costs" box on the form.
- o **Funding Source:** This box reports the source of the funding.

o **Time Line:** The time for completing the activity.
o **Other Boxes:** The remaining boxes on the form allow status reports to be recorded.

Thirteen objectives were included on the AIP for 2007-2008. The objectives/activities were not stated in measured qualitative or quantitative terms, and very few departments were assigned responsibility for implementation of an objective/activity as described in more detail later in this section of the report (IV.A.1).

There are no unit plans, and there was no other planning document that would show that every department on campus is undertaking some level of activity to assist the College in meeting its strategic plan goals and that would show how departments are working to improve student learning. In the areas identified on the AIP, the College is pursuing goals to improve and constituency groups are provided opportunities to participate in the development of plans and arguably to participate in decision-making processes in a manner that reflects the views and concerns of constituency group representatives.

The number of objectives included in the planning matrix is not comprehensive enough to conclude that there are plans that will improve institutional effectiveness. To illustrate this point the objectives for 2007-2008 are listed below along with the *Strategic Plan 2009* goal and objectives developed to achieve the goals[1]:

Goal: All

Objective 1: Prepare Palomar's self study for reaffirmation of accreditation
Assigned Groups: Accreditation Steering Committee; Accreditation Standard Writing Groups

Goal: Student Success

Objective 2: As a result of Palomar's self-assessment for effective practices in Basic Skills Instruction and support, develop and implement student success centers to increase student engagement, persistence, and completion
Assigned Groups: Student Learning Outcomes Council; Curriculum Committee; Instructional Planning Council;, Student Services Planning Council

Objective 3: Define and communicate classroom and college expectations of students that foster shared responsibility for learning outcomes
Assigned Groups: Student Services Planning Council; Instructional Planning Council; Learning Outcomes Council; Faculty Senate, Associated Student Government.

Objective 4: Develop a plan to increase the number of full-time faculty and the "75/25" ratio, while recognizing the need to increase diversity among full-time faculty
Assigned Groups: Strategic Planning Council; Human Resources Services Planning Council for Model EEO Plan; Faculty Senate, "75/25" Work Group

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[1] *Strategic Plan 2009 Annual Implementation Plan 2007-2008*, Pages 1-17, undated,

Goal: Teaching and Learning

Objective 5: Integrate campus discussions related to on-line teaching
Assigned Groups: Faculty Senate Academic Technology Committee; Academic Technology Group; Professional Development; PFF; Associated Student Government; TERB

Objective 6: Provide up-to-date technology and related technical and equipment support for instructional purposes
Assigned Groups: Strategic Planning Council; Faculty Senate Academic Technology Committee; Information Systems

Objective 7: Enculture the discussion and implementation of learning outcome cycles
Assigned Groups: Learning Outcomes Council, Institutional Review Committee; Curriculum Committee

Goal: Organizational and Professional Development

Objective 8: Develop and implement a plan to establish and fund on-going employee training programs for technical and professional skills to assess needs, assure competencies, and identify appropriate delivery methods
Assigned Groups: Human Resource Services Planning Council; Information Services; Professional Development; Council of Classified Employees; Staff Development and Training Committee

Objective 9: Evaluate formal communication channels and improve the vertical and horizontal communication within the governance structure
Assigned Groups: Strategic Planning Council; Instructional Planning Council; Student Services Planning Council; Administrative Planning Council; Research and Planning

Goal: Resource Management

Objective 10: Develop and implement a process for submitting, approving, and managing grants.
Assigned Groups: Strategic Planning Council; Research and Planning; Director, Grant Funded Student Programs; Director, Fiscal Services

Goal: Facilities Improvement

Objective 11: Identify and provide appropriate levels of funding to support and ensure implementation of the facilities plan and the on-going maintenance of buildings and grounds
Assigned Groups: Administrative Services Planning Council; Facilities Review Council

Objective 12: Complete the master signage plan for all district facilities

Assigned Groups: Administrative Services Planning Council

Objective 13: Continue to develop procedures to respond to emergency situations
Assigned Groups: Safety and Security Committee; Campus Police Committee

An AIP has been prepared each year since FY 2003-2004. The AIP identifies which council is expected to monitor the progress on objectives in each area and lists a number of activities that are expected to occur over the course of the year. In the FY 2007-2008 AIP, there were thirteen objectives/activities identified to be completed over the course of the year. The activities were associated with a goal or goals of *Strategic Plan 2009*. The AIP assigns only a small number of departments with responsibility for completing objectives/activities that will assist the College in achieving or making progress toward completion of a goal (IV.A.1, IV.A.2.a).

For most objectives/activities, a planning council or one of many committees of the College was assigned to complete the objective/activity. Because the goals are broadly stated, the College continues to use the same goals year-after-year giving the appearance that the College does not accomplish any goal as evidenced by the fact that the goals have remained unchanged since 2002 causing the evaluation team to question the effectiveness of the planning process used by Palomar College (IV.A.1).

Faculty, staff, students, and administrators are well aware of the planning councils that are in place that are intended to facilitate decisions that support student learning programs and services. Constituency group leaders are active in the planning councils and keep their members informed using a variety of communication methods. Some employees expressed concerns that the governance processes were not in fact operating as intended. More specifically, the stated concern was that frequently it appeared that decisions had been made outside the governance processes. The administration has responded to this concern by creating a planning agenda included in the self study report that notes the College intends to review governance processes, redefine roles as necessary, and ensure that decisions are being made with appropriate input (IV.A.2).

Findings and Evidence:

College staff interviewed during the evaluation team's visit understood the goals and values of the strategic plan. *Strategic Plan 2009* is an updated version of *Strategic Plan 2005*. No changes in the mission, vision, values or goals occurred between *Strategic Plan 2005* approved in 2002 and *Strategic Plan 2009* approved in 2005. The activities proposed to achieve the goals changed. Other than the change in activities the plans similar is every material aspect. The planning councils established to encourage participation of faculty, staff, and students in the governance process are structured, have minutes taken for each meeting, and provide opportunities for employees and students to be involved in the decision-making processes of the College (IV.A.1).

Palomar College has five goals in its strategic plan. The goals are broadly stated and have remained unchanged since 2002. The goals have been used in two consecutive strategic

plans. The first strategic plan was in 2002; *Strategic Plan 2005* and the second plan approved in 2005 called *Strategic Plan 2009*. The mission, vision, values, and goals were identical in *Strategic Plan 2005* and *Strategic Plan 2009* (IV.A.1).

Faculty Senate members were the most aware, of all constituency groups interviewed, of the goals in the plan and had a clear understanding of their roles in assisting the College in achieving the goals of the plan. One goal specifically addresses a commitment to excellence and a second of the five goals was related to teaching and learning excellence. The College's *Strategic Plan 2009*, through its goal entitled "Teaching and Learning Excellence," states the institution's commitment to excellence. As defined earlier in this section of the report, at the time this goal was written in 2002, the College's emphasis was on enhancing the learning environment through "relevant curricula, innovation, partnerships, technology, research, and evaluation." The terminology used in 2002 provided a different focus on student learning than is used in today's context on demonstrating improvement in student learning as a result of deliberate activities intended to improve student learning (IV.A.1).

The goals of the Strategic Plan are broad and lack characteristics that allow the College to qualitatively and quantitatively measure progress towards accomplishment of goals. The use of broad goals has resulted in the College using the same strategic plan for the past seven years. As written, the Strategic Plan is just as appropriate in 2009 as it was when it was written in 2002. Using the AIP, departments are able to create activities that satisfy these easily achievable strategic plan goals. The broad nature of the goals allows for almost any activity created by a department to fit within the loose confines of the strategic plan. Without measurable, qualitative and quantitative goals, the evaluation team had difficulty in determining whether or not the College was actually achieving its intended goals (IV.A.1).

In the AIP, there is a section that identifies the goal that is expected to be improved once the activity has been implemented. For one activity included in the 2007-2008 AIP, the goals that were being worked on with the activity was defined as "All" meaning that all five goals will be achieved by completing this one activity. For example, the "Prepare Palomar's self-study for reaffirmation of accreditation" activity would assist the College in accomplishing all five goals (IV.A.1).

The AIP included thirteen objectives for 2007-2008. One objective applied to "all" five goals as discussed in the proceeding paragraph. Other goals, for example in the goal area of "Student Success" the identified activity for the year was: "Develop a plan to increase the number of full-time faculty and the "75/25" ratio, while recognizing the need to increase the diversity among full-time faculty." The existing full-time versus part-time ratio is not listed, and no desired end result is stated other than the assumption that the College expects to achieve 75% full time faculty at some point in time. The goal is so broad and can be accomplished on various scales that it is easy for the College to conclude it made progress on the goal without that goal actually being a primary focus that requires concerted effort to accomplish. For example, to raise the full-time faculty ratio, the College could add one full-time faculty member. Or, it could add twenty full-

time faculty members. Both would accomplish the goal as would elimination of a non-teaching faculty position or reduction in the class schedule so that fewer adjunct employees are offered opportunities to teach. Each action would accomplish the goal yet some ways of reaching the goal may not be what was intended. To eliminate undesired actions that accomplish goals, and to ensure deliberate efforts are exerted to achieve goals the College needs to create measurable goals and objectives. Additionally, unless all departments on the College are working to achieve goals of the strategic plan, there is an appearance that very little effort is being exerted to meet goals (IV.A.1).

Another concern when using this goal is that the College states: "while recognizing the need to increase diversity among full-time faculty" yet again there is no quantitative measure applied to let the College and other stakeholders know that the desired objective has been achieved or improvement toward accomplishment of the goal has occurred (IV.A.1).

The AIP includes the College's operating division that is assigned responsibility for implementation of each activity within the plan. The goals are developed from the various councils on campus and are included in the AIP prior to the beginning of the next fiscal year. The goals are not measureable and are not linked to the resource allocation process or any other plans such as a Technology Plan or Human Resources Staffing Plan. The Strategic Planning Council creates activities that are listed as an objective for the upcoming year and then are linked to the strategic plan by identifying which goal will be achieved as a result of the created activity (IV.A.1).

A main concern about *Strategic Plan 2009* is that the goals are so broad that the plan's goals could be and have been reprinted annually and serve as a strategic plan for additional future years without achieving the goal. Virtually any activity developed by a council as an objective for a year could fit within these overly broad goals. With such a broad description, it is difficult to determine how priorities are set. The goals are not measurable, quantified or stated in a way that establishes a clear sense of direction for the College (I.V.A.1).

All employee constituency groups stated that they had an understanding of their roles in assisting the institution in achieving its goals. In various committee meetings to include the Strategic Planning Council, employees described their roles on the committee to members of the evaluation team when questioned about the roles and responsibilities of constituency group representatives. The College has appropriately noted that it needed to work on its decision making processes and on the roles of constituency groups in the College decisions (I.V.A.1).

A number of employees interviewed expressed concern that they were being excluded from decision making or were provided information about decisions that had been made before the councils discussed the topic. In these circumstances, employees commented they were informed about the decisions. Information was being provided as a way to inform constituencies about what was occurring on campus. Reportedly, when employees requested to participate in providing input prior to decisions being made, there were

statements that certain decisions were operational in nature and were not the types of issues that were intended to be decided via the governance structure, and accordingly employees were not consulted. While the team agrees that there are times when operational decisions need to be made with limited participation of others as a result of an immediate need to act, this should not be routine nor occur on a regular basis. The College identified the shared governance process as a concern in its self study and has prepared a planning agenda to concentrate on clarifying roles of constituency groups in the decision making process of the College. Planning agenda #10, page 96 of the self study lists three actions the College intends to implement that should clarify the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of constituency group representatives in the shared decision making processes at the College. The team's assessment is that complete implementation of this planning agenda should resolve the concerns expressed to team members during the visit (IV.A.1).

Information about student success, retention, demographics, transfer and a number of other data components are provided to college personnel for decision-making purposes. The institutional research department provides a lot of data to users to assist in making decisions. Information received at councils regarding operations and institutional performance is provided to constituencies through their representatives on the councils. Each group interviewed spoke about the reporting process the designated constituency group representatives used to ensure employees were informed (I.V.A.1).

Palomar College Governance and Administrative Structure Handbook (undated) identifies the councils and advisory committees that are used by the College. The handbook provides a description of the responsibilities of the various councils and membership of the councils. The handbook summarizes the governance structure in place and provides useful information about the governance councils that exist at Palomar College. Interviews with College personnel confirmed the accuracy of the information contained in the handbook. The processes are clearly stipulated and meetings are held consistent with the information included in the handbook. A primary outcome of the council structure is the ability for all constituency groups to be involved in discussions related to student learning and provide the opportunity for input into institutional decisions. In spite of the structured and documented governance councils at Palomar, employees commented that their participation does not have a real impact on decisions made at the College (IV.A.2a).

The Faculty Senate takes a lead role in academic and professional matters and informs others about decisions it has made. In an interview with the Faculty Senate, representatives stated that the Faculty Senate is responsible for "academic and professional matters" with the following areas of operations being defined as areas where the Faculty Senate has primary responsibility (according to its website located at http://www.palomar.edu.facultysenate/):

1. Curriculum, including establishing prerequisites and placing courses within disciplines
2. Degree and certificate requirements

3. Grading policies
4. Educational program development
5. Standards or policies regarding student preparation and success
6. Governance structures, as related to faculty roles
7. Faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes, including self-study and annual reports
8. Policies for faculty professional development activities
9. Processes for program review
10. Processes for institutional planning and budget development
11. Faculty Hiring Policy, Faculty, and Faculty Hiring Procedures
12. Other academic and professional matters as mutually agreed upon by the Governing Board and the Faculty Senate. As other such academic and professional matters are identified, they will be added to this list.

The list of areas considered academic and professional matters is considerable. The College relies on the Faculty Senate for recommendations about student learning programs and services. In addition to those areas the faculty members take lead roles in providing guidance on academic and professional matters, the faculty members are very active on all councils and are appropriately involved in all major decisions (IV.A.2.a, IV.A.2.b).

The responsibilities and authority of the faculty and academic administrators in curricula and educational matters is stipulated in *Palomar College – Governance and Administrative Structure*. The written policies specify appropriate roles for staff and students. The roles of faculty are defined. The Faculty Senate has assigned representatives to each council. The policies are described in *Palomar College Governance and Administrative Structure Handbook*. Constituency groups receive information from their representatives on the councils. There is no evidence to illustrate how the governance process is used to enhance student learning. Reports are provided by constituency groups to the councils; however, there is no evidence to indicate what processes have been changed or to show what reflective dialogue occurs regarding student learning and improvement of student performance (IV.A.2b).

The Strategic Planning Council is one of five planning councils of the College. All constituency groups have representatives on the planning councils of the college. At the meetings with the Strategic Planning Council, a few individuals described the process followed by the College. The minutes of meetings show that the councils meet on a regular basis. Employees and students have the opportunity to comment and to participate in the council meetings. The structure, when used as intended, facilitates discussion of ideas and promotes effective communication among the institution's constituencies (IV.A.3).

There are several forms of communication used to get information to all College constituencies. Constituency leaders hold regular meetings with their members, send out email memos, and record minutes from council meetings. Communication among constituency group members is good with each constituency group representative being

able to cite several forms of communication methods in use to ensure their colleagues receive information about activities occurring at the College. Overall, communication of information is good with information being widely disseminated on campus. (I.V.A.3)

The team was alarmed to learn that the Faculty Senate conducts evaluations of administrators without participation of administrators in the evaluative process. After receiving survey information along with comments made by faculty members, the Faculty Senate representatives meet with members of the Board of Trustees in closed session to discuss the performance of administrators. The Faculty Senate has no authority in policies of the Board of Trustees or in the policies of the Faculty Senate to conduct evaluations of administrators in this manner. This process operates outside of the established governance structures processes.

The team has serious concerns about use of this process. Administrators are evaluated by Faculty Senate members using anonymous surveys which create a forum for subordinates to retaliate against supervisors for making decisions. In the situation at Palomar College, a far more serious concern was identified. In comments about one administrator, a statement was made that the employee's race was the reason for the employment of this individual. This process can only be described as being harmful to the creation of a professional working environment where faculty, staff and administrators work collaboratively to the benefit of the students of the College. More important than damaged working relationships is that a venue for discriminatory and disparaging comments to be made and communicated to members of the Board of Trustees in a closed session meeting has been created and is operating in a most harmful manner.

The team members were troubled by these comments when recognizing they were not random anonymous comments from disgruntled individuals but from a professional body held in such high esteem by students and administrators alike. The information contained in the survey included discriminatory and inflammatory statements that demonstrate that the College is not complying with the Commission's *Policy on Diversity*. The Commission's Policy Statement on Diversity requires among other things:

> "Every institution affiliated with the Commission is expected to provide and sustain an environment in which all persons in the college community can interact on a basis of accepting differences, respecting each individual, and valuing diversity."[2]

Palomar College is not meeting the requirements of the <u>Policy Statement on Diversity.</u>

Recommendation # 6 (2009) was developed to assist in establishing professional behavior respectful for the diversity that is frequently pronounced as an important value (IV.A.3).

The College reported that it has implemented the recommendations made by the Accrediting Commission as a result of the accrediting team visit in 2003. The college

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[2] Policy Statement on Diversity, Page 69, Accreditation Reference Handbook, August 2008

cites its justification for making those statements as responses within the self study report. While the team does not agree with the conclusion reached by the College in each instance, there is no indication that there is anything other than a professional relationship between the College and the Commission (IV.A.4).

The College discloses information to the public and makes a faithful and honest attempt to present information objectively. The team noted in many cases throughout the self-study that the college declared itself to be meeting the requirements of the accreditation standards. Reviews of evidence and assessment of actual practices at the College led the team to conclude that a number of areas were not in compliance with the standards even though the College concluded they were. It is the team's view that there is a general lack of understanding about the requirements of the standards. College personnel were completely open and honest with team members throughout the site visit. Documentation and reports were provided upon request and College employees were candid with team members when being interviewed (IV.A.4).

The governance process and specifically the Strategic Planning Council are evaluated using an employee survey. A survey conducted in 2008 revealed that only 26% of respondents indicated that the governance committees were working well. Almost 74% of employees stated the governance committees were not working well. Interviews with employees confirmed the concerns expressed in the employee survey. The governance question appeared as part of the College's accreditation survey. A review of available evidence did not show any other survey documents on file (IV.A.5).

The College prepared a planning agenda as a result of the accreditation review process to address the concerns about the effectiveness of the Strategic Planning Council. The College has not yet made the necessary improvements to the governance process so that employees feel a part of the process and that their voices are important in college decision making. (IV.A.5)

Conclusions:

Palomar College has a governance structure substantially in compliance with Standard IV.A. Improvements and changes are needed in order for the College's processes to begin operating to meet their intended purposes. The team verified evidence of the operations of a comprehensive governance process that allows all constituency groups on campus to engage in reflective dialogue and arrive at decisions that could improve student learning. However, the College is not obtaining the benefits of the processes as a result of employees comments that the councils are used more to communicate decisions made than to obtain input and respond to concerns of constituencies before decisions are made and implemented. The College has also identified this concern and has appropriately established a planning agenda to address this concern.

There is a defined governance structure in which each constituency group knows about its role and is provided opportunities to participate in decision making processes. Staff, faculty, administrators, and students are encouraged to initiate improvements in College

practices through the various governance councils and use of the Annual Implementation Plan (IV.A.1). The College meets the requirements of Standard IV.A.1.

Written policies describing participation and responsibilities of faculty, staff, students, and administrators in the decision making processes are institutionalized and are well known across the campus by all employees. The structure has been in place since at least 2002. Faculty and administrators have defined roles in institutional governance and are important participants in establishing institutional policies, conducting planning activities and in participating in budget development leading to decisions being made by the College. While the processes and structures are in place to provide members of the institution with involvement in institutional decisions, comments in interviews revealed that the process is not working as intended. Additionally, the College noted the need to address appropriate involvement by constituency groups in decision making processes and created a planning agenda to bring the College into compliance with Standard IV.A.2.a.

The College is applauded for identifying the seriousness of the concern about the employees' statements that they are not provided the opportunity to comment and discuss changes in operations prior to decisions being made by administrators. The College relies on the Faculty Senate and academic administrators to provide recommendations on student learning programs and complies with Standard IV.A.2.b. Planning Agenda #10, page 96 of the self study report will address this concern once implemented.

There is a potential for erosion of the collegial atmosphere that was expressed by faculty and staff during the evaluation team's interviews with employees. There are two circumstances of great concern to the evaluation team. First, the feeling of constituency group members believing decisions are being made without their involvement or concern for their perspectives as evidenced by comments that planning councils are used for information purposes and not for the purpose of collaborative decision making.

Second, the Faculty Senate's practice of conducting evaluations of administrators and then discussing the results of those evaluations with governing board members in closed session meetings, and making the comments received during employee surveys public, threatens the ability of the faculty and the administration to continue with professional working relationships. The practice provides anonymous complaints to be recorded against administrators who play no role in this evaluation process and have no due process rights. Moreover the administrator evaluation process provides a forum for discriminatory comments to be made. The team has two concerns about this comment being made. The first concern is that the comment was made in writing and made available publicly. The second concern is that the governing board, the administration and the Faculty Senate leadership did not immediately censure the comment or otherwise remove this comment from the list of comments distributed publicly. It is the team's assessment that the College is, at a minimum not in compliance with Standard IV.A.3 and is not in compliance with the Commission's Policy Statement on Diversity.

The College has stated in a number of areas in the Palomar College Institutional Self-Study that it meet the requirements of the Commission's standards. The College also concluded that in its opinion it fully implemented the previous recommendations. The self study also concluded in numerous areas that the College was in compliance with the standards yet the evaluation team's review of evidence and interviews with employees resulted in the team arriving at a different conclusion.

Recommendations:

See Recommendation # 6 (2009)
Board of Trustees Policies

STANDARD IV
Leadership and Governance

B. Board and Administrative Organization

General Observations:

The Palomar Community College District Governing Board is an elected board of five trustees, charged with representing the public interest; establishing policies that define the institutional mission and setting prudent, ethical, and legal standards for district operations; hiring and evaluating the Superintendent/President; delegating power and authority to the Superintendent/President to effectively lead the district; assuring fiscal health and stability; monitoring institutional performance and educational quality; and advocating for and protecting the district. As chief administrator, the district's Superintendent/President is responsible for administering the policies adopted by and for executing all decisions made by the Board of Trustees. The Board has a comprehensive project underway to review and update its policies.

The College has continued to evolve its governance structures since the 2003 accreditation team's visit. Discussions continue, leading the College to reflect on the interface between governance/planning and administrative decision-making. This self-reflection is documented in the College's response on Standard IV.A and resulted in an associated planning agenda. However, the College essentially provides no evidence that it has systematically assessed the efficacy with which Board governance and administrative organization supports student learning or to improve institutional effectiveness.

Findings and Evidence:

The Board is responsible for establishing policies to assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution per its Board Policy (BP) 2410. In September 2008, the Board established goals for FY 2008-2009 that included several related to student success, specifically:
- o Promote and support the development and implementation of an institution-wide plan that includes strategies to improve student retention and persistence
- o Ensure that the College's process for addressing the changing needs of the workforce is timely and effective
- o To facilitate student success and goal achievement
- o Ensure that the College provides timely access to programs and courses
- o Support the College's efforts to provide access to its diverse community
- o Increase the diversity of the College's faculty and staff
- o Promote the success of all students
- o Support implementation of the assessment of student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels

o Ensure that the Colleges curriculum, planning, and budgeting processes are responsive to emerging technologies and innovative approaches to teaching and learning."

Upon the retirement of the previous Chief Executive Officer, the Board hired a new Superintendent/ President in 2004 based on a comprehensive search in accordance with BP 2431. The Board has evaluated the performance of its chief administrator annually in accordance with BP 2435. The Board has initiated a project to update and revise its policies incorporating recommendations and a format from the Community College League of California's Policy service (IV.B.1).

The Board, consisting of five public members and one student member, is the final authority for governance in the district. Board of Trustee members are elected at large by the voters of the district to four-year staggered terms of office. Members vote independently on matters before the board and act as a whole, according to the majority vote per BP 2330. Members are charged with "basing decisions upon all available facts in each situation, voting [their] honest conviction in every case unswayed by partisan bias, and abiding by and upholding the final majority decision of the Board" per BP 2715. The Board has adopted a Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice in BP 2715 to assist in decision making absent of undue influence or pressure (IV.B.1.a).

The Board of Trustees approved the institution's vision, mission, and values statements in 2002 and reaffirmed them in 2007. As mentioned above, the Board has commissioned a project to revise and update policies and procedures as part of a regular review process. BP 1200 defines the district's Mission Statement as:

"Palomar College is an educational leader committed to quality learning. We provide our community the knowledge, information, skills, and aesthetic appreciation necessary to live responsibly, effectively, and creatively in an interdependent and changing world."

In September 2008 the board established goals for 2008-09; however, the institution did not provide any evidence that these goals are linked in any fashion to the College's strategic planning, the mechanism by which the institution should refer when implementing its mission (IV.B.1.b).

Interviews indicated that Board of Trustee actions are independent and final; BP 2200 adequately defines the Board's role. A review of policy revealed the Board has approved policies regarding budget, finance, legal matters, and employee disciplinary actions (IV.B.1.c).

The Board maintains and publishes policies on the Palomar College website. The website posting of Board Policies is still a work in progress with the majority but not all of the policies posted and accessible on the website. Board Policies 2010, 2100, 2200, 2410, 2715, and 2745 define board size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating

procedures. The Board is a five-member, elected board representing the electorate of the college district. The policies define broad duties and responsibilities, and provide meeting operating procedures and voting requirements for board actions (IV.B.1.d).

Interviews with trustees and a review of 2006, 2007 and 2008 Board minutes revealed the board generally acts consistently with its policies and bylaws. As mentioned previously, the Board has recently started a project to revise and update policies using a policy and procedures service available to California community colleges through the Community College League of California. The team found that the Board has noted on its Board Agendas that it has completed self evaluations and evaluations of the president on an annual basis. The team concludes that the Board of Trustees is conducting annual evaluations as required by its policies and is conducting regular self evaluations required and therefore complies with Standard IV.B.1.g.

As previously discussed the College has a long-standing practice of allowing the Faculty Senate to conduct an evaluation of senior administrators. These evaluation results are discussed with the Superintendent/President and respective administrator and subsequently presented to the Board of Trustees in closed session. This practice is not consistent with board policy on the administrator evaluations. The Faculty Senate should have a role in the evaluation of administrative employees. Nothing in BP states the Faculty Senate will conduct evaluations in the manner in which they now are being conducted (IV.B.1.e).

BP 2100 formalizes a staggered election process and BP 2110 addresses vacancies mid-term to ensure continuing board membership. The Superintendent/President conducts an orientation for candidates running for an open Board of Trustees position. BP 2740 outlines expectations for trustee education and attendance at orientations and conferences sponsored by the Community College League of California. A review of board meeting minutes indicates that staff provided the Board with updates and support study sessions regarding particular college programs and issues including accreditation standards and process. In its 2008 self-evaluation, the Board determined that it was not satisfied with board development, particularly with regard to the board's understanding of college finances and with regard to the new trustee orientation (IV.B.1.f).

BP 2745 defines the board's annual self-evaluation process. The Board conducted a self-evaluation in 2008. However the recent self-evaluation process did not include measures to reflect the Board's implementation of policies to promote quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services (IV.B.1.g).

BP 2715 defines a code of ethics which includes a clear policy for dealing with behavior that violates the code. Interviews reveal that the board has not had a situation where it was necessary to resolve violations of the code of ethics (IV.B.1.h).

Board of Trustee meeting minutes reveal that it regularly received presentations and reports from College employees regarding the accreditation process and progress towards key aspect of the College's meeting accrediting standards. In particular, the Board

reviewed, responded to and ultimately approved the institution's self-study document. Board goals for 2008-09 included supporting, monitoring and participating in the institution's self-study and application for reaffirmation of accreditation. However, the institution provided no evidence that the board's actions showed a connection between institutional planning, resource allocation, and the institutional self-evaluation and accreditation processes (IV.B.1.i).

BP 2431 establishes the policy by which the Board conducts a search and selection of its superintendent/president; however, the institution did not provide evidence that this policy was followed. Given that the process occurred several years ago and the Board has an established policy to conduct a structure process for its CEO, the team concluded that this policy was in practice followed. BP 2200 and 2430 provide the Board's delegation of authority to the superintendent/president specifying authority for implementation of board policies and holding the superintendent/president accountable for the operation of the College. Based on interviews with College employees, the team concluded that the Board remains focused on policy and allows the Superintendent/President to lead College operations. In accordance with BP 2435, the board evaluated the Superintendent/President annually and the College provided evidence of the evaluations to the team. Board policy defines the evaluation criteria (IV.B.1.j).

Per BP 2430, the Superintendent/President has responsibility for administering the policies adopted by the Board and for executing all decisions of the Board of Trustees. The Superintendent/President is empowered to reasonably interpret board policy, to oversee and evaluate the administrative structure, and to delegate authority to administrators and others as appropriate. (IV.B.2.a)

The superintendent/president guides the institutional improvement of the teaching and learning by implementing the College's planning and decision-making processes. Since the 2003 Comprehensive visit, the institution has reported that it has an update to the strategic plan. *Strategic Plan 2009* was prepared in 2005. In actuality *Strategic Plan 2009* contains the same goals of *Strategic Plan 2005* with only changing the objectives that will be used to obtain the goals. College personnel indicated that it will begin a new cycle of planning next academic year. The College recognized that its strategic planning and budgeting/resource allocation processes were not integrated and had established a planning agenda to address this. In May 2008, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning provided the College and the Board of Trustees with a report measuring progress on the strategic goals and objectives. This report, *"Monitoring Palomar's Strategic Plan through Measures of Institutional Effectiveness,"* includes measures of institutional effectiveness and organization by each strategic goal (IV.B.2.b).

The superintendent/president is responsible for implementation of statutes, regulations, and board policies and assures that institutional practices are consistent with institutional mission and policies. As previously mentioned, the institution participates in a policy and procedures service which provides frequent policy updates. The institution has not provided any evidence that it has systematically evaluated institutional practices to ensure that they are consistent with the College's mission and policies (IV.B.2.c).

The superintendent/president controls budget and expenditures and ensures staff provides periodic reports to the Board of Trustees to monitor revenues and expenditures and to maintain control over college finances. Annual audits are conducted in accordance with BP 6400. A review of recent audits revealed a significant internal control weaknesses related to access to institutional data contained in the College's management information system. Additionally, there is no disaster recovery plan for management information data. These are significant financial audit findings that are discussed in more detail in Section III.D (IV.B.2.d).

The superintendent/president represents the College to a diverse group of professionals in both the private and public sectors and maintains institutional membership in various local, state, regional, and national organizations (IV.B.2.e).

Conclusions:

The Board is responsible for establishing and updating policies for the College. The Board is currently reviewing and updating its policies. Board policies are in place for budget, finance, legal matters, ethics, mission statement, board composition, and elections. It is aware of the accreditation standards and process. The Board has a policy for self-evaluation, and an evaluation was completed for the 2007-08 year. The College maintains a written mission statement and goals; however, it is not clear that the Board evaluates its performance on the basis of the College's achievement of the mission and goals. The College partially meets Standard IV.B.1.

The superintendent/president is responsible for the overall operations and quality of the institution. He communicates institutional values, goals and direction throughout the organization using regular written and oral communications. The superintendent/president effectively controls budget and expenditures and makes regular reports to the Board of Trustees on the College's finances. The Board evaluates the president's performance annually. The College partially meets the requirements of Standard IV.B.2.

It is suggested that the Board revise its self-evaluation process to ensure that evaluation measures reflect the Board's implementation of policies to promote quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services. (IV.B.1.g)

Recommendations:

The College partially meets the requirements of Standard IV.B. The team makes the following recommendation:

See Recommendation #6 (2009)
Board of Trustees Policies