FOLLOW-UP VISIT

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 on April 5, 2010

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Introduction:

A comprehensive accreditation team evaluation visit occurred at Palomar College from March 9 – 12, 2009. The evaluation team offered a number of recommendations for the college to assist it in coming into compliance with the standards and to help improve processes and practices required by the Commission's standards. In June 2009, the Commission met and acted to issue a Warning to Palomar College. The college was asked to prepare a Follow-Up Report not later than March 15, 2010 and show resolution of four recommendations that are described in the body of this report.

An evaluation team consisting of three members was assigned to conduct a visit to the college to evaluate evidence in support of the college's actions to implement the recommendations. Due to a family emergency one of the team members had to be excused resulting in two team members being available to conduct the follow up visit. Team members arrived in the area on April 4, 2010 and met with college personnel on April 5, 2010.

During the visit the team evaluated evidence prepared by the college in support of its comments and conclusions in the Follow-Up Report. Team members interviewed approximately 40 members of the faculty, staff, administration and Board of Trustees during the visit. The following employees by title and members of committees were interviewed by team members:

> Members of the Board of Trustees
> College President
> Vice President for Instruction and Accreditation Liaison Officer
> Vice President of Finance & Administrative Services
> Instructional Planning Council
> Tenure and Evaluations Review Board
> Accreditation Steering Committee
> Faculty Senate
> Curriculum Committee-Co-Chairs
> Learning Outcomes Council
> Academic Technology Committee
> Strategic Planning Council

The college faculty, staff, administrators and members of the Board of Trustees were of great assistance to the evaluation team members during this site visit. They were well versed in the wide range of procedures, processes, written guidelines and progress made to fully implement the Commission's recommendations. During the visit team members were able to gain a comprehensive understanding of the actions taken and the evidence created by the college that validates the college's progress in implementing the Commission's recommendations. The overall campus atmosphere was very positive with many members of the college commenting about the manner in which the college campus as a whole came together to complete whatever work was needed to implement the Commission's recommendations. Specific actions taken along with the policies, guidelines, and procedures developed as a result of the college wide effort are described in more detail in subsequent paragraphs of this report. To use just a few words to describe what the team witnessed during the visit it is fair to state that the team members were very impressed with the quality and quantity of work completed by the college. It is our conclusion that the college did an outstanding job and put forward its very best efforts to implement the Commission's recommendations.

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

In order for the College to 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.D)**

General Observations
Each year an action plan is prepared to identify implementation activities for the upcoming academic year. For academic year 2010/11 the college indicates that it will complete or update each of the major supporting plans such as the: Educational Master Plan, Facilities Master Plan, Technology Master Plan, Equipment Master Plan and the Staff Plan. Most of the items are listed as work to be completed during either the spring or fall terms of 2010. Objective and measurable outcomes are identified in broad terms within Strategic Plan 2013 Action Plan 2010/11. Until the plans are fully implemented the college will not have sufficient information to evaluate if the intended results were achieved. The college has however established measurable goals and objectives for various plan elements within the Strategic Plan. The college also acted to implement the remaining portions of Recommendation # 2 as described in more detail below.

Findings and Evidence:
On February 2, 2010 the Board of Trustees approved Strategic Plan 2013 that included goals to be completed during FY 2010/11. The action plan for FY 2010/11 identifies the progress the college anticipates to complete during the upcoming academic year. Although not each plan has been completely updated as of the team's visit on April 5, 2010 the goals and objectives for FY

2010/11 is to complete each of the plans by the end of the year. The plans to be completed or updated are the Educational Master Plan, Facilities Master Plan, Technology Plan and Human Resources Staffing Plan. The timeline indicated by the college for updating and creating the various plans is consistent with the Planning Cycles approved by the Board of Trustees as part of the Accreditation Follow-Up Report.

<u>Conclusion:</u>
The team recognizes the enhancements made by the college to its strategic plan and noted that the college completed a considerable amount of work since the Commission's recommendations were provided in June 2009. The college has identified the operational support plans of facilities, technology, staffing and the educational master plan as plans that need to be completed or updated. The college has not yet updated those plans resulting in the team concluding that Recommendation 2 part 1 has not been fully implemented.

<u>Recommendation # 1. 2. Budget Development Process</u>
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).

<u>Findings and Evidence:</u>
Palomar College modified its evaluation, planning, and resource allocation process to form a new Integrated Planning, Evaluation, and Resource Allocation Decision Making Model (IPM). The IPM links the various master plans to the Strategic Plan. The IPM also links the Program Review & Planning (PRP) process that identifies needed resources in support of student learning and service area outcomes. The IPM and PRP process drives the Resource Allocation Model (RAM) process. It is the RAM process that places the college's Strategic Plan priorities and those from the PRP process at the center of its resource allocation decisions. The college's Strategic Planning Council approved the RAM process on February 2, 2010 and the Board of Trustees approved the RAM process on March 2, 2010 as part of the Accreditation Follow-Up Report. All were approved for implementation beginning in the FY 2010-11 budget development processes.

The IPM also includes an Annual Implementation and Review Plan (also known as the "Action Plan"). These plans are used to include timelines and responsibilities for implementing the priorities identified in the Strategic Plan and the PRP along with an assessment component. To help in the assessment component, starting in FY 2010-11 selected budget line item expenditure code number**s** will include information that links it to a Strategic Plan strategy and goal**s**. The college indicates that format of the Annual Implementation and Review Plan (also known as the "Action Plan") will be completed in April 2010.

<u>Conclusion:</u>
Similar to Recommendation 2 part 1, the college created a process that uses the priorities of the Strategic Plan to influence resource allocation decisions. Since the process is established for use in allocating FY 2010/11 resources the team has to arrive at the conclusion that implementation of this recommendation will be complete once the budget has been developed using this process. This recommendation is expected to be fully implemented by fall 2010. At the time of the team's visit all but the actual distribution of resources using the process had occurred. Accordingly, this recommendation is partially implemented.

<u>Recommendation # 1.3</u>

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).

<u>**Findings and Evidence:**</u>
As described in the response to Recommendation #1.2 Palomar College prepared an Integrated Planning, Evaluation, and Resource Allocation Decision Making Model (IPM) that links the various master plans to the Strategic Plan. The IPM also links the Program Review & Planning (PRP) process that identifies needed resources in support of student learning and service area outcomes. The IPM and PRP process drives the Resource Allocation Model (RAM) process. It is the RAM process that places the college's Strategic Plan priorities and those from the PRP process at the center of its resource allocation decisions. The process includes the evaluation process recommended by Recommendation #1.3. The college has all of the plan components in place and will begin implementation at the start of FY 2010/2011. Use of a full fiscal year for evaluation purposes is an appropriate approach with FY 2010/2011 being the first opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the resource allocation process.

<u>**Conclusions:**</u>
Once the resources are allocated using the new IPM the college will then be able to evaluate how well the resource allocation process worked. Another year will be needed in order for a complete cycle to be available for evaluation. Accordingly, the team concludes that this recommendation is partially implemented.

<u>**Recommendation # 1. 4. Update Technology Plan**</u>
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).

<u>**Findings and Evidence:**</u>

Palomar College has not yet updated the Technology Plan. The college indicates that the Technology Plan will be updated during spring 2010. The timeline for updating the plan is consistent with the Planning Cycles approved by the Board of Trustees as part of the Accreditation Follow-Up Report.

Even though the college has not yet prepared an updated Technology Plan, the important and critical operating procedures concerning data security, equipment replacement, and a disaster recovery plan were implemented. The external auditors in their FY 2008-09 Audit Report, under Prior Year Findings, indicate that the college has "Implemented" various information technology internal controls and has "Substantially implemented" a Disaster Recovery Plan. These procedures and plans are to be incorporated into an updated Technology Plan when approved. Once approved, the updated Technology Plan will cover years FY 2010-11 through FY 2015 – 16, with on-going assessments during this period.

<u>**Conclusions:**</u>
The college has not updated the Technology Plan although it is scheduled for completion as a component of the Strategic Plan for FY 2010/11. The college now has a disaster recovery plan, a data security methodology or procedure and a plan to address the on-going equipment replacement needs. The team concludes that this recommendation is partially implemented.

Recommendation # 3 (2009)
<u>**Student Learning Outcomes**</u>

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).

<u>**General Observations**</u>
College faculty and staff have made significant progress on development and assessment of student learning outcomes across the institution including the student services support areas and the administrative services areas. The college developed the following named processes and forms to assist faculty and staff in developing, implementing, assessing and modifying as necessary the Student Learning Outcomes for all areas of the institution:

Course SLOAC Guidelines
Program SLOAC Guidelines
Instructional Support Program and Service Area Outcome Guidelines
General Education/Institutional SLOs
SLO Mapping Chart

College faculty commented that they were on-campus and worked diligently over the summer (2009) to create the guidelines, framework, the SLO Mapping Chart and other activities that had to be completed to implement the Commission's recommendation on SLOs. College personnel noted that several important activities occurred as a result of the interaction between full time faculty and adjunct faculty. Some of the key products that resulted from Palomar College's concentration on completion of SLOs are as follows:

1. Course, Program and Institutional Support Program and Service Area Outcomes Guidelines are high quality pathways that can now be followed by anyone who is tasked with responsibility for developing and assessing SLOs.

2. General Education/Institutional SLOs were developed as was an SLO Mapping Chart to give all participants a global view of what needs to be completed and a structure from which the college intends to operate to ensure it meets accreditation standards. The Mapping Chart can now serve as a quick reference guide to those faculty and staff who may be new to the process of SLOs.

3. The Commission's Recommendation was viewed as a serious matter requiring the very best talents of all personnel on campus. The nature of the recommendation resulted in faculty and staff working hard to come into compliance with the Standards. The college took the matter seriously and responded in kind by rising to meet and satisfy the challenge. The team was impressed by the quality and the depth of the work that was completed in a relatively short period of time.

4. The college supported the participation of the adjunct faculty by offering additional compensation for those who developed SLOs for their academic disciplines.

The work products completed by the college such as the guidelines, the course curricula that now includes course SLOs and at least one item to be assessed to validate student learning, and the widespread enthusiasm evident across the college have all served to unite the faculty and staff to achieve even higher educational quality than what the college has historically been known for. Several college faculty stated in interview sessions and in the open forum that while they were not pleased to receive the Commission's recommendations, they did agree that the recommendations ignited their interest in proceeding with the implementation of SLOs and that process has improved the quality of the education programs at the college. The faculty members interviewed also stated that during the time when everyone was working to develop SLOs, the guidelines and the assessments, a lot of tough decisions were made. Everyone who commented about the recommendations and the work completed to implement actions to satisfy the recommendations acknowledged that the college is a much stronger institution for having to have gone through this process. They stated that there was little resistance as they understood they had to make improvements to the instructional programs. Implementing SLOs was embraced as the best method of looking at the programs from a holistic perspective.

The college is integrating SLOs into the program review process as the curriculum is reviewed and updated as appropriate. The course program outcomes are considered during the review and then assessment items are identified. The faculty used a combination of qualitative and quantitative factors when identifying the areas to be considered as part of the assessment process.

College personnel noted that the total number of courses offered (1,640) at Palomar presents a formidable challenge as it works to implement and assess all courses, programs and general education/institutional level outcomes by the 2012 deadline. The college's schedule indicates that it will not fully implement SLOs until 2013.

Findings and Evidence
To describe the findings and evidence cited during the evaluation team's review of documents, interviews with faculty, staff and administrators this report will describe the phases of implementation that appeared to be the manner in which the processes were implemented.

Work Plan and Development of the Framework for SLO Implementation

Palomar College created a number of useful guidelines, process outlines and forms to assist faculty in determining SLOs for courses, assessment methods to be used, timelines to be followed, and the process to be used to analyze, reflect and modify SLOs if necessary. Course and Program SLO Guidelines were approved by the Curriculum Committee on April 29, 2009 and the Faculty Senate on May 4, 2009. The guidelines were implemented in spring 2009.

A second set of guidelines approved by the Learning Outcomes Council on March 4, 2010 was developed to help guide the faculty and staff who work in the Instructional Support Program areas and who provide service in the Service Area Outcomes (SAO) functions of the college. With the second set of guidelines addressing non-instructional SLOs the college now has guidelines that can be used to develop SLOs for each functional area on the campus. Finally, a guide to address general education and institutional student learning outcomes was prepared and approved by the Learning Outcomes Council on November 12, 2009 and was reviewed by

Faculty Senate on December 7, 2009. The team was impressed by the level of research used by the faculty who created the guides. As an example the General Education/Institutional Student Learning Outcomes guide referenced the Association of American Colleges and Universities Liberal Education and America's Promise (or "LEAP") Essential Learning Outcomes Framework as a document considered when developing the guidelines.

Monitoring progress towards implementation of assessments for SLOs was advanced by the college's purchase of TracDat. This is a change since the team's visit in March 2009 when the college was using CurricUNET. College personnel stated that CurricUNET did not provide a chance to record assessment information. At the time of the team's follow up visit, the college reported having SLOs for 73% of its courses.

Training and Professional Development

SLO Coordinators are available to assist faculty members and their departments in implementing SLOs and in preparing assessments. The implementation plan is a timeline that lists the current plan for implementation and assessment of SLOs. The plan shows that the college currently does not expect to meet the 2012 deadline. However, because the faculty have made solid improvement in just one year it is possible that the process may move faster as faculty become more proficient with this process. To illustrate this point, the college reported 9% of all courses were complete through the assessment phase of implementation. In the current semester the college will add 17% bringing them up to approximately 26% completed by Spring 2010.

Implementation

Instructional areas were asked to assess at least one SLO per course. The requirement to assess one SLO was important in gaining broad implementation across the curriculum and college. All departments are now involved in the full cycle of SLOs from development through the assessment process. There is no required number of assessment areas stipulated by the standards. Each college should use its best judgment to determine the right number of assessment areas that should be used to evaluate student learning. The team encourages the college to expand the number of assessments that it conducts for each course and program as assessing just one area may not provide an adequate representation of the amount of student learning that has occurred.

The college has appropriately identified the full range of activities that need to be performed to fully implement SLOs for courses, programs, general education/institutional level outcomes including the student services and administrative services areas. With clear guidance on how it plans to proceed, the college has begun to make good progress toward full implementation

College personnel commented during interviews that when implementing SLO's a decision was made to change to TRACDAT as it was better able to incorporate assessment data. The college decided that the CurricUNET program that had been used to assist in the monitoring of curriculum was not able to incorporate assessment information within the CurricUNET program. TRACDAT a second software program was purchased and is being used as the platform for courses as they are being converted. When a course is ready for an assessment component to be added to the package of SLO items the faculty members take information previously recorded in CurricUNET and is then copied into TRACDAT. Once the course information from CurricUNET including course learning outcomes is converted to the TRACDAT program the

faculty members add the assessment elements. Each department is responsible for identifying the assessment elements that will be used.

Status on Progress Achieved

As of March 2010, the team examined the status of assessments completed as of the spring 2010 semester. Seventy-three per cent (73%) of courses had completed SLOs. The college remains actively involved in assessment of SLOs using the one SLO per course criteria established for measurement purposes. The team noted that the college reported 1,726 active courses. This number included courses that were cross listed and counted a second time by another department. The count of unduplicated courses is reported to be 1,600 by the college. A revised schedule reporting the correct number of unduplicated courses was provided to the team prior to its arrival. As of the team's visit to the college, the college's projected data showed approximately 26% of course SLOs will have been assessed by the end of Spring 2010.

Palomar College has three general "Service Areas" outside of instructional services; Finance and Administrative Services, Human Resource Services, and Student Services. The respective planning councils for each service area establishes their own process in identifying assessment methods, dates for assessment completion, and the development of performance measures to improve institutional effectiveness. All three services areas have done considerable work in this area with established timelines for completion in 2012. It is expected that these areas will complete the full cycle from development of SLOs and SAOs through assessment and on to use of SLOs and SAOs to influence planning efforts and the strategic plan.

Additional Work to Complete Initial Requirement

As previously noted, the college has a solid program that it is using to guide through implementation of SLOs at the course, program and general education/institutional levels. It is difficult to predict whether the college will reach full implementation by 2012 although the rapid progress made in such a short period of time would suggest that the college will be very close if not fully implemented. The structured approach developed by the college is used for all courses including courses conducted by adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty members are actively involved in the development and assessment of SLOs. The college encouraged the participation of adjunct faculty in the development and assessment of SLOs by offering additional compensation to adjunct faculty who were interested in development of SLOs.

Conclusion:

Palomar College has made considerable progress over the past year in the development of Student Learning Outcomes. Using the Commission's *Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness – Part III: Institutional Effectiveness* as a guide in determining the college's progress toward implementation of SLOs the team concludes that the college has reached the Development level of implementation. The reasons for this conclusion are that the college has:

- Established an institutional framework for defining SLOs
- Established authentic assessment strategies for assessing SLOs as appropriate to intended courses, programs and degree learning outcomes
- An organizational structure that supports strategies for SLOs

- Leadership groups that have accepted responsibility for SLO implementations
- Allocated appropriate resources in support of SLOs and assessment of SLOs
- A fully engaged, committed and highly professional group of faculty and staff who are developing SLOs.

When considering the progress made on SLOs by Palomar College, the team found considerable progress in developing, implementing and assessing SLOs. Additionally, the team felt that the college did a commendable job in reaching this level of implementation. Based on the amount of work completed it is the team's opinion that the college has implemented Recommendation #3. The team encourages the college to continue with its outstanding efforts to fully implement SLOs by the Commission's deadline of 2012.

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)

General Observations:
The Palomar College Faculty Senate assumed the lead role in development of processes, professional development, curriculum review and revision as necessary to complete what the evaluation team considers to be a comprehensive holistic view toward development of distance education development and delivery. It is the team's assessment that this approach is noteworthy and should be considered as a model program for other colleges to use when assessing or developing their own distance education programs. As a result of Recommendation # 3 (2009), the college took immediate action and got to work to develop the following materials; all of which are independently significant and collectively constitute a model program.

To prepare the faculty member to teach distance education, Palomar College:

1. Developed an Online Preparedness Checklist to serve as a guide that can be used by the faculty member to assemble all materials needed for a distance education course and to additionally be used by peer reviewers and administrators to assess the completeness of a faculty member's course materials to determine if the member is prepared for the work expected when teaching a distance education course.

2. Created an Online Preparedness Checklist to assist faculty new to online instruction to prepare to teach using a Distance Education format. The checklist is used to validate that the faculty member is ready for online instruction.

3. Developed an Instructor/Student Contact Policy for Distance Learning Courses that stipulates a minimum base of regular, effective communication between faculty and students and increases the curriculum review and approval process relevant to syllabi information, types of contacts, and evaluation.

4. Developed new approaches and materials to evaluate Distance Education/online courses and instruction. This included a student evaluation form for students taking Distance Education courses and revised faculty standards of performance evaluation form.

5. Tested a software program called "Evaluation Kit" to facilitate and improve student participation in completing online course evaluations.

6. Initiated dialogue to compare student achievement data in traditional courses to students taking online courses and then revised the PRP data elements to include relevant data for discussion, review and analysis by academic departments.

On the whole, Palomar College completed a thorough and comprehensive review of the Distance Education courses to determine whether online courses were of equal quality to the traditional or on-campus face-to-face courses.

Findings and Evidence:
The Faculty Senate was the dominant group that worked to create the structure, forms and procedures to ensure that Distance Education courses were consistent with traditional on-campus face-to-face instruction. The evaluation team interviewed members of the Faculty Senate's Academic Technology Committee (ATC), the Tenure and Evaluations Review Board and the Curriculum Committee to learn about the process that was used by the College and the forms and procedures to promote consistent quality of instruction regardless of the mode of delivery.

Area 1 – Preparing Faculty to Teach in an Online Environment

The Faculty Senate's Academic Technology Committee was instrumental in creating: 1) an Online Preparedness Checklist, and 2) an Online Faculty Training Program. As a result of the work of the ATC the Faculty Senate approved a "Program for Validation of Preparedness to Teach Online" (Faculty Senate Minutes, November 30, 2009). The Program addresses the following aspects of instructing a course using an online format:

1. A subgroup of the ATC and a department designee will validate the online course.

2. The number of faculty to undergo the evaluation is 10% of the instructors in spring 2010.

3. Once a faculty member completes an evaluation they may then volunteer to become a mentor to another faculty member.

4. Should a review of an on-line faculty member's course indicate that the faculty member is under prepared in some manner; the ATC will recommend the member take a training program that will assist the faculty member in becoming better prepared for online instruction. The faculty member will be cleared to teach online following validation of preparedness.

The ATC also developed an Online Preparedness Training Program that is available to all faculty members who are interested in teaching an online course for the first time. The program is a five part program that covers topics to include online organization and design, instructional design that promotes interaction, appropriate use of technology, universal access, and assessment/evaluation.

Area 2- Ensuring Regular Effective Communication Occurs between Faculty and Students
The second major component of the program that ensures Distance Education is similar to traditional instruction is that there will be regular effective communication between the faculty members and their students. The Faculty Senate's Distance Learning Subcommittee (called the Academic Technology Committee or ATC) developed an Instructor/Student Contact Policy for Distance Learning Courses (November 23, 2009) that requires faculty to regularly initiate meaningful interaction with students. The policy offers several forms of contact as examples. The intent of the policy is to ensure that qualities of regular contact in the traditional informational format will be available to distance education learners.

Area 3- Evaluation of Online Instruction

Evaluation of online courses and instruction was the third area included in the Faculty Senate's process to ensure distance education instruction is equivalent to traditional instruction. The Tenure and Evaluations Review Board (TERB) developed this portion of the process as TERB is responsible for the evaluation process used to evaluate full time faculty. TERB included four key elements when preparing an evaluation methodology for online instruction. The elements are described in greater detail in the college's Follow-Up Report but are essentially as follows:

1) Standards of performance for faculty teaching online.
2) Peer observation, review, and evaluation of a faculty member's online course.
3) Refining the questionnaire for students' evaluation of their online instructors.
4) Improving the rate of return of students' evaluation of online instructors.

Area 4 - Comparison of Student Achievement and Student Success between Distance Education courses and Traditional Instruction.

In this component of the process the objective is to ensure distance education is comparable to face-to-face instruction by examining data on student retention and success in both formats. The first comparison of success and retention data occurred in fall 2009. An adjustment in the PRP data was suggested by the Instructional Planning Council and approved by the Faculty Senate for implementation in fall 2010/11.

The four elements used to assist in ensuring a college's distance education program is equivalent to traditional instruction as recommended by the Commission has been augmented by Palomar College through the addition of one more element. Palomar's Curriculum Committee and Computer Literacy/Information Competency Workgroup decided that a fifth element is important to maintain security over the distance education courses. That element is Student Preparedness to Succeed in Online Courses. This element is intended to assist students to prepare for distance education course work should students want to pursue online course work. Additionally, the college is working on security protocols to verify the identity of a student who registers and participates in an online course.

Conclusion:
The college has made tremendous advances in the area of its online instruction so that it can be assured that distance education courses are equal in quality to traditional courses. As noted in the paragraphs above a standard process has been developed with its execution aided by various forms. Interviews with members of the Faculty Senate revealed a strong commitment to the quality of distance education course work. Faculty members also commented that after completing the process to promote high quality instruction in distance education, they now realize that the evaluation of traditional face to face instruction needs to be updated, as the distance education instructional requirements are more stringent than what is currently in use. The team concludes that the college has implemented Recommendation 5.

Recommendation # 6 (2009)
Board of Trustees Policies
There are several areas of College operations that can benefit from direction provided through policies of the Board of Trustees. In order to comply with Standards, the team recommends the Board of Trustees prepare policies to set direction on the following areas:
1. **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 be provided appropriate due process rights (IV.B.1.e).**

General Observations:
To comply with the Standards, the Commission requested the college initiate action to safeguard employee due process rights during performance evaluations. The team learned that the Board of Trustees, Faculty Senate and the administration acted to permanently end a practice that was reported as being suspended in spring 2008. The team conducted interviews and examined documentation to determine whether the college had taken institutional level action to permanently change the performance evaluation practices in a manner that would comply with the standards.

Findings and Evidence:
Interviews with members of the Board of Trustees, the Faculty Senate and the administration were conducted to learn what changes have occurred since the Commission's Recommendation was presented to the college. Team members examined Board Policy 7150 – Employee Evaluations approved by the Board of Trustees on February 16, 2010, meeting minutes of various councils and other materials as appropriate to arrive at a conclusion about the college's implementation of the Recommendation. The purpose of the interviews and the review of Board Policy 7150 was to determine whether actions taken by the college resulted in the use of Board Policies and administrative practices that serve to show that Recommendation # 6 (2009) was resolved.

Members of the Faculty Senate expressed a desire to remain involved in the performance evaluation of administrative employees. The faculty members commented that they are comfortable with the evaluation process used for faculty member evaluations and noted that work would be needed to develop an evaluation process that was perhaps similar to the faculty member evaluation yet considerate of the requirement for protection of employee rights and confidentiality as an evaluation is conducted.

A key requirement of the employee evaluation process required by BP 7150 is that the evaluation of an employee will be conducted under the direction of the employee's supervisor. This enhances the chances for the evaluation to be occurring with the knowledge of the employee and provides no opportunity for third party discussions between members of the governing board and other employees or employee groups. Employees being evaluated now have the right to review the content of the evaluation and are provided the right to respond to evaluative comments in writing.

Conclusion:
Palomar College has taken appropriate action to ensure employees being evaluated are provided with information about the evaluation process to be used and the content of information used in the evaluation process. The employee's supervisor directs the evaluation process which provides an additional level of security that ensures employees are subjected to a fair, accurate and

impartial evaluation process. Additionally, BP 7150 states that employees can review the content of evaluative information and may provide written comments in response to information included in the evaluation.

The team concludes that Recommendation # 6 has been fully implemented.