June 29, 2006

Dr. Doris Givens
Interim President
West Los Angeles College
4800 Freshman Drive
Culver City, CA 90230

Dear President Givens:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on June 7-9, 2006, reviewed the institutional self study report and the report of the evaluation team that visited West Los Angeles College on Monday, March 20-Thursday, March 23, 2006. The Commission took action to reaffirm accreditation, with a requirement that the college complete two Progress Reports.

The Commission asks that a Progress Report be submitted by March 15, 2007. The report will be followed by a visit by Commission representatives who will address the college issues during a visit to the campus. The Progress Report should focus on the institution's resolution of the recommendations and concerns as noted below. The Commission notes that some of these issues were also cited during the last comprehensive visit in 2000, and may have been stalled during turnover in administrative staff. The Commission urges the college to institutionalize its progress toward meeting standards.

COLLEGE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: The college should create a campus climate that embraces open, candid dialogue that embodies a culture of respect, civility and trust to improve institutional decision making, planning and effectiveness. (Standard I.B.1; Standard III.A.1.d, III.A.4, III.A.4.c; and Standard IV.A.2, IV.A.2.a, IV.A.3, IV.A.5)

Recommendation 5: The college should develop a sustainable reiterated cycle of integrated planning, resource allocation, plan implementation and evaluation by strengthening its information collection and dissemination for program review, and concentrating on implementation of the master plan and its ambitious planning agenda. (Standard I.A.4, I.B)

Recommendation 6: The college should periodically review its staffing practices, hours of operation, and counseling priorities to ensure that what is delivered is consistent with program review, of acceptable quality, and aligns with the mission and values of the college. (Standard II.B.1)

Recommendation 9: The college should complete and maintain scheduled employee evaluations. (Standard III.A.1.b)
Dr. Doris Givens  
West Los Angeles College  
June 29, 2006  
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**Recommendation 13:** All college personnel should identify ways to increase participation in governance and develop trust throughout the institution by conducting meaningful, timely dialogue that acknowledges different perspectives and ideas for making informed decisions. (Standard IV.A.1, IV.A.2.a)

**2000 Evaluation Team Recommendation 4:** The college should develop and evaluate strategies to ensure the communication, use, and integration of existing and planned research and evaluation throughout the college community. This will further college efforts to develop a process where decisions are based on a culture of evidence.

The Commission also asks that a second Progress Report be submitted by March 15, 2008. The report should address the following recommendations and concerns:

**DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 4:** The district should evaluate the impact of the revenue allocation model and consider the special conditions of individual colleges. (Standard III.D; Standard IV.B)

In addition, the Commission makes the following recommendation which requires district and college collaboration in the clarification of the generic district/college functional map. This recommendation was crafted by the team that visited LA Harbor College but applies as well to West Los Angeles College.

**Recommendation 14:** The functional relationship between the College and the District needs to be fully defined through a dialog focused on efficient use of resources and service to students. The implementation of a decentralized relationship needs mutual definition. (IVB.3.a, c)

I have previously sent you a copy of the evaluation team report. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires you to give the team report and this letter appropriate dissemination to your college staff and to those who were signatories of your college self study report. This group should include the Chancellor, campus leadership, and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that the team report and the self study report be made available to students and the public. Placing copies in the college library can accomplish this. Should you want the report electronically to place on your web site or for some other purpose, please contact Commission staff.

The recommendations contained in the evaluation team report represent the observations of the evaluation team at the time of the visit. The Commission reminds you that while an institution may concur or disagree with any part of the team report, it is expected that the report will be used to improve the educational programs and services of the institution.
All colleges are required to file a Midterm Report in the third year after each comprehensive evaluation. West Los Angeles College should submit the Midterm Report by March 15, 2009. Midterm Reports indicate progress toward meeting the evaluation team's recommendations and forecast where the college expects to be by the time of the next comprehensive evaluation. The report also includes a summary of progress on college-identified plans for improvement as expressed in the self study.

The college conducted a comprehensive self study as part of its evaluation. The Commission suggests that the plans for improvement of the institution included in that document be taken into account in the continuing development of West Los Angeles College. The next comprehensive evaluation of the college will occur during Spring 2012.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to remind you that federal legislation affecting accrediting agencies requires that accredited colleges conduct systematic assessment of educational outcomes (see especially Standards One and Two). A further requirement is that accrediting agencies pay close attention to student loan default rates.

On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express continuing interest in the institution's educational programs and services. Professional self-regulation is the most effective means of assuring integrity, effectiveness and quality.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Rocky Young, Chancellor, Los Angeles Community College District
    Dr. Alice Taylor, Accreditation Liaison Officer
    Board President, Los Angeles Community College District
    Ms. Sandra Serrano, Team Chair
    Evaluation Team Members
PREPARATION OF A PROGRESS REPORT WITH A VISIT

A Progress Report is a report requested by the Commission for special purposes. It can occur at any time in the 6-year accreditation cycle. A Progress Report requires that the institution provide information, evidence, and analysis regarding the resolution of the issues to which it was directed by the Commission's Action Letter. The institution's report will be reviewed by the Commission at its next regularly scheduled meeting, and the institution will be notified as to what action, if any, it must take next.

Visits accompanying Progress Reports are normally one-day visits by a team of two members, typically the chair of the comprehensive evaluation team familiar with the issues confronting the institution and a member of the Commission or Commission staff. The team is appointed by the Commission and reviewed by the institution in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

The purposes of the team conducting this visit are to:
- verify the accuracy and relevance of the report submitted by the college in response to the specific action of the Commission
- determine the extent to which the institution now meets the Commission standards cited in the recommendations
- report findings and recommendations to the Commission

Progress Report Format
The following format for the report should be used:

1. Cover Sheet
   Include the date of submission, the name and address of the institution, and a notation that this is a Progress Report.

2. Table of Contents

3. Statement on Report Preparation
   The statement, signed by the Chief Executive Officer of the institution, describes the process of report preparation and identifies those who were involved in its preparation, review, and approval.

4. Response to Team Recommendations and the Commission Action Letter
   Each recommendation identified by the Commission in its action letter should be identified and discussed. The report should describe the resolution of each recommendation, analyze the results achieved to date, provide evidence of the results, and indicate what additional plans the institution has developed.

5. The Progress Report must be reviewed by the Governing Board prior to its submission
Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

The institution is required to send **three copies** of its report to the Commission **plus an electronic version**. The hard copies of the report should be sent to the Commission's mailing address at 10 Commercial Boulevard, Suite 204, Novato, CA 94949. The electronic version of the report should be transmitted to accjc@accjc.org.

A copy should also be sent to each team member listed on the team roster who will visit the institution. The date of the visit is listed on the team roster.

EVALUATION REPORT

West Los Angeles College

9000 Overland Avenue
Culver City, CA  90230

A Confidential Report Prepared for the Accrediting Commission
for Community and Junior Colleges

CONFIDENTIAL

FOR INTERNAL WLAC USE ONLY
NOT TO BE PHOTOCOPIED OR DISTRIBUTED

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited
West Los Angeles College on March 20 – 23, 2006

Sandra Serrano
Team Members

Ms. Sandra Serrano, Chair
Chancellor
Kern Community College District

Ms. Anne Bevilacqua
Professor of Sociology
Solano Community College

Ms. Mazie Brewington
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Ms. Mona Lee
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Dr. Kenneth Meehan
Director of Research and Planning
Fullerton College

Ms. Marie Mestas
Dean of Learning Resources
San Bernardino Valley College

Mr. Michael Pecsok
Assistant Dean for Academic Services
Leeward Community College

Dr. Paulette Perfumo
Superintendent-President
Solano Community College
Introduction

A ten member accreditation team visited West Los Angeles College, March 20 through 23, 2006. Three Colleges – West, Harbor, and Southwest - collectively known as the seaside colleges of the Los Angeles Community College District were visited during this period.

West Los Angeles College is one of nine colleges of the Los Angeles Community College District. The college is referred to as West by district and college personnel, as well as by students. The campus is nestled in a residential neighborhood in Culver City, California, approximately five miles from the Los Angeles International Airport. More than 1.5 million people reside in the college’s service area that extends in a six-mile radius from the campus.

West enrolls about 8,300 students representing diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The faculty, classified staff, and administration are representative of the rich ethnic and cultural mixture of the student population and the communities that lie within the West service area.

The college experienced an eight percent enrollment growth between 2000 and 2004, but enrollment has declined since peaking at 9,804 unduplicated first census credit enrollment in fall 2003. Declining enrollment exacerbates the college’s ability to operate within a balanced budget. The college has struggled to overcome a one-million dollar budget deficit it incurred in 2003. Yet, the college did balance its budget and meet its enrollment targets in 2004, though this success was not sustained in 2005.

Since the last accreditation visit conducted in March 2000, chief executive leadership changed at both the college and the district. In the summer of 2000 a new college president was named. Five years later, in August 2005 an interim president was named. A new president is expected to be appointed by July 2006. Similarly, the district chancellor position has changed, with three chancellors serving during this six year period. An interim chancellor was appointed in January 2004, and a new chancellor was named in July 2005.

The college was well prepared for the accreditation visit. Both the pre-visit and visit were assisted by a warm and enthusiastic college team that included the interim president, chair of accreditation, Accreditation Liaison Officer, and members of the Accreditation Self Study Steering Committee. The visiting team was welcomed by a warm and open college community. The entire college community provided access to physical resources, college personnel and students.

Students are proud of their college and assert, “West is the best.” The students attending the open forums with the visiting team, as well as those approached by team members while on campus, spoke highly about the quality and dedication of faculty as well as the support and encouragement provided by faculty and classified staff.
College personnel are engaged in learning ranging from student learning outcomes and assessment to college branding and marketing. The college has earnestly started to engage in learning about systemic planning, fiscal accountability, student learning outcomes, and the benefits of conducting research and assessment. The college governance structure has been strengthened and information for effective decision making is beginning to be used.

College personnel are discovering that the college has an identity for which it can be proud. They are recognizing the college’s strengths and acknowledging there are weaknesses to address. It is noteworthy that dialogue is becoming open, honest, and collaborative.

The 2000 visiting team noted that the college struggled with a history of resentment, ineffective participatory governance, lethargy, lack of clear direction, and without integrated planning. At the root of this acerbic history is fiscal instability, which continues as evidenced by the college’s deficit spending. However, in spite of the ongoing fiscal challenges, a new climate is emerging. The college has commenced to address these challenges through a strengthened participatory governance structure, improved dialogue, and the support of institutional research. The college is commended for strengthening its process of participatory governance. The College Council has created an environment where all come together to know each other and to understand issues. Communication has improved and decisions are being made by reaching consensus for the common constituencies good. It is now incumbent upon the college constituencies to put its history behind them and move forward strategically to affect needed change.

It is evident that West Los Angeles College has commenced laying the foundation upon which to build a better future. West is an institution recently revitalized and in transition. The staff has taken the first steps, which are always the most difficult. The momentum has been created, and now the agenda must be set in motion with executed plans that are financially viable and directed to meet the needs of the community and the students. The overarching challenge will be for college personnel to maintain discipline in their thought and action to create a better future. As declared at a college forum with the visiting team, “The college has never had a problem with identifying strategies; the problem is with maintaining focus and following through.” The college’s commitment and discipline to sustain the transition remains to be seen. The chief executive leadership will be changing within months, and the motivation inspired by an impending accreditation self study and visit may diminish. Nonetheless, the revitalized environment is encouraging and laudable.

Based on the careful reading of the self study, examination of documents, and interviews with district personnel, members of the Board of Trustees, college personnel and students, the visiting team makes the following recommendations related to the four accreditation standards.
Key Overarching Recommendations:

1. The college should create a campus climate that embraces open, candid dialogue that embodies a culture of respect, civility and trust to improve institutional decision making, planning and effectiveness. (Standard I.B.1; Standard III.A.1.d, III.A.4, III.A.4.c; and Standard IV.A.2, IV.A.2.a, IV.A.3, IV.A.5)

2. The college should identify student learning outcomes at the course and program levels, and refine them at the institutional level, while adhering to the defined timeline and monitoring timely development within each department. These student learning outcomes should be systematically assessed and the results used for the improvement of student learning and institutional effectiveness. (Standard I.B.1, I.B.4, I.B.7; Standard II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.A.2.f, II.2.h, II.2.i, II.A.3, II.A.6, II.A.6.a, II.B.1, II.B.4, II.C.1.a, II.C.2; Standard III.A.1.b, III.A.1.c; and Standard IV.A.1, IV.A.2.b, IV.B.1.b)

3. The college should implement a viable plan to operate in a fiscally responsible fashion that aligns its programs and services with its revenue allocation to achieve sustainable fiscal stability. (Standard III.D)

4. The district should evaluate the impact of the revenue allocation model and consider the special conditions of individual colleges. (Standard III.D; Standard IV.B)

Additional Recommendations by Standard:

5. The college should develop a sustainable reiterated cycle of integrated planning, resource allocation, plan implementation and evaluation by strengthening its information collection and dissemination for program review, and concentrating on implementation of the master plan and its ambitious planning agenda. (Standard I.A.4, I.B)

6. The college should periodically review its staffing practices, hours of operation, and counseling priorities to ensure that what is delivered is consistent with program review, of acceptable quality, and aligns with the mission and values of the college. (Standard II.B.1)

7. The college should address the inadequacy of its library collections. (Standard II.C.1)

8. The college should assess its staffing needs and organizational structure and implement a plan that effectively allocates its human resources. (Standard III.A.1, III.A.2, III.A.6)

9. The college should complete and maintain scheduled employee evaluations. (Standard III.A.1.b)
10. The college should adopt a fully integrated planning and budgeting process that focuses on promoting student learning, includes a technology plan that provides an equitable distribution of information technology, and includes the total cost of ownership for technology. (Standard III.C.2)

11. The college should assign a high priority to attaining long-term financial stability. (Standard III.D)

12. The college should develop and execute enrollment management strategies to achieve stable enrollment and growth. (Standard III.D)

13. All college personnel should identify ways to increase participation in governance and develop trust throughout the institution by conducting meaningful, timely dialogue that acknowledges different perspectives and ideas for making informed decisions. (Standard IV.A.1, IV.A.2.a)

Responses to the Previous Team’s Recommendations

The college has made progress addressing the twelve recommendations made as a result of the comprehensive accreditation visit conducted in March 2000. The level of progress varies for each recommendation, with much of what has been accomplished occurring within the last year. Be that as it may, the team believes West Los Angeles College is improved compared to six years ago. 2005-2006 is a seminal year for affecting change at West Los Angeles College.

As noted in the Focused Midterm Report submitted by the evaluation team which visited the college in November 2002, appropriate progress was made to respond to the two key recommendations which called for a completed master plan that integrated all aspects of planning and the creation of a functioning participatory governance structure. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, accepted the Focused Midterm Report at its meeting in January 2003. The college was commended for its response to planning and for strengthening its structure for participatory governance.

Nonetheless, the midterm evaluation report submitted by the evaluation team also encouraged ongoing use and development of the college’s recently developed planning and governance processes. It appears the progress reported in November 2002 diminished between November 2002 and August 2005, though it is encouraging that there is recent evidence that aspects of planning and governance are again being continuously strengthened.

West Los Angeles College has started to address the previous team’s twelve recommendations and should continue to steadily advance the progress made to date. The previous team’s twelve recommendations and the progress made towards those recommendations follows:
Recommendation 1: The college should complete the master planning process assuring that program review, educational master planning, financial planning, and facilities planning are integrated.

The college has completed, with the assistance of consultants, the educational master plan. There is little evidence that the educational master plan has been used to guide the college’s direction in areas other than facility planning. This recommendation has not been fully implemented and remains a work in progress.

Recommendation 2: The college should create a functioning structure for participatory governance.

The college has renewed its commitment to effective governance and inclusion of all college constituencies by forming the College Council. Members of the constituent groups are working collectively to understand issues and make recommendations based on shared interests. This recommendation was effectively implemented.

Recommendation 3: The college should integrate research and evaluation of data into the various planning processes, and include a greater focus on outcomes, particularly with respect to persistence, transfer, occupational placement, and other measures.

The college has recently re-invigorated institutional research and, along with district reports, provides information on institutional outcomes, including course retention and success, persistence and other measures. It is not clear that this information has been integrated into planning processes, although it is “received” and “reviewed” by committees. The implementation of this recommendation remains a work in progress.

Recommendation 4: The college should develop and evaluate strategies to ensure the communication, use, and integration of existing and planned research and evaluation throughout the college community. This will further college efforts to develop a process where decisions are based on a culture of evidence.

The college has begun refining the program review process, including the identification of key performance indicators and standard reports, with resource requests tied to performance indicators. All programs, including student services and administrative services, complete a brief annual program review and a comprehensive program review is scheduled every six years. The college has created a program review committee and a subcommittee that reviews and validates the comprehensive program reviews. Those reports are then received by the faculty senate. The receipt of reports seems to be the extent of the use and integration of research. There is little evidence that program review has contributed to establishing a culture of assessment or that evaluative outcomes are used for planning. The recommendation has not been fully implemented.
Recommendation 5: It is recommended that the college develop and implement a plan for effective integration and coordination of basic skills offerings in mathematics, English, and learning skills to meet the needs of under prepared students, improve retention, and allow students to progress through the curriculum, and achieve educational goals.”

Since the last report the basic skills program is far less fragmented and there is a college wide focus on improving basic skills in math and English. Using Title V funding, discipline faculty from English and mathematics are including a computer aided instruction (CAI) basic skills component along side the basic math and English courses, as well as a personal development course that teaches good study skills. The CAI component, though required, was not universally enforced in the English classes although there is now greater compliance. Instructors and students value this approach to basic skills although the data on student achievement is mixed. Basic skills course completion rates have increased slightly from 61 percent in fall 2001 to 64 percent in fall 2004. The pairing of personal development courses with math has also yielded mixed results. Compliance with this recommendation is still a work in progress.

Recommendation 6: The college should improve the coordination of counseling services to better serve students in a timely and effective manner.

The 1994 team recommended “that the college immediately implement a process to alleviate both the problematic reporting structure, as well as communication barriers that exist among counselors and between counselors and other college segments.” The current student services functional chart indicates that categorical programs for special populations of students are reporting to different administrator and thereby continue to fragment into silos the dissemination of services.

The research to identify specific counseling needs has not been completed. Some counselors are required to split their time between programs to meet student needs. Part time faculty counselors have been hired to replace two full time counselors who are assigned to other college functions. Due to budget cuts, specialized counseling for students with disabilities is supported only by general counselors. Student access to counseling is being facilitated by three initiatives: 1) Counselors are serving more students through the teaching of personal development classes that enroll students in linked math and English classes and are funded through a federal grant initiative. 2) The fall 2002 installation of computer assisted scheduling and reporting. 3) The development of electronic reporting of student educational plans. This recommendation has not been fully met.

Recommendation 7: In the absence of a student union or cafeteria, the college should provide an appropriate space for students to interact and enjoy a sense of community.

The college has not adequately responded to the recommendation. However, a preliminary solution was implemented by designating space for the Associated Students
Organization. In the long term, the college’s plan for the construction of the student services building will fully address this recommendation. Key services will be housed in the new facility, which is designed to provide students with the convenience of a one-stop center for their administrative transactions. The new building, intended for construction in 2007, will bring together the key student services and programs under one roof. The new facility will addresses the continuing concern for needed food services, meeting rooms, and social areas that enhance student interaction, and thereby create an improved campus atmosphere.

**Recommendation 8: The college should take the steps necessary to ensure the currency of the library collection and other learning resources.**

This recommendation had not been met. The institution admits that there is and has been a lack of funding, which is the main obstacle to providing an adequate and up-to-date library collection. A collection of books in electronic format has been added to the library’s collection in an effort to maintain currency and diversity of holdings. Electronic periodical and reference databases have also been added to alleviate the problem. Librarians follow newly-devised strategies to select materials, including considering student requests, librarian observations, and faculty suggestions for purchases; these are then collected, prioritized, and purchased as funding becomes available. A rotating schedule allows librarians to scan each area of the collection for gaps to fill, and discipline faculty are consulted to ensure that the entire library collection is reviewed. Reference databases have been added through restricted state funding for training and technology and federal funding for special programs such as vocational education.

The acquisitions librarian has maximized the purchasing power of limited funding by delaying acquisition of new key reference books until deep discounts are offered when new editions are published. Although this does not fully solve the problem of access to current information, it does provide an avenue to slightly more current information than what would have been available without the purchase of somewhat dated materials.

**Recommendation 9: Regular evaluation of all staff should be monitored and documented.**

In spite of some progress, the college has not adequately responded to the previous team’s recommendation. The self-study indicates that each vice president’s division now has systems to track whether employees are being evaluated, but that the evaluation tracking systems have determined that some permanent employees are not being regularly evaluated. This was affirmed in interviews with employees during the visit.

**Recommendation 10: An appropriate level of custodial services and physical plant maintenance should be identified and addressed.**

The college has not adequately responded to the prior teams’ recommendation. The current self-study indicates that some effort has been made to improve custodial services and plant maintenance by securing funding for one additional custodial position. Findings indicate the position is funded with parking revenues. Furthermore, two
custodians, as provided by their union contract, have requested and will be granted transfers. Although the transfers will provide West Los Angeles College with budget relief, it heightens the need for custodial support for the college. The college continues to struggle to provide appropriate levels of services for plant maintenance.

Recommendation 11: The governing board should undertake an evaluation of its practices and policies.

The district governing board conducted a self-evaluation in September 2005 at a retreat that is planned to be an annual event. The results of this self-evaluation (IV.B-3) indicate a high overall degree of effectiveness and productivity. On a 4.0 scale (1.0 lowest), the Board ranked itself 3.5 overall in 22 areas including administration, finance, community relations, diversity and bond policies.

Recommendation 12: The college should improve faculty participation on college committees and other forms of wider service to the institution.

This situation has not remedied itself. The results of the 2005 self-study college questionnaire (IV.A-5) indicate that more than 43 percent of the full time faculty attended only one to three meetings in the past academic year. In meetings with various groups on campus, it was often stated that many departments are rarely represented on campus committees. For example, it was stated that the Curriculum Committee meetings are usually not represented by departments unless they are attempting to get committee approval for new classes.

Eligibility Requirements
For Accreditation Certification of Continued Compliance

1. Authority

West Los Angeles College (West) is a public two-year community college, established in 1969 and operating under the authority of the State of California, the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, and the Board of Trustees of the Los Angeles Community College District. The college is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

2. Mission

The West mission statement was last amended in October 1997, and the statement was approved by the district governing board in March 2000. The mission statement was last reviewed by the college community in spring 2005. The mission statement is published and supported by the college community.
3. Governing Board

The governing board of the Los Angeles Community College District consists of seven members elected by voters to four year terms. A student trustee is selected annually by the Associated Student Organizations of the nine colleges that comprise the multi-college Los Angeles Community College District.

The governing board is an independent, policy making body, in accordance with the California Education Code. The board is responsible for the quality and integrity of the institutions that comprise the nine college district. The governing board has a Conflict of Interest Code and recently adopted a Statement of Ethical Values and Code of Ethical Conduct.

4. Chief Executive Officer

The chief executive officer of West Los Angeles College is an interim president who commenced duties and responsibilities in August 2005. The interim president is expected to leave this position at the conclusion of the fiscal year on June 30, 2006. The governing board appointed president is expected to assume duties and responsibilities in July 2006.

The chief executive officer for the Los Angeles Community College District is the chancellor. The current chancellor assumed duties and responsibilities in July 1, 2005.

5. Administrative Capacity

West employs qualified personnel with appropriate experience to support the college mission and assure the quality and integrity of programs and services. The sufficiency of staff to conduct the operations associated with West Los Angeles College is questionable in every classification of employee. Several administrative positions are vacant, many academic disciplines are without full time faculty, and the classified staff is scant. Many employees noted the shortage of personnel. A staffing needs assessment and organizational study is recommended to effectively allocate human resources.

6. Operational Status

West has been in continuous operation since 1969. The college enrolls nearly 8,300 students in day, evening, and weekend classes in varying lengths to accommodate student needs.

7. Degrees

The current college catalog lists 41 associate degrees, 14 certificates of completions, and 26 skill certificates. According to the annual 2004-2005 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the college awarded 342 associate degrees and 292 certificates.
8. Educational Programs

West offers a wide variety of educational programs, academic and vocational, for both credit and non-credit. The college’s programs and services adhere to levels of quality and rigor appropriate to the degrees and certificates offered.

9. Academic Credit

West awards academic credit in a manner that is consistent with the Carnegie formula.

10. Student Learning and Achievement

West has identified nine institutional student learning outcomes and has developed a model that provides instructors with a guideline to follow that will assist in establishing expected student learning outcomes at the program and course levels. All courses are expected to incorporate at least two of the expected nine institutional outcomes.

Basic skills course completion rates for the period 2001-2004 indicate approximately 64% of students successfully complete with a grade of A, B, C, or pass. The student retention rate is approximately 83 percent, with a course success rate of about 64 percent. Student persistence rates from fall to spring term show that for the period fall 2001 to fall 2005, between 55 percent and 68 percent of students re-enroll.

11. General Education

The general education requirements for the associate degree include demonstrated proficiency in reading, writing, computational skills, oral communication, and technological awareness. The associate degree requires a minimum of 60 units. West offers two general education plans: Plan A for majors, which requires less than 36 units, must complete a minimum of 30 units of general education, and Plan B for majors, which requires 36 or more units, must complete a minimum of 18 general education units. Students must earn a grade of “C” or better in all work attempted.

12. Academic Freedom

West maintains an atmosphere where intellectual freedom and academic independence prevail. Faculty and students are free to examine and test knowledge appropriate to disciplines. Governing board policy exists that recognizes “that academic freedom is essential to excellence in education.”

13. Faculty

West’s full time faculty numbered 110 at the time of the visit. Additionally, nearly 300 part time faculty provide key instructional, library and counseling support. Faculty meet the teaching and minimum qualifications for the discipline they teach and the area they serve. Faculty have primary responsibility for curriculum and other academic and professional matters.
14. Student Services

Student services include a full range of comprehensive programs to support student learning.

15. Admissions

The admission policy of the college is consistent with state law as reflected in the governing board policy.

16. Information and Learning Resources

West provides access to information and learning resources located in the Library and Learning Resource Center. An automated library system offers an electronic book collection, and research and periodical data bases. Library hours and resources are limited and dated, but internet enabled computer stations offer access to an on-line catalog of print books, e-books, and videos.

17. Financial Resources

The college is challenged by fiscal constraints that are associated with a decline in student enrollment. The college’s general fund allocation is derived from a formula driven primarily by enrollment measured in full time equivalent students (FTES). Fewer students generate less revenue to support an institutional budget that has little room for expenses other than fixed costs associated with employee compensation and campus infrastructure.

18. Financial Accountability

A review of the audited financial statements revealed that the district complied with accepted accounting principles, state compliance requirements, and federal program requirements. No material weakness was identified involving internal controls. Long-term debt, capital leases, and other liabilities are kept current, and there is no significant audit finding.

19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation

The college’s master plan was created in 2001-03 and includes educational, facilities and Information Technology plans. There is evidence that planning does occur for all aspects of college operations, but it does not appear that planning is integrated or that the master plan guides annual planning, except in the area of facilities. While work remains to refine, integrate, and assess planning, the college has laid the foundation for the development of information based decision making and a reiterated cycle of planning.

20. Public Information

The college catalog, schedule of classes, and the web site each contain information about the college, its faculty, programs, services, and requirements. Included in the Schedule of Classes are the college’s values and mission statement, institutional student learning outcomes, admission requirements, student fees, and matriculation process, including registration
procedures, and steps to apply for financial aid. The college catalog is comprehensive, including student conduct and academic policies, major requirements, and course descriptions.

21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission

West attests that it adheres to eligibility requirements and accreditation standards as indicated in its self study for accreditation. The president of the Los Angeles Community College District Board of Trustees, chancellor, and college president certify that the college continues to be in compliance with the terms and conditions of accreditation and continues to meet each of the eligibility requirements for accreditation.

Evaluation of the College Using AACJC Standards for Accreditation

**Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness**

**General Observations**

The college mission statement is: “The mission of West Los Angeles College is to serve the students and the community by providing quality instructional and support services including programs, facilities, and open access for who can benefit from instruction.” This mission statement was approved by the Board of Trustees for the Los Angeles Community College District in March 2000. The institutional mission for West Los Angeles Community College is published and is supported by the college community. (Standard I.A.1, I.A.2)

The college has begun the dialog about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes, has developed its institutional research capacity, and has begun the collection and dissemination of data on student characteristics and student success. It has also completed an educational master plan, updated the program review process and created both a Program Review Committee and a Planning Committee. (Standard I.B.1)

The college’s master plan was created in 2001-03. This plan calls for a cycle of self-evaluation and adjustment, according to the self study, and encourages input from all parts of the campus community. The Annual Leadership Retreat conducted in 2005, identifies “preliminary areas for focused planning”. This retreat was attended by fifty three people, including the Academic Senate, the AFT Faculty Guild leadership, representation from the classified forum and several unions. (Standard I.B.2)

The college is assessing its progress toward achieving its stated goals but progress can be characterized best by saying that the college is poised to implement a number of plans or that it has taken the first steps in implementation of a number of plans. It has not yet developed an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation and re-evaluation. (Standard I.B.3)
The college, which lost the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness prior to the creation of the self-study report, invested in two research analysts, one of whom was eliminated due to budget problems. The remaining research analyst functions at the level of a director and has solidified the office. The researcher provides a great deal of data, including the West Los Angeles College Data Book as well as data through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness web site. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness has recently provided a Scorecard for Student Success with an array of data and comparison to other colleges in the district. These and other activities could best be characterized as representing the nascent stage of the development of a systematic cycle of evaluation and improvement. The researcher indicated that the college is at a stage of description and is moving toward a culture of evidence, and the provision of data and reports to inform decision-making attest to this. The planning agenda for this standard provides a map for the development of a process of empirically based decision-making. Overall, the college appears to be on the right road to developing key sources of information. It has a researcher who is capable and eager to infuse information into key committees and decision-making processes, and there is an ambitious planning agenda. Like other areas of the college, it remains to be seen whether the new momentum will be sustained and the planned activities recently started or revitalized will continue and become part of the regular, systematic business of the college. (Standard 1.B.4, 5, 6, 7)

Findings and Evidence

The mission statement itself is now included in the Schedule of Classes (pg. 2, Winter/Spring 2006 Schedule of Classes), the WLAC Catalog (pg. 9, 2004-06 Catalog), and the college web site (http://www.wlac.edu/about/college_mission.htm). There is a plan to post it in college classrooms and other public areas of the college. The accreditation self-study indicates that with the development and implementation of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) now taking place at WLAC, the mission statement needs to be revisited and perhaps even revised annually after SLOs become an embedded part of campus policy and procedure. There is no evidence to indicate that the mission statement has been recently assessed, but it was confirmed in interviews that the mission will be reviewed annually as part of the planning and assessment cycle.

A number of minutes, surveys, analyses, reports and plans were examined that attest to the collection and dissemination of information. The major document that addresses this standard is the West Los Angeles College Integrated Master Plan. The college has conducted a self-study survey and a general student survey, developed and refined a program review form and process, developed a unit plan guide and several unit plans, completed all annual program reviews and six comprehensive program reviews, developed a faculty position identification and prioritization process and developed the Office of Institutional Effectiveness web site. The Title III final report and Title V 2005 interim report were also provided as evidence. Minutes of the Divisional Council, Program Review committee, Comprehensive Program Review Evaluation committee, and College Council support a number of the college's claims in the self-study report. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides a description of services available, the Self Study Survey, the District Student Survey (West Los Angeles College students), the Data
Book and Leadership Retreat summaries. There are also several ad hoc reports published on the web site. Evidence was also collected during meetings with the Interim President, Vice President Academic Affairs, Vice President Student Services, Dean of Academic Affairs and Student Services, Dean of Admissions and Records, Academic Senate President, College Researcher, and members of the Program Review committee, Planning Committee and the Strategic Enrollment Management Committee.

Conclusions

The college meets standard I.A. Mission. The mission statement is publicized and respected by the college. The college, as stated in the self-study, is scheduling a review of the mission statement on an annual basis. Changes to the mission statement will be made as necessary.

The college minimally meets standard I.B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness. The college has made progress in the development of institutional research capacity, program review process and integration of information in planning and decision making. The college has created a number of plans, created processes and laid the foundation (with an ambitious planning agenda) for the development of information based decision-making and the development of a cycle of evaluation, planning, resource allocation, implementation and re-evaluation. The college has solidified the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the researcher has begun providing analyses and disseminating information that can provide the basis for the creation of the evaluation cycle. It remains to be seen whether recent momentum can be sustained and develop into an iterative process of assessment and planning.

Recommendation

5. The college should develop a sustainable reiterated cycle of integrated planning, resource allocation, plan implementation and evaluation by strengthening its information collection and dissemination for program review, and concentrating on implementation of the master plan and its ambitious planning agenda. (Standard I.A.4, I.B.1-7)

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

General Observations

The college serves a diverse population of 8,300 students. The college offers a liberal arts transfer program as well as 41 other associate degrees. The college boasts flagship programs in dental hygiene and in paralegal studies. New courses and programs as well as modifications go through a curriculum approval process and course outlines are reviewed at regular intervals to assure quality and conformance to objectives stated in the college master plan. The district has issued a new form for revising course outlines that requires faculty to cite specific learning objectives for each course. Also required for distance learning courses is a Distance Delivery Strategies Supplement. (Standard II.A.1.a, II.A.2.a)
Course offerings are primarily determined by historical trends and program review. The college has acquired class tracking software that it hopes will enable the college to plan offerings in an improved, systematic manner and help students complete their educational goals more efficiently. Annual and comprehensive program reviews are used to develop unit plans and budgets. The math faculty have used the program review process to modify basic skills courses and have increased the use of Computer Aided Instruction (CAI). In addition, vocational programs have advisory boards which provide input on course relevance and effectiveness. Minutes of the advisory board meetings are available for many of the programs. (Standard II.A.2.b)

The college has encouraged course improvement with resources from federal grants being used to offer workshops in addressing student learning styles and to create linked courses that combine basic skills classes with personal development classes. The college delivers instruction through the use of technology in the classroom and on-line. Of note are computer assisted instructional components in basic skills, math, English and information literacy. The college is experimenting with the use of smart boards in the classroom. Appropriate changes to instruction based on sensitivity to student gender and ethnicity are also being explored by the math faculty. (Standard II.A.1.b, II.A.2.d)

The college has begun to develop a systematic process for assessment of instructional programs in order to assess currency, improve teaching and learning strategies, and achieve stated Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Collegial dialogue has commenced to identify SLOs for courses, programs, certificates, and degrees. The college has a faculty committee on SLOs to steer this process. The development of SLOs is being encouraged by the Curriculum Committee through its requirement that two institutional SLOs be addressed in order for course outlines to pass the review process. (Standard II.A.1.c, II.A.2.e, II.A.3)

The college has identified SLOs for general education, for 12 certificate and degree programs, for counseling programs, and for 21 courses. The general education SLOs were adopted in 2005 by the Academic Senate. The program review instrument was revised in 2006 to require updates on the development of student learning outcomes. In addition, course outlines must reference at least two of the institutional SLOs. A large number of courses still need to be reviewed, and the issue of measuring SLOs and making course improvement based on this data is still a work in progress. The planning agenda for this area reflects this view. (Standard II.A.2, II.A.2.a)

The college has provided workshops on SLO’s to expand the discussion among faculty as to what SLO’s are and how they will be spread across the college curriculum. These workshops are a source of extensive professional development, and faculty are personally selected to attend. The student learning outcomes and assessment workshops that took place in summer of 2005 assisted faculty in setting up a grid of program outcomes that align SLO’s objectives and skills with assessment tasks in the goal of reaching program outcomes. There appears to be a slow but steady inclusion of SLO’s across the curriculum, entering into the classroom level through the syllabus. (Standard II.A.2.b, II.A.C.3)
The college’s planning process includes the annual program reviews that lead to unit plans. Unit plans identify problems, challenges and opportunities for the unit and cite the resources needed to address these issues. (Standard II.A.2.f)

The math division administers departmental final exams in elementary and intermediate algebra. Test items are generated from a test bank created by the author of the approved text. Student scores are also correlated with student semester grades. (Standard II.A.2.g)

Credits for courses are based on the Carnegie Rule and California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 55002. Degrees and certificates are based on completed required courses rather than student achievement of stated learning outcomes. This is because the college is still developing and incorporating course and program learning outcomes. (Standard II.A.2.h - i)

The Dental Hygiene program receives, on average, 144 applications for 24 spots in the program. Students are required to apply separately to this program, even if they are enrolled at the college. The retention is excellent and job placement is 100 percent. Students are closely monitored up to two years after they complete the program and through surveys and contact with employers. Faculty at the college are able to measure the student’s success and adjust curriculum based on the results of the survey. The Dental Hygiene program is required to complete its own accreditation report every seven years, thereby making it a data rich program. The accreditation process also requires that faculty participate in professional development in both Dental Hygiene and teaching. (Standard II.A.1.b, II.A.5)

The Accelerated College Transfer (ACT) program is newly implemented and a positive example of responding to diverse learning styles of students and a varied delivery system, through an opportunity to be part of an accelerated program. ACT has attracted 55 students into the current cohort. Students are encouraged to take two courses at a time, thereby accelerating program completion. The program is academically rigorous. The student population consists of single parents, older adults, working students, and others motivated to complete the associate degree in two years. (Standard II.A.2.d, II.A.3.a – b) II.A.5

The college communicates to its students through both print and electronic format. The web site for the College is http://www.wlac.edu/. The college catalogue is published every two years. There are pages on the web site that address college’s vision, mission and philosophy, its master plan and goals. Additionally, policies related to student conduct and expectations for academic honesty are clearly published on the web site and in the printed schedule. The schedule of classes, both the website and catalog versions, provide students with the necessary information. The college provides its student population with a printed and electronic course schedule on a semester basis. This schedule includes recommended and required prerequisites and a course description. Both the printed and electronic schedule include transfer information specific to each course. (Standard II.A.6.a, II.B.2)
Student Services operates within a flattened organizational structure with unit heads reporting directly to the vice-president. There are monthly meetings of the Student Services Council with every unit represented. At these meetings the processes of program review and development of student learning outcomes are coordinated and managed by the vice president. Annual program review for each student services unit were completed in 2005. Each unit has written individual student learning outcomes. (Standard II.B.1, II.B.3.c – d, II.B.4)

Two recent student satisfaction surveys have provided West with documentation and recommendations for improvement in the quality of their support services. The spring 2005 biannual student services survey on goals, services and programs identified the class schedule as the most important reason that students choose to attend West. An October 2005 report identified key areas for improvement, including the need to raise awareness of West’s programs in the local community. Responsibility for addressing the goal of increased enrollment is assigned to staff for recruitment, using high schools in close proximity as a target population. These actions are being implemented by student services staff, with input from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the Academic Affairs office, as part of their strategic enrollment planning effort. The self-study noted the results of both surveys, although it could not be determined whether analysis through dialogue was conducted. (Standard II.B.1, II.B.3, II.B.4)

The matriculation process benefits from the input of two supporting groups, a matriculation advisory committee and an assessment sub-committee comprised of faculty and staff from the offices providing related services. A streamlined process has been designed and is clearly articulated in a step-by-step guide in the schedule of classes. Online matriculation services are being piloted through a project with the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department. A prototype on-line delivery of student services was recently developed collaboratively between student services and institutional research. (Standard II.B.3)

The implementations of the Student Accountability and Records System (SARS) and electronic Student Educational Plans (SEP) resulted in improvements for student support and tracking student progress. Student Services counselors are beginning to collect and share matriculation data at committee meetings. However, data gathered from program reviews, when available, only describes the efficiency levels of the units. The comprehensive program review of counseling was completed. However, there were numerous recommendations by the Evaluation Committee. The counseling program is not actively developing an assessment plan and has not established a working relationship with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. (Standard II.B.4)

Funding for Library and Learning Support Services is inconsistent and inadequate. The book budget, periodicals budget, and tutoring budgets have all been reduced in recent years resulting in book and periodical collections that are insufficient and dated. Money has been earmarked by the college for physical improvements in the library such as painting and new carpeting, but the collection itself is static due to under funding. Only one major book purchase is made each year, and even with augmentation from other funding sources, the basic book budget is less than $20,000 per year. New contracts with
a book vendor and a periodicals vendor have been negotiated in an effort to cut costs and improve services. Only immediate needs are able to be filled, instead of collection building and development. The librarians shop for discounts instead of looking to purchase the most current information; electronic databases and e-books are counted on to provide the currency that print resources in the library do not. The lack of funding has also resulted in reducing the hours of service from 62 to 52 hours weekly in the library. The library is closed each Friday. (Standard II.C.1)

Technologically, the services offered in the Library and Learning Support Services division are adequate. A lack of a strategic technology replacement plan results in an uneven distribution of resources. The most substantial technological expenditure by the library was for its automation system, which is a shared district-wide expense.

Findings and Evidence

Findings are based on interviews, meetings, examination of minutes and agendas for the Matriculation Advisory Committee and Student Services Council, counseling folders, assessment and matriculation folder, student services program reviews, student services unit learning outcomes, spring 2005 Student Survey, West Los Angeles Community College vs. Two Major Competitors Final Report, Student Equity Plan and Title V outcomes reports.

There is some question about whether instruction delivery methodology is based on student learning needs or on instructor preference. Evidence for the effectiveness of the use of smart boards is based on instructor and student enthusiasm and its inferred impact on learning.

While there is a curriculum process and training workshops to help ensure the quality of distance delivered courses, there are no formal processes to conduct needs assessment for selecting distance courses or faculty to teach distance education. (Standard II.A.1)

The college has begun incorporating student learning outcomes into instruction. However, it is not at all clear that faculty sees the usefulness of SLOs or embraces the concept. The college is addressing this concern through workshops and a curriculum process that requires SLOs.

Communication, coordination, and staffing remain strong concerns for counselors. Despite a planning agenda to increase student educational plans and maintain them electronically, the counselors have not been organized to respond to the workload.

Program reviews and descriptions of student programs do not include measures of effectiveness of those services. While there are some ad hoc assessments done by individual offices, there is a lack of coordination with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. In fact, there is evidence that counselors lack knowledge about the resources of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and thereby missed opportunities for collaboration with academic affairs to seek programmatic and financial support through grant applications.
The individual student services units are appropriately developing student learning outcomes, and eight units have submitted them to the Student Services Council. However, these SLOs lack assessment data and will need review and revision. Three units have not submitted their plans.

Faculty at the college worked to improve retention and student success in basic skills. There is evidence that combining personal development with English and math courses leads to increased student success. In a cohort of 100 students, there has been improvement of students who took the personal development course in a face-to-face classroom environment. These results did not show up with either the online version or the TBA version. Evidence of these findings came from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

The claimed positive impact on student learning of computer aided instruction (CAI) in basic skills math and English courses has not been clearly established by course achievement data. The college may want to consider using SLOs to study the effectiveness of CAI delivery.

There is no hard data or research as of yet on the effectiveness of the ACT program, something that is anxiously awaited. ACT is an open-entry program, making it possible to join the program during any of the semesters. Students who do not pass the English and math assessment to place in college level classes must be part of a bridge program, enrolling in the lower level English and math classes outside of the ACT program. At the orientation to ACT, students are provided with a full array of student services; representatives from student services areas are all on hand to provide information to students. The orientation starts the process of creating a unified cohort. As student outcomes data becomes available, it will be used to make programmatic changes and seek additional support.

The library has holdings of 62,000 volumes and 91 current print periodical subscriptions; 75 computers; one microform reader; 15 video players with 1,200 instructional videos; and a laboratory classroom with 22 student workstations. The book budget is approximately $20,000 dollars per year from various sources of funding. Selection of materials to support courses is done by library faculty with input from faculty, administration, staff, and students. The library faculty follow an Acquisitions Policy in shaping the library’s collection. (Standard II.C.1.a)

Seven library courses are offered, ranging from basic research methodology to more advanced Internet resources for specific applications. In addition, various information competency workshops are presented throughout the year. These workshops were developed in cooperation with UCLA and other community colleges with support from the Fund for Improvement of Instruction (FII) and the Fund for Student Success (FSS). Approximately 30 classes are oriented to the library each semester. Work on identifying Student Learning Outcomes for Library courses has not been done, and according to the Library’s 2005-2006 Program Review, SLO’s will only be added to courses as each of the course outlines are updated. (Standard II.C.1.b)
Although the library faculty are committed to improving services to students, there is no evidence that feedback from evaluation tools is being used to do this. The college’s Library and Learning Support Services distribute evaluation instruments to students and faculty to enable planning to improve their services. In spring 2005, a Student survey was conducted; although a year later there is no evidence that evaluation and analyses of this survey instrument is underway, as stated in the institution’s self-study. (Standard II.C.2)

Data collection related to library services is limited. No statistics could be provided documenting use of remote access to library resources or circulation figures. A new software system called “Red Canyon” was recently purchased to track student progress in the tutoring area, but no data collected from that software is yet available. The library has used multiple automation systems and is now using Sirsi, but circulation and usage statistics from that software are not available or being used. (Standard II.C.1.c)

The lack of focus on assessing the library effectiveness, along with a tightening budget that has reduced operating hours in the Library and Learning Support Services tutoring center, have hampered plans for improved services. One new procedure does strengthen the correlation between college curriculum and library materials: a librarian is now represented on the campus curriculum committee and signs off on new and revised offerings as an indication that there are adequate materials in the library to support the new courses. (Standard II.C.2)

A tri-fold print brochure is provided to students to alert them to library resources. It includes hours of operation, examples of services offered, borrowing rules and loan periods, and fine information. Also included are instructions to log-in remotely to access the library’s catalog and databases. (Standard II.C.1.c)

Conclusions

The college meets standard II. The college has a rich and diverse curriculum that serves students with varying educational needs and provides an array of student support services. However, the college needs to further embrace data as the driver for curriculum and programmatic decisions. It is not always clear that decisions are based on documented data rather than perceived needs. The development of student learning outcomes and the assessment of programs may strengthen instruction and support.

The Dental Hygiene program is truly an exceptional program. The close attention that students receive and the close monitoring of student outcomes can make it a model for other programs at the college that want to use data to improve student outcomes. The program is required to conduct a separate accreditation every seven years. This has made it a very data rich program, and faculty use this data to improve the curriculum. The program has integrated SLO’s into its goals, which mesh well with the original competency goals.

Through federal grants the college has made a positive effort to address the failure and dropout rates of its students who enroll in English and math. The combining of computer
aided basic skills instruction and teaching personal development with the basic English and math classes has allowed faculty to expand what they are teaching, and improved retention and success. This has helped to create a program directed to basic skill students that is more robust and less fragmented. The data has reinforced the results although the population being sampled in some areas is too small to draw accurate conclusions.

The Office of Matriculation presents an inviting and human face to new students. Since 2000 the facility has been refurbished and is much more attractive and welcoming to students. The Office of Matriculation has a testing center for students and a video orientation for new students. The Director of Matriculation has been very successful in building a center where students avail themselves of the essential services that help to ensure a smooth passage through the community college system and beyond. Nonetheless, there is an immediate need to improve the student flow through the matriculation process in the current layout and design of the various offices.

It is expected that new Student Services Building will provide students with more efficient access to in-person services that are lacking in their current facilities. The planned new facility should result in the improvement to the overall working relationships and coordination of services among the various student services units. Furthermore, a new one-stop student services building is expected to foster student socialization and draw more students into campus services and activities. (Standard II.B.1, II.B.3)

Although the counselors’ involvement in the development of online student services is not clear, the prototype student services website, along with a degree audit program developed by the district, are critical components of student retention and satisfaction. The adoption of newer technologies, blended with traditional services, will extend West’s ability to market and recruit new students as well as support current and returning students. (Standard II.B.1, II.B.3, II.B.4)

Based on interviews and observations, a strong dedication to students is demonstrated by the student services faculty and staff. They are determined to provide a wide array of student services to meet the needs of the students attending the college.

Commendation

The ACT program is to be commended for its creative and smart use of scheduling that provides the students with the optimum chance for achieving an associate degree within two years. The college should consider this program as a model for meeting student demand and their needs.

Recommendations

6. The college should periodically review its staffing practices, hours of operation, and counseling priorities to ensure that what is delivered is consistent with program reviews,
of acceptable quality, and aligns with the mission and values of the college. (Standard II.B.1)

7. The college should address the inadequacy of its library collections. (Standard II.C.1.)

**Standard III.A: Human Resources**

**General Observations**

West Los Angeles College has undergone frequent turnover in upper management at the same time the District office is decentralizing many of its operations, including human resources. Staff reductions at the college have resulted in employees having to absorb additional responsibilities. Recent layoff notices given to three senior level administrators and one faculty member will not improve concerns with workloads. No plan is evident at this time that addresses how administration will be organized in order to cover the responsibilities that remain from these vacant positions. (Standard III.A.2)

The responsibility of assuring the qualifications for West’s personnel resides with the campus screening committees for faculty and administrators, and in the instance of classified staff, by the District Personnel Commission. The Commission maintains a merit system for classified employees, and is responsible for fostering the advancement of a career service for these employees. (Standard III.A.1)

The college has a Compliance Officer who is responsible for compliance, sexual harassment, Title IX, student equity and grievances, and diversity. The compliance officer is scheduled to work a load split equally between the West LA and LA Southwest colleges. (Standard III.A.2, 3, 4)

**Findings and Evidence**

The transition of human resource operations to a more decentralized model has created some concern. During interviews, employees expressed frustration with the lack of staffing or financial support to carry out the responsibilities once handled by the District and now transferred to the colleges. The lack of clarity about delegated responsibility to the college for human resources is identified as a problem for effective administration of services and support. (Standard III.A.2)

The evaluation of staff continues to be an area requiring monitoring and timely completion. In addition, the college has yet to integrate student learning outcomes into assessing and improving faculty performance. While some progress was noted, a concerted effort should be made to provide timely feedback to faculty regarding job performance to ensure quality teaching and expected student learning outcomes. (Standard III.A.1.b - c)

The college compliance officer conducted sexual harassment training in December 2005 for all managers, supervisors, and division chairs. Other college personnel have
expressed interest in receiving this training. In addition, the Staff Development Committee coordinates professional development activities for faculty and staff. During interviews, faculty and staff expressed gratitude for additional training and staff development activities made available through federal grants. The new opportunity to develop and teach courses on-line was cited as one positive training outcome. Employee survey results indicated that the Staff Development Committee needs to develop a more systematic process to identify the professional development needs of staff. (Standard III.A.5)

A lack of sufficient numbers of qualified full-time faculty, staff, and administration was repeatedly mentioned as a great concern. Presently, there are 110 full-time faculty and approximately 300 adjunct faculty. According to the 2005 self-study questionnaire, 55 percent of the full-time faculty, 40 percent of the adjunct faculty, 64 percent of the administrators, and 78 percent of the classified managers strongly disagree or disagree that there is adequate staff to successfully run their units. While four full-time faculty positions have been identified to be hired, no recruitment efforts have begun and managers suggested that all of these may not be filled due to the college’s budget deficit. (Standard III.A.1, III.A.2, III.A.5)

All personnel policies and procedures are available on the District website and the Personnel Commission website. In addition, district policies provide the necessary security and confidentiality of all personnel records. During interviews, employees mentioned a college appreciation for issues of equity and diversity. Documented data collection affirmed that the college personnel represent richly diverse ethnic and cultural diversity. (Standard III.A.3.a - b, III.A.4.a - c)

Employees reported high satisfaction with their employment experience at West Los Angeles College. Employee survey results indicate that 78 percent of employees reported “feeling comfortable asking the administration for help”, 83 percent feel their interactions with colleagues “are positive”, 95 percent “enjoy the work” they do, and 80 percent would “recommend working at WLAC to a friend.” (Standard III.A.4.c)

While the college formally assesses the effective use of its human resources during the annual program review process, budget constraints in recent years have limited the college’s ability to fill vacancies. Despite budget difficulties, the College Planning Committee intends to create an identification and prioritization process for staff positions. (Standard III.A.6)

Conclusions

The college minimally meets Standard III.A. The self-study clearly describes the college’s human resources, and evidence exists that the college has adequately identified its problems and needs. Interviews and evidence pointed to a college that is well aware of the financial constraints. Creative use of grant funding to continue staff development opportunities and a renewed sense of teamwork to move the college forward go a long way in keeping the upbeat attitude revealed by college personnel.
Commendation

The college is commended for being resourceful in seeking external funding to support college operations and professional development.

Recommendations

8. The college should assess its staffing needs and organizational structure, and implement a plan that effectively allocates its human resources. (Standards III.A.1, III.A.2, III.A.6)

9. The college should complete and maintain scheduled employee evaluations. (Standard III.A.1.b)

Standard III.B: Physical Resources

General Observations

West Los Angeles College sits on 72 acres as an urban center of learning nestled on a hillside in a residential community of Culver City, California. The college has additional land of approximately four acres adjacent to the Los Angeles International Airport.

The physical plant is approaching 40 years old and its age is visible in several locations of the campus. However, two general obligation bonds will provide needed resources to renovate, replace, and expand several building. On the horizon are a much needed student services building and a science building. The construction of these buildings will permit the campus to demolish long-standing temporary buildings which line one side of the campus.

Findings and Evidence

Based on the review of the facilities master plan, campus tours, site visits and interviews, the physical plant is determined to be safe and adequate for the college’s educational programs. Facilities planning and evaluation are integrated with West Los Angeles’ Master Plan. The college will utilize Proposition A and AA General Obligation Bond funding to replace temporary classroom facilities built in 1969 with modern classrooms, located in math/science facility and a one-stop student services building. This planned expansion commences in 2007-08 and will increase capacity by approximately 127,174 square feet. Staffing associated with maintaining the new facilities may amount to no more than stretching current resources and should be assessed to plan for viable options. (Standard III.B.1.a - b, III.B.2.a)

Facility meetings are held monthly with constituency representation from the campus, the college’s contracted construction management company, and key district staff. The college facilities committee is the first step in the participatory governance process where
facility issues are discussed, recommendations sent to College Council, and finally council recommendations sent to the President. Safety is a priority that drives college decisions related to physical plant planning and maintenance. (Standard III.B.2.a - b)

The college’s plant operations and facilities office has demonstrated efforts to aggressively secure Scheduled Maintenance Dollars and Hazardous Material funding from the California System Office for completion of the following projects; (1) replacement of 29 year old chillers in the Heldman Learning Resource Center; (2) replacement of the deteriorating stairs in the Career Education building; and (3) the replacement of the boiler in the Athletics building. (Standard III.B.1.a, III.B.2.b)

The college faces a bigger challenge than plant maintenance related to a decade old mitigation measure required for campus build-out as approved by the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This matter involves the Homeowners Association and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with residents immediately outside of campus. An access road being constructed around the college’s campus has doubled in cost as demands for modification are made by adjoining residents. This matter has halted the college’s construction until it is resolved.

The college contracts with local law enforcement, the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department, to provide campus security. The campus security is staffed with one deputy team leader, two deputy sheriffs and eight security officers. There are also four student worker cadets, who are criminal justice majors. These students must carry 12 units and pass a criminal background check. Campus security is provided 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Additional security measures include 12 new surveillance cameras strategically placed around campus. Exterior lighting was improved around high traffic areas formerly not well lit. The campus is locked down after the conclusion of evening classes and on weekends, except for calendared events. (Standard III.B.1.b)

In addition to providing campus security, the Sheriff’s Department assists with the coordination of Community Emergency Response Training (CERT), preparation of the college’s Emergency Response Plan, scheduling and leading campus emergency drills, and preparation and publication of the campus crime statistics. (Standard III.B.1.b)

Interviews with security personnel, staff, and students, confirmed the college is a safe environment. Concerns related to safety and physical plant improvements are taken care of immediately. The one remaining challenge appears to be parking, but there is a plan to build a parking structure and improve existing parking lots.

Conclusions

The college minimally meets Standard III.B. The self-study accurately describes the college’s physical resources. The college recognizes its difficulty maintaining its facilities, including the surrounding grounds, with its current staffing levels; yet financial resources do not exist to address this ongoing issue. West is an aging campus maintained with a mix of minor and extensive painting, renovations, landscape work, and parking lot
improvements. The college lacks adequate funding for new equipment, equipment replacement (energy efficient, etc.), and equipment maintenance, but very minimum requirements are satisfied. Long-term planning is essential to ensure that physical plant and equipment needs are prioritized and available funding sources identified. (Standard III.B.1.a - b)

The college’s allocation of Propositions A and AA General Obligation Bond funding, will improve the physical environment that supports the institutional mission. However, due to the escalating costs of construction, the college has made some difficult decisions to re-prioritize projects. Scarcely resources have delayed the renovation efforts for the Learning Resource Center, Career Education building and the Science Center building. (Standard III.B.1.a – b)

Recommendations

See Recommendations # 8, in Standard III. A. Human Resources.

Standard III.C: Technology Resources

General Observations

Information Technology (IT) support is divided between the district and the college. The district has a staff of over 70 that maintains the district wide area network (WAN) as well as providing servers, software, and maintenance for a number of administrative programs including human resources, library, financial management, and student information. The college is responsible for their local area network, services such as e-mail and courseware, and the purchase and maintenance of computers, peripherals, and software. The college has an Information Technology Department with a staff of five. The lab assistants assigned to some division labs provide direct assistance to student users. The district Chief Information Officer described the present organization as a “federated” system. Coordination and information sharing occurs at monthly meetings of the District Technology Committee. Both district and college reported satisfaction with the current organization and division of responsibilities. (Standard III.C.1)

The college adopted an Information technology Strategic Plan (April 2002) as part of its process to develop an integrated master plan. The plan established five action objectives as priorities for budget consideration, which due to budget constraints have not been adequately funded. (Standard III.C.2)

The college surveyed its faculty IT users in the WLAC Technology Survey (Fall 2003) to ascertain needs and usage. There is evidence that resources for faculty are widely available and are used for a variety of purposes including instructional management. IT directly supports instruction for on-line courses and there is a required computer aided instruction (CAI) component in basic skills courses. Math faculty reported that CAI is an intrinsic part of many of their courses. Student access is facilitated through a number of labs situated throughout the college containing equipment supporting different platforms
and levels of computing need. There are specialized labs for certain programs as well as general access labs. The *LACCD Student Survey* (2005) provides evidence that students have adequate access to IT services. (Standard III.C.1.a, III.C.1.d, III.C.2)

Funding for college IT comes from a variety of sources and is managed through various campus units. There is no significant general fund budget line item for IT. The college is heavily dependent on external funding from the California Telecommunications and Technology Infrastructure Program and other grants. The specialized instructional labs are funded through their respective divisions. Faculty and staff computers are likewise funded by their respective units. However, purchases are evaluated by the technology committee. Networking infrastructure, computer maintenance, core software purchasing, and support for administrative computers are managed through the college’s Information Technology Department. The college has no formal standard computer platforms, yet tends to make purchases from negotiated price lists thus creating de facto standards. The college offers minimal support to non-Windows platforms as an economy measure which also contributes to the de facto standards. (Standard III.C.1.e)

The college has an ongoing project of extending and upgrading its networking infrastructure and technology facilities in classrooms. There are no formal policies on equipment maintenance and replacement. Needs and priorities are determined at the unit level with assistance from the Information Technology Department. All unit level needs are vetted at the technology committee. Maintenance and support levels vary from division to division. The college has not yet widely adopted the total cost of ownership (TCO) budget model even though this expense is a critical budgeting action plan which aggravates the problem. (Standard III.C.1.c, III.C.2)

The college has dedicated facilities for IT training for faculty, staff, and students. The college Teaching Learning Center has regular workshops for faculty and staff. The library has a recognized program in information literacy for students. In addition, general computer literacy is taught in the Computer Science division. Direct support for students using lab facilities varies—some labs have sufficient budget to provide assistants and others do not. The college is also expanding the use of technology in the classroom through the planned expansion of the installation of “smart boards”. While the “smart board” is quite popular with college faculty, its effectiveness and impact on learning has not been assessed. (Standard III.C.2.b)

**Findings and Evidence**

Minutes, surveys and plans were examined, as well as interviews conducted and observations made to make the following findings.

Despite the development of an IT Strategic Plan within the integrated master planning process, there is a lack of evidence that IT planning is fully integrated into the actual budgeting process. In part, this is because general funding is not readily available for many of the IT initiatives and IT acquisition must follow the intentions of the external funding sources. (Standard III.C.2)
Budget control is valued by separate college units, but this control has led to a lack of coordination and planning at the college level and varying levels of support across the college. IT purchases are budgeted for acquisition, but not to account for total cost of ownership. Current budgeting practice, particularly in maintenance, tends to be reactive rather than preventive and planned. The expectation is that funding will be “found” for maintenance and repair. These problems are recognized by the college in the WLAC Self Study and affirmed by interviews, site visits and observations. (Standard III.C.2)

The overall direction of IT planning is more focused on supporting teaching than promoting student learning. This focus may evolve as the college develops implementation of student learning outcomes and assessment. (Standard III.C.1.a)

Conclusions

The college minimally meets Standard III.C. Student, faculty and staff access to IT resources is adequate to support the mission of the college. However, there is some question as to how sustainable the resources are since they are heavily dependent on significant, but unpredictable, external funding. While the college has continually suggested a more centralized and unified approach to IT planning and budgeting, little progress has been made towards actualization of the intent. Since much of the support for administrative information systems is at the district level, focus for college IT support should be placed on the direct impact of IT towards student learning outcomes. The college has chosen a distributive budget model for IT support. However, the college should also consider funding strategies that help insure equitable levels and access to IT resources across campus.

Commendation

The IT staff has shown itself to be dedicated and hardworking, and given the resources available, provides a level of service that exceeds expectations.

Recommendation

10. The college should adopt a more fully integrated planning and budgeting process that focuses on promoting student learning, includes a technology plan that provides an equitable distribution of institutional technology, and includes the total cost of ownership for technology. (Standard III.C.2).

Standard III.D: Financial Resources

General Observations

The August 1, 2002 Integrated Master Plan describes a dynamic process that looks at programs and services with the intent to ensure the allocation of appropriate resources to respond to changing needs. While this document seeks to ensure the institution has a financial planning process that fully integrates with other institutional planning efforts,
this has not fully materialized. Evidence to support this claim can be found in a number of committee meeting minutes where independent ideas have not completely come together as described in the decision making model incorporated in the Master Plan. (Standard III.D.1.a - c)

For the reason that the adopted budget drives the college short-range financial plans, established resource goals set by the college should be mission-focused and support all institutional planning. Collectively, this process should tie to the Master Plan and requires leadership through a well-established budget committee, planning committee, and College Council. The college governing committees follow a process of budget development with representation from campus constituencies having some input into the development of the annual budget plans, but the effort does not include a scheduling component, which means the planners lack adequate data and expertise to evaluate college-wide needs and develop a balanced budget.

The college budget planning calendar starts in September of the prior year weaving through a number of planning cycles starting with preliminary budget projections in March, tentative budget projections by June, and final budget work in August leading to the adopted budget by September 15 each year. (Standard III.D.1.b, III.D.1.d)

Long-range budget decision-making involves a comprehensive planning and review process with various governing committees. Although fiscal oversight, administration of capital budgets, and the development of long-range strategies are major responsibilities of the college administration, there is little evidence to support this planning model exists consistently on a long-term basis. However, there is a recent effort through the facilities and budget committee to make recommendations to the College Council and through that council to the President. Nonetheless, it is unclear that all of the appropriate constituent groups are involved in linking financial and institutional planning as evidenced by observing the special budget committee meeting held on March 22, 2006. (Standard III.D.1.a – c, III.D.2.b – c, III.D.3)

Findings and Evidence

The self-study points out that the institutional mission of serving students and the community, providing quality instructional support services programs, and sufficient facilities is what drives financial planning. However, evidence links financial planning to a mere projection of student enrollment rather than on historical data and an integrated plan. The former President’s memorandum dated June 8, 2005 states that the college initially submitted a 2005-06 annual budget operational plan that determined the college would generate 6,928 FTES reflecting an ambitious four percent increase over the 2004-05 operational plan. This planning projection became a part of the District’s Tentative Budget allocation in spite of the prior fiscal year ending balance deficit of $570,479 and actual reported FTES of 6,483. As of February 2006, the college FTES projection is reduced by 578 FTES, while the initial target of 7,032 FTES set by the district would represent a reduction of 682 FTES.
As of the accreditation team visit, the college has made a further FTES reduction and projects only reaching a target of approximately 6,100 FTES (fall, winter, spring) including 350 FTES from summer. Based on this number, the district has pulled back all growth and basic skills funding; the net effect of this is a deficit of $582,596 coupled with an operational deficit of $917,394 totaling $1,499,990. The college is reporting to budget committee members and others that the revised total projected deficit is approximately ($1.3) million, which may include overpayments and other transactions inappropriately recorded due to errors from a newly implemented software system. In spite of fewer resources, the 2005-06 operational plan also points out the need for additional resources for necessary facilities operations and a permanent marketing budget including a full time staff dedicated to outreach and community relations to assist the college with reaching enrollment targets. (Standard III.D.1.a – c)

Interviews with the finance administrative team confirm that the college is currently projected to end fiscal year 2005-06 with a $1.3 million-dollar deficit in expenses over revenue in the Unrestricted General Fund. Furthermore, the $570,479 deficit incurred in 2004-05 requires the repayment of the debt in three annual installments of $190,160 beginning in fiscal year 2006-07. Add to this the potential implementation of a district office requirement to establish a one percent contingency. This contingency represents approximately $262,610 in revenue that would not be immediately available for operational needs. (Standard III.D.2.c)

The college is operating on deficit spending that may continue over the next three to five years as it repays existing debt obligations, experiences other possible financial impacts, and continue to struggle with enrollment targets to provide additional unrestricted dollars for operational needs. The governing committees might benefit by using a Strategic Cost Management model to contain cost and plan short and long-range needs. The district does have a forgiveness process under a grant allocation method, which the college has not taken advantage of so far. The college should not rule out the possibility of requesting debt forgiveness through the grant allocation program as a part of its future planning strategy. (Standard III.D.2.g, III.D.3)

As evidenced by the financial analysis and ending balance information provided by the institution during fiscal year 2004-05 approximately 56 percent of Unrestricted General Fund dollars were spent on certificated salaries, 22 percent non-certificated salaries, 16 percent on benefit costs, four percent on other services and expenses, and two percent on supplies, capital outlay and other outgo. This represents 94 percent of the general fund dedicated for salaries and benefits leaving an institution of this size with only six percent to distribute across other operating expenses including utilities, supplies, capital outlay, and other outgo expenses. Based on the 2004-05 adopted budget of $24,080,925, final expenditures were $630,936 over the district allocation. (Standard III.D.3)

Several capital expenditures are planned for the near future such as classroom modernization, a math/science facility that will also house the Dental Hygiene Program, and a one-stop student services building that will include all student service programs, bookstore, storage, conference facilities, and a food court. The primary source of funding
is based on remaining proposition A and AA General Obligation Bond revenue. The projected continued cost escalation for these upcoming projects may have a further negative impact on long-range planning as the college proceeds to improve plant facilities. (Standard III.D.1.b)

The college owns its Bookstore that currently has a fund balance of approximately $350,000. The District retains one percent of gross sales which goes through an allocation process back to the college when needed for appropriate expenditures involving bookstore operations. (Standard III.D.2.a)

A review of the District audited financial statements revealed that over the last three years no “material weakness” was identified involving internal controls. Long-term debt, capital leases, and other liabilities are being kept current, and there have been no significant audit findings over the periods reviewed. (Standard III.D.2, III.D.2.a)

The Administrative Services staff has consistently met all state and federal government regulations and all audit requirements and therefore demonstrates appropriate financial oversight of all operations. The college also exhibits integrity in assuring that all financial resources are utilized responsibly and in accordance with the college’s mission. Contracts with external agencies, such as banks and equipment vendors are appropriate and regularly reviewed by the administration. (Standard III.D.2.d, f)

Importantly, West Los Angeles’ approach to assessing the effective use of resources takes place in a number of settings. Based on a review of the Wes Los Angeles Master Plan, financial reports, and monthly/quarterly expense variance analysis, the most visible examples of fiscal review are the daily budgetary review by the Vice President of Administrative Services, the Associate Vice President of Administrative Services, and the Quarterly review with the District financial staff, as well as the quarterly reviews of financials conducted by the LACCD Board of Trustees. (Standard III.D.3)

Interviews with the college administration and review of bi-weekly budget committee meeting minutes confirm that projected enrollment will greatly impact the institution’s fiscal resources, and thereby its financial stability. It is suggested that annual budget assumptions be established to broaden communication and understanding about the implications of both long and short range planning, particularly regarding enrollment and growth and the relationship to income and expense. These written budget assumptions should be distributed to key personnel throughout the college to contextualize budget development and encourage planning for unanticipated expenses that have a direct impact on unrestricted general revenue. (Standard III.D.2.b)

Conclusions

The college minimally meets standard III.D. The college has seen a reduction in enrollment growth of approximately eight to ten percent over the last two years. This has caused a significant reduction in the Unrestricted General Fund allocation to cover the college’s operations. The college’s planning and budget efforts have operated
independently until only recently when a structural change was made, designed to bring
everything back into the College Council for a recommendation to the President.
(Standard III.D.1.a – d)

The college is operating on deficit spending that might continue over the next three to
five years as they repay their existing debt obligations, experience other possible
financial impacts, and continue to struggle with enrollment targets to provide additional
unrestricted dollars for operational needs. The following examples highlight a few
challenges faced by the college:

- The college is responsible for the cost of health and welfare benefits, which
  increased an average of 18-20 percent over the last three years.
- The college is responsible for the contract with the Sheriff’s department,
  which has added an additional deputy over the last two years.
- The college is responsible for utility expenses, which have risen over the last
  three years. In addition, the college is trying to care for 37-year-old
  temporary facilities, without energy efficient equipment.
- The district is considering a set aside of one percent of the Unrestricted
  General Fund allocation for contingency purposes, further reducing the
college’s operational budget. In addition to this, the district is considering a
strategy to withhold growth dollars until the following year when, and if,
growth is earned.
- There is not a college marketing plan to deal with enrollment growth
  challenges and to provide more outreach to the communities West serves.
  West is projecting a 2006-07 preliminary enrollment target of 6,676 FTES.
  Their enrollment strategy in 2005-06 is to borrow 350 FTES from summer; an
  impact to the next year.
- The district approved salary improvements in 2005-06, at 5.23 percent, but
  allocated to the college only a 4.23 percent augmentation to pay for this
  increase.
- There was a district approved step increase for all adjunct faculty with no
  augmentation for the increased expense for salaries and associated benefits.

As mentioned above, there are a number of contributing factors as to why West’s deficit
continues to grow. More District oversight and leadership is strongly urged to look at
this small college and better determine how to assist in its financial solvency.

Recommendations

11. The college should assign a high priority to attaining long-term financial stability.
(Standard III.D)

12. The college should develop and execute enrollment management strategies to
achieve stable enrollment and growth. (Standard III.D)
Standard IV: Leadership/Governance

General Observations

West Los Angeles College is in a period of transition in terms of leadership and governance. As noted in the self-study, there has been a "changing cast" of senior staff members. For example, there have been three vice presidents for Administrative Services from 2000-05. Furthermore, there is currently an interim president who will be replaced July 1, 2006, and there exists several administrative vacancies.

The Academic Senate represents the faculty in academic and professional matters. The self-study stated that the ratio of full-time faculty to part-time faculty is low due to the previous reassignment of full-time faculty to administrative and program tasks, thereby relying on more part-time faculty. This was confirmed in interviews and validated by public documents. However, it was stated in meetings with the accreditation team that the current administration is returning full-time faculty to teaching when their non-teaching reassignment terms expire. Regardless, it may benefit the college to assess the adequacy of the number of full-time teaching faculty. (Standard IV.A.2.a, IV.A.3)

American Federation of Teachers is the bargaining representative of faculty and represents more than 110 full-time and 300 adjunct faculty. Local college leadership of AFT has committed to build teamwork with other constituents to facilitate communications and to seek consensus in decision making. (Standard IV.A.2.a)

The self-study specified, and interviews confirmed, that the Associated Students Organization, which represents the interests of students at West, is active on campus and makes recommendations in areas such as student services, financial aid, and academic policies. As noted in documentation and interviews, the school does have a very low participation rate of students in college-wide activities and committees. The absence of a cafeteria as a general meeting space, which could enhance socialization and the sharing of campus information, has doubtless contributed to this low participation. The college's facility plan includes construction of a cafeteria and student center. (Standard IV.A.3)

The Division Council, Academic Senate, academic administrators and chairs of academic divisions are preparing for the eventuality of department and program level student learning outcomes. The implementation of SLOs has been a concern to all community colleges in California, and West Los Angeles College is no exception. While the campus has made progress in identifying institutional learning outcomes, the process towards developing clear, focused and measurable student learning outcomes is on-going. The campus community clearly acknowledges the importance and need for this process to be expedited to affect full implementation by 2010. Meetings with various campus personnel confirm that everyone is learning the process related to student learning outcomes. (Standard IV.A.3, 4, 5)

"Planning Drives Budget" is the goal of West Los Angeles College. The Integrated Master Plan was created in 2001-03. This plan clearly spells out the process which guides decision making and prioritization, including budget, program review, unit
planning, and college objectives. Yet, the master educational plan seems to have little influence for predicting student enrollment and attaining fiscal stability. The college has operated with a budget deficit in two of the last three years. (Standard IV.A.3)

The College Planning Committee assisted the Program Review Committee with unit planning and program review. The self study admits that governance at West has proven to be challenging. The college, however, seems committed to a continued effort to streamline the process. (Standard IV.A.3)

The newly functioning College Council, a recommending body to the President of the college, is being embraced with optimism and enthusiasm. The college believes the formation of the College Council shows an effort toward systematic evaluation and planning as well as a step towards a more efficient decision making process. This council will provide frequent and improved opportunities for enhanced communications and true participatory governance. However, to be fully effective and successful, all campus groups must show commitment to participation and two-way communication, bringing feedback from constituents to create an effective and respected decision-making vehicle for the entire institution. (Standard IV.A.2.b, IV.A.3)

Since the last accreditation, the district's Council of Academic Affairs and the District Academic Senate have contributed to the decision to decentralize the curriculum approval process and to empower local college faculty. This policy change is contained in the document, Curriculum Approval: Standards and Procedures. Decentralization of the curriculum approval process is thought to professionalize the local college faculty and to make college academic programs more responsive in their immediate service areas. (Standard IV.B.3)

The Los Angeles Community College District is comprised of nine colleges. West Los Angeles College, as one of these nine colleges, is governed by the seven-member Board of Trustees. There is a student representative that votes in an advisory capacity. (Standard IV.B.1)

The self study verifies that the duties and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are defined by state Ed Code (70902) and by Board Rules (Chapter II, Article III 10.9). The Board rules are published and available to the public, and are on the district's web site. Several members of the district governing board met with the accreditation team, and demonstrated they are informed and involved in the accreditation process. (Standard IV.B.1.d, e, i)

The district has established and the Board of Trustees has adopted a budget allocation model that has changed from an expenditure based model to a revenue based model. The model has been adjusted in response to deficit spending at some of the district's colleges. West has incurred a significant deficit, which has not been repaid to the district. A grant allocation proposal was implemented to assist colleges with deficit budgets, and West is eligible to apply. Regardless of a significant and growing deficit, West has not requested such a grant and therefore must repay the loan provided to cover its budget deficits. (Standard IV.3.C)
The President of the college, since the implementation of the administrative
decentralization, has the autonomy and independence to make decisions and thus is more
accountable. On a monthly basis, the District Budget Committee meets with
administration, faculty and staff representatives from all nine college campuses to
monitor and track budgets and expenditures.

College presidents are evaluated regularly by the Chancellor's office. The Board of
Trustees annually self-evaluates their performance. According to the self-study, the
district and the college evaluate district/system roles, governance and decision making.
Evaluation results were available in the self-study. (Standard IV.B.1.g, IV.B.1.j)

Conclusions

The college meets Standard IV. Leadership at West Los Angeles College is in transition
with the interim President leaving at the end of this academic year and with the new
President (not yet selected) taking over the college. The turnover in administration and
other key positions on campus has created an atmosphere of "silos" where campus
personnel accomplish their own chores without an appropriate cross-section of input from
colleagues and administration. The educational environment and campus culture will be
affected by the highly anticipated appointment of a new college president in July 2006.

The district and board oversee all aspects of the college's programs and operations
through policy setting and appropriate delegation of authority. Several colleges in the
district continue to operate while incurring budget deficits. Although modifications have
been made to respond to specific college situations, the district's current grant allocation
program does not adequately address the need to bring fiscal stability to West Los
Angeles College. Ultimately, the district and board are responsible for the adequate
distribution of resources to support effective operations of its colleges.

Commendations

The college has made significant improvement to strengthen its process of participatory
governance. The College Council has created an environment where all constituencies
come together to know each other and understand issues in concert, to reach consensus
for the common good.

Leadership has improved and brought a sense of community and energy to the campus.
Firm, yet nurturing, decisive action is welcomed by all parts of the college.

Recommendation

13. All college personnel should identify ways to increase participation in governance
and develop trust throughout the institution by conducting meaningful, timely dialogue
that acknowledges different perspectives and ideas for making informed decisions.
(Standard IV.A.1, IV.A.2.a)