

# **EVALUATION REPORT**

## **LASSEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

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A Confidential Report Prepared for  
the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited  
Lassen Community College from March 10, 2008 through March 13, 2008

Jackie L. Fisher, Sr., Chair

## Evaluation Team Members

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## SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

INSTITUTION: Lassen College

DATE OF VISIT: March 11 through March 13, 2008

TEAM CHAIR: Jackie L. Fisher, Sr., Ed. D.  
Superintendent/President  
Antelope Valley College

A nine-member accreditation team visited Lassen College from March 11 through 13, 2008, for the purposes of determining whether the institution continues to meet accreditation standards. Prior to and during the three and a half days, the team assessed how well the college is achieving its stated purposes, analyzed how well the college is meeting the Commission's four standards, provided recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement, and submitted a recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) regarding the accredited status of the college.

In preparation for the visit, team chair and team members attended an all-day team training session in the City of Oakland, California on February 5, 2008. During the training session, team members were taught how to conduct an institutional evaluation in accordance with ACCJC standards.

The team prepared for its visit by thoroughly reviewing Lassen College's self study, by evaluating the responses to the previous team's recommendations, and by examining the numerous documents provided by the college. During the three-day visit, the team held several meetings with individuals and small groups. The team held four open forums, two at the Lassen campus. Team members also visited classrooms, state and federal prisons sites where Lassen College offers instruction, and an off-campus site in Alturas.

A month prior to the team's visit, members were required to fulfill two written assignments in reaction to Lassen College's self study. Team members were asked to evaluate the self study report and examine the institution's responses to the previous team reports, which include progress reports and special visit reports. Team members were asked to submit requests for individual and group appointments to be scheduled by the team assistant. On March 10th, the team met for approximately 2 ½ hours to review the self study report, confirm appointments, and discuss issues to be addressed during the visit.

Lassen College appeared to be well prepared for the visit and the staff greeted the team in a professional manner. The team was provided open access to all documents needed to gather evidence related to the accreditation standards. The staff provided additional evidence when requested by team members via the team assistant. Administrators, faculty, staff, and students were generous with their time and assistance.

The team was able to confirm the self study's portrayal of the college and its appraisal on how well the college and outreach sites were meeting the four accreditation standards. However, the team discovered that some data and information describing student success rates were missing in the self study report.

The team believes that during the last seven months administrators, faculty, and staff have developed an atmosphere of trust and cooperation. The college's employees exhibited an attitude that suggests they will fully address all recommendations set forth by the accreditation commission.

## Introduction and Summary

Lassen Community College was established May 4, 1925 as the Junior College Department of Lassen Union High School District. The current era of the college began in July of 1969 with the establishment of the Lassen Community College District, with one college, Lassen Community College.

Lassen College is located in Susanville, California on Highway 139, and consists of 184 acres. The campus is comprised of 17 main buildings, four moveable buildings, dormitory with 130 rooms for students, and 17 modular buildings. Today the campus consists of a library, a cafeteria, computer rooms, offices, a gymnasium, a stable, a barn, a rodeo arena, outdoor recreation facilities, and traditional classrooms for lecture and laboratories.

Lassen College serves a large geographic service area containing a small population. Communities such as the Honey Lake Valley communities of Susanville, Janesville, and Herlong receive courses offered by Lassen College. Lassen College also provides students courses and services in Alturas, Big Valley, Westwood, and offers a cosmetology program in Reno, Nevada.

The recently published "Annual Fact Book" (March 11, 2008, page 11) indicated that Lassen College's total unduplicated student headcount for fall semester was 1,907. In contrast, total student population was 2,588 during the 2001-2002 academic year. Student population has declined significantly during this time period. During this same period unduplicated student headcount declined from 8,484 to 3,334. The Annual Fact Book revealed that there was student enrollment decline in other categories: continuing students from 1,560 to 1,118; first-time students from 1,152 to 280; first-time transfer students from 227 to 176; and returning students from 759 to 340.

The Annual Fact Book showed that in the 2002-2003 academic year 2,658 full time equivalent students (FTES) was generated compared to 1,538 FTES during the 2006-2007 academic year. Lassen College provides instructional programs via correspondence mode of delivery. Twenty-nine percent of the college's FTES is generated through correspondence. Of the 29 percent, 16 percent is generated from inmates from two California correctional institutions located in Susanville, a federal institution in the city of Herlong, Lassen Adult Detention Facility, and Corcoran Prison located in the county of Tulare, CA. There are 18 students enrolled in a cosmetology program held in Reno, Nevada. The cosmetology program represents .94 percent of the total FTES produced by Lassen College during the fall semester of 2007.

In 2007-2008, the Annual Fact Book revealed that the largest ethnic diverse groups among the 1,907 student population consists of 69.54 percent White, non-Hispanic, 6.43 percent African-Americans, and 3.92 percent Native Americans. The Annual Fact Book shows that 169 students participate in intercollegiate sports programs: men's and women's soccer and basketball, men's wrestling, baseball, women's volleyball, and softball.

In the fall semester of 2006, enrollment of freshmen that do not have high school diplomas was three times higher than students with a high school diploma. Lassen College, therefore, plays a critical role in efforts to improve the educational and economic status of the communities it serves. During the past seven months, the superintendent/president has met with community groups to rebuild relationships with its surrounding communities. However, when conducting an open forum with employees, the team found that the community believes that the college is in the process of losing its accreditation.

Grounds, buildings, and facilities at Lassen College present a well-kept and attractive appearance due to District's investments in basic maintenance and to a dedicated building and grounds staff. The overall morale of administrators, faculty, and staff is positive, as evidenced by the self study and through interviews by the visiting team.

## **Recommendations:**

After carefully reading the self study, examining documentary, observational and interview evidence, and extensive discussion among team members in the light of the four accreditation standards, the team offers the following recommendations to the college and the district:

### **Recommendation 1 (previous Recommendation #19 - 2002): Institutional Planning and Decision-Making**

The college must implement and evaluate ongoing student learning outcomes and institutional planning processes, which should be based on data and research that results in a strategic plan, and incorporate all other college planning documents, such as an educational master plan, a technology plan, and a facilities plan. These processes should guide future enrollment management decisions, resource allocation, and most importantly educational programs and services for the students and the community. The processes should be evaluated, using agreed-upon criteria, on an annual basis to determine the effectiveness of the governance groups and leadership responsible for them, as well as the success of the planned outcomes and actions stated in the plans. (Standards IA.4, IB.3, 4, 5, 6, & 7, IIA.1c, IIA.2e, IIA.2f, III B.2a&2b, III C.1&2, IIID.1 – d, IIID.2 a – g, III D.3, IV A.3, IV A.5)

### **Recommendation 2: (previous Recommendation #14 - 2002) Student Learning Outcomes**

The team recommends that the college achieve a sustainable level of assessing student learning outcomes, which can be used for continuous quality improvement. Administrators, faculty, and staff need to continue to conduct meaningful, timely, and inclusive dialogue with all constituent groups to identify, develop, implement, and assess student-learning outcomes at the course, instructional and non-instructional programs, and degree levels and use the results of those assessments to improve student learning, services, plans, and institutional effectiveness. (Standards IB.1, IB.4, IB.7; Standard IIA.1c, IIA.2a, IIA.2b, IIA.2e, IIA.2f, IIA.2g, IIA.2i, IIA.3, IIA.6, IIA.6a, IIB.1, IIB.3.e, IIB.4, IIC.2; Standard III; and Standard IVA.1, IVA.2b, IVB.1b)

### **Recommendation 3: (previous Recommendation #17 - 2002): Institutional Research**

The college must fully develop, implement, and evaluate its research capabilities (staff skills, data analysis/interpretation and use of data) assuring the college has the appropriate resources and staff to perform the necessary research, data collection, and analysis to meet all accreditation standards. The college needs to conduct research on programs and services, student achievement and learning outcomes, and institutional effectiveness, such that program reviews and stated learning outcomes can draw on this resource to improve the effectiveness of the college. The results of the research need to be used by the leadership and all governance groups in their deliberations, dialogue, and

decision-making. (Standards IB.3, IB.4, 5, 6, 7, IIA.1a, IIA.2e, IIA.2f, IIB.3a – 3e, IIB.4, IIC.2, IVA.1 -4)

**Recommendation 4: Employee Evaluations:**

The college must take steps to assure that evaluation processes of all personnel are current, and the evaluation processes seek to assess effectiveness of personnel and encourage improvement. Evaluation of faculty members must include, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes. (III.A.1.a&b)

**Recommendation 5: (previous Recommendation #10 - 2002): Administrative Positions**

The college must fill all administrative/management vacancies as quickly as possible while consistently using established hiring policies and practices. (Standards III A.1a, IIIA.2)

**Recommendation 6: (previous Recommendation # 15 - 2002): Faculty Staffing Plan**

The college must implement and assess the effectiveness of a staffing plan that will ensure full-time faculty members are proportionally distributed, based on a long-term plan, which results in an effective course schedule. Faculty must be assigned to a course schedule that will meet the demands of students, so that they can achieve their academic goals in a timely manner. (Standards IIIA.1a, III.2, III.6)

**Recommendation 7: Financial Planning**

The college must, as part of the strategic planning process for the college, develop and implement a set of baseline data, which are used to evaluate performance involving financial management and planning (i.e., expected revenues and expenditures over time to ensure this planning does not result in deeper long term deficits). It must develop objectives and action items, and evaluate outcomes, based on these data, which are necessary to achieve goals. The college should incorporate data into the overall strategic planning process for the college. Standards IIIB.2a & b, IIC.2, IIID.1, 2, 3)

**Recommendation 8: Fiscal Stability**

The college must carry out its fiscal and academic portion of the Multi-Year Recovery Plan and the Corrective Action Matrix, which delineate how future revenues and expenditures will provide the college a blueprint to fiscal solvency. The college must monitor performance of these financial actions and assumptions, and make appropriate corrective actions to ensure this financial recovery plan is completed successfully. (Standards IVB.1c, IVB.2d, IVB.3c&d)

**Commendations:**

Among the many programs, services, and initiatives that the team was impressed by, the following seemed particularly noteworthy:

1. Administrators, faculty, staff, and students should be commended for their collective efforts to make changes in response to previous Accrediting Commission's recommendations.
2. The team noticed that during the previous six months, employees and students were motivated to create an atmosphere of collegiality, trust, and open and honest communications. As a result, the college was able to create important planning documents to serve as blueprints in establishing a successful shared decision-making process.
3. The team wants to commend the faculty and staff for maintaining a caring and supportive environment both inside and outside the classroom. The physical environment is attractive and well maintained.

## **Team's Evaluation of Institutional Responses to 2002 and Succeeding Special Visit Recommendations**

In 2002, the accreditation visiting team submitted 21 recommendations for Lassen College to address before the next comprehensive visit. The self study report, which was prepared for the team's visit in March 2008, addressed how each of the 21 recommendations was given particular consideration. The 2008 visiting team reviewed recommendations from the previous team visits. The team notes the college has made significant progress in responding to the last comprehensive evaluation team's recommendations in recent months, but much remains to be done.

The 2008 team's assessment regarding Lassen College's progress reported on prior recommendations included the following recommendations:

**Recommendation # 1:** *The college should invite the assistance of the Community College League of California to help all college staff understand and implement their defined roles in college governance. The League currently offers a joint workshop with a League representative and the California Academic Senate representative designed to facilitate institutional understanding of California laws with respect to governance. This workshop might be joined or followed by a workshop by the ACCJC to discuss accreditation requirements on governance.*

The college was to rewrite the mission statement to make it more focused, define the students to be served, and be the basis for the allocation of resources. The college responded to this recommendation and rewrote the college mission statement. The 2008 team confirmed that the college appears to have met this recommendation.

**Recommendation # 2:** *The institution should seek the assistance of outside mediators and trainers to help individuals and groups change their behaviors and develop strategies for working together for the good of the college.*

After conducting interviews with members serving on the Consultation Council, the 2008 team found that the college were conducting open and honest dialogue and cooperating effectively. The team found that Consultation Council was a venue for constituent groups to foster shared governance and resolve college issues. The team found that the college has taken significant steps to address this recommendation.

**Recommendation #3:** *Recognizing that the institutional climate at Lassen Community College does not fully promote an atmosphere of trust or open communication, the team urges that:*

- *Renewed efforts be made by the board of trustees and by senior administration, as well as all constituent groups, to promote a collegial environment that is positive in outlook, supportive of personnel, facilitates open dialogues and focuses on cooperative problem solving and consensus building.*

- *All members of the college faculty and staff make every effort to work as a team in order to remove perceptions of inappropriate actions and activities by any member of the college community or the board.*
- *The board takes steps to model strong and positive relationships among and between all constituency groups, especially between and among themselves and between the board and the superintendent/president.*
- *Faculty and staff and administration implement and abide by the processes to which they have agreed.*

During the fall semester, a retreat was held to help develop a better relationship between superintendent/president and board of trustees. The team found the relationship between the newly appointed superintendent/president and board of trustees has improved significantly.

**Recommendation #4:** *The president and college staff should develop jointly a governance document which includes for all college committees: the structure, charge and purpose, relationship to administration, meeting days/times, membership by role and function for all college constituent groups, and decision making/advisory expectations and relationships. Once completed, criteria should be developed for evaluating the effectiveness of college governance on an annual basis. The results should be widely disseminated and used for further refinement and improvement over time.*

The 2008 team found that during the last seven months the college has initiated the Consultation Committee, which has developed a governance document that serves as a guide to better decision-making process. The 2008 team recommends that this new process should be monitored to ensure that its effectiveness will become institutionalized.

**Recommendation #5:** *The college faculty appointments to decision making bodies need to be more inclusive of a larger number of faculty members through a documented process that rotates responsibility for committee assignments over time or assigns terms to each appointee; it is currently too concentrated in the hands of a small portion of faculty members.*

The 2008 team found that more faculty members are participating in all committees as required to satisfy this recommendation.

**Recommendation #6:** *All “leaders” need to live up to the Commission’s standards of supporting the institution’s efforts to identify values, set and achieve institutional goals, learn what is educationally effective, and improve. All leaders need to improve their professionalism, and set aside personal complaints and agendas, and assume appropriate responsibility for their own legitimate roles in governance and stop second guessing and micromanaging the college administration. The institution’s leadership needs to be refocused on students and on educational effectiveness.*

The 2008 team found that since the 2002 accreditation visit, the college has new administrative staff. Through interviews with employees, the 2008 team found administrators are making sufficient strides to adhere to the accreditation standards.

**Recommendation #7:** *The board should establish a fair evaluation process for the president that includes clear goals and objectives, and implement that process during the 2006-07 academic year. The board should then evaluate the evaluation process and adjust it as necessary, using input from the president as well as the board members.*

After conducting interviews with the board of trustees and superintendent/president, the 2008 team found that the board of trustees has addressed this recommendation in accordance with the accreditation standard.

**Recommendation #8:** *The board needs to provide the college president clear instruction on what information it requires in order to support his personnel recommendations.*

See previous response to recommendation # 7.

**Recommendation #9:** *The board should establish deadlines for receipt of board meeting materials and require the college to meet those deadlines in order to facilitate the board's timely receipt and thoughtful review of agenda items.*

The 2008 team found that the superintendent/president has provided guidance to the board of trustees on the proper method of establishing agenda items for meetings. The 2008 team found that this recommendation has been met.

**Recommendation #10:** *The college should fill all administrative/management vacancies as quickly as possible while consistently using established hiring policies and practices.*

The 2008 team found that college continues to experience vacancies involving key administrative positions. During the 2008 visit, the team found that the college was seeking to fill the dean of business administration and director of human resources and employee relations. The college will be seeking to fill the position of dean of instruction during the 2008-2009 academic year. The 2008 team does not believe that this recommendation has been met. (See recommendation #4 2008)

**Recommendation #11:** *The president should ensure that all current administrators are evaluated annually and provided the appropriate training for their positions as well as general management training for community college administration.*

After conducting interviews with new superintendent/president and administrators, the 2008 team found that administrators are being evaluated annually and are participating in professional development activities to enhance their performance. The 2008 team found that the college has met this recommendation.

**Recommendation #12:** *The president and his subordinates should hold regularly scheduled staff meetings using appropriate methods for agendas and minutes to provide needed documentation on decisions, directions, and expectations.*

After conducting interviews with the new superintendent/president and reviewing documents that showed meeting minutes, the 2008 team found that meetings with other administrators are held regularly and with agendas. Therefore, the 2008 team found that the college has met this recommendation.

**Recommendation #13:** *The college should consider the value of contracting with an outside expert (possibly a retired chief instructional officer (CIO) to assist in evaluating policies, procedures and practices attendant to all aspects of curriculum and student learning, including laws, regulations, and best practices.*

The 2008 team found that the college hired a retired CIO, who was previously employed at Butte Community College, California, to assist the address this recommendation. The 2008 team found that the college hired a full-time Dean of Instructional Services. The Dean of Instructional Services has guided the college to correct curriculum and programs as recommended by the retired CIO. In order to meet this recommendation, the college must continue to evaluate its' policies, procedures and practices attendant to all aspects of curriculum and student learning, including laws, regulations, and best practices.

**Recommendation #14:** *The college should identify an organizational function to provide focus on student learning outcomes (SLOs), develop a training plan for all faculty, and develop a plan and schedule for implementation of SLOs.*

The 2008 team found that college has not met this recommendation. (See recommendation #2 - 2008)

**Recommendation #15:** *The college should initiate a review of its current staffing to determine whether full time faculty are proportionally distributed to address enrollment distributions; and where faculty loads are disproportionate or not appropriate, a plan should be developed to facilitate the shift into higher demand programs and better utilization of faculty resources.*

The 2008 team found that college has not met this recommendation. (See recommendation # 5- 2008)

**Recommendation #16:** *The college should immediately submit substantive change proposals for the three programs that are available in the distance education modality. (ER 21 Relations with the Commission).*

The 2008 team found that the college has submitted to the ACCJC the completed substantive change form as required. The 2008 team found that the college has met this recommendation.

**Recommendation #17:** *The college needs to create a research function with the appropriate resources and staff, including an educational researcher to perform the necessary research to meet ER 19 and all the accreditation standards requiring research on programs and services, student achievement and learning outcomes, and institutional effectiveness. The results of the research need to be used by the leadership and all governance groups in their deliberations, dialogue, and decision making.*

The 2008 team found that the college has not met this recommendation. (See recommendation #3 – 2008).

**Recommendation #18:** *The college needs to use the resulting data and research outlined in recommendation #17 to systematically implement a robust program review process for all programs and services of the college.*

The 2008 team found that the college has not met this recommendation. (See recommendation #3 – 2008).

**Recommendation #19:** *The college needs to design and implement ongoing institutional planning processes based on data and research which result in a strategic plan, an educational master plan, a technology plan, and a facilities plan. These processes should inform future enrollment management decisions, resource allocation, and most importantly educational programs and services for the students and the community. The processes should be evaluated, using agreed upon criteria, on an annual basis to determine the effectiveness of the governance groups and leadership responsible for them as well as the success of the planned outcomes and actions stated in the plans.*

The 2008 team found that the college has not met this recommendation. (See recommendation #1 – 2008).

**Recommendation #20:** *The college must define and follow appropriate practices and procedures to ensure timely decisions based on student needs, curriculum, and state attendance accounting regulations for class schedule production and distribution as well as decisions on academic calendars.*

After conducting interviews with employees, the team confirmed that the college has implemented a process to assure that appropriate attendance accounting methods are in place. The 2008 team found that this recommendation has been met.

**Recommendation #21:** *The college should review its staffing levels in information technology and develop a plan to address appropriate levels of staffing for services and research as well as back up systems.*

After conducting interviews with administrators and staff in the newly formed Information Technology Department, the 2008 found that the college has made significant strides to address this recommendation. Additional information describing how the college has addressed its application for technology will explain later in this report. The team found that the college has met this recommendation.

At its special visit of July 11 through July 13, 2006, the accreditation visiting team recommended follow up on 2002 recommendation #2.

After a special visit May 3, 2007, the Accrediting Commission reaffirmed that Lassen College is required to respond to the following recommendations, which were established after a comprehensive visit conducted in March of 2002: Recommendations 2, 4, 5, 10, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, and 21.

The 2002 team recommended that the college “continue efforts to integrate data, analysis and evaluation into the program review and planning process to identify priorities for improvement that are used by the institution to prioritize recommendations for educational planning.” The college has acquired a data management system, Datatel, and is in the process of developing this system’s capacity to provide data for planning and program review. The team found evidence that planning procedures such as instructional and noninstructional program reviews are now established that incorporate data; the data analysis function is dispersed among end users. The 2002 team also recommended that the college “continue efforts to reengineer and restructure a number of the college’s occupational programs ... and identify opportunities for new course and/or certificate and/or program development that respond to changing or expanding community and student needs.” The college has suspended but not eliminated the Power Generation technology program and has scaled back its cosmetology and construction technology programs. The mechanical agriculture program has been substantially modified. In response to changing occupational demands, the college has also received State Chancellor’s Office approval for a program in fire technology, and the administration of justice and correctional science programs have been expanded through correspondence delivery.

The 2002 team further recommended that the college “proceed with the commendable initial efforts it has made to enhance its technology infrastructure college wide, including implementing an ITV classroom linked to outreach centers, and developing some internet based offerings and enhancing computer lab facilities on the Susanville campus. For both technical and pedagogical reasons, the college has not continued ITV offerings. The college has developed very limited internet based course offerings but has expanded and refined general education and degree program course offerings in a correspondence-based mode. The college has used a Title III grant to upgrade its on-campus technology infrastructure.

Much of the college’s progress report on previous recommendations has been made within the current academic year.

A 2004 progress report team visit, followed by a 2006 special visit resulted in 21 specific recommendations. Among those, recommendation #s 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 relate in whole or in part to Standard II. A team that conducted a special visit in May 2007 found that recommendation #s 13 and 16 had been met. The team confirms this finding.

An October, 2007, progress visit report found that recommendation #s 15 (instructional staffing), 17 (research function), 18 (use of data to support program review), and 19 (institutional planning) had not been met. The team observes that recommendation #15 remains unmet, and that while substantial progress has been made on recommendations 17, 18, and 19, they have not yet fully been met. Recommendation #14 (organizational function for SLOs) has been met.

## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. AUTHORITY**

Lassen College currently operates as a publicly funded two-year community college under the California State Education Code and the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. Lassen College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

### **2. MISSION**

The team confirmed that the college developed its mission statement which was approved by the Lassen Community College's board of trustees on December 11, 2007. In 2001, 2002, and 2003 the college's mission statement was reviewed during its annual leadership retreat.

### **3. GOVERNING BOARD**

The Lassen Community College District Board of Trustees is a seven-member body elected for staggered four-year terms from areas within the district. A non-voting student member is selected by students to serve on an annual basis. The team confirmed that the board makes policy for the district and exercises oversight of its operations. Board members have no employment, family or personal financial interest in the district, and file a conflict of interest statement annually to this effect.

### **4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

The team confirmed that the board of trustees obtained waiver from the Board of Governors and California Community College Chancellor's Office to appoint the current interim superintendent/president to a three year term. The team confirmed that the superintendent/president has primary authority and responsibility for leadership and management of all programs and services provided by the college.

### **5. ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY**

The team determined that the college does not have a sufficient administrative staff, who are adequately prepared and experienced, to operate the college efficiently and effectively. The college must hire a Director of Human Resources and Employee Relations, Dean of Business and Administrative Services, and Dean of Instructional Services.

### **6. OPERATING STATUS**

The team certifies that Lassen College is fully operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs.

## **7. DEGREES**

The team found that a majority of students enter Lassen College with the intent of taking a degree, certificate, license, or preparing for transfer to a four-year institution. Additional information confirmed that degrees and certificated programs were defined clearly so that student may complete their educational goals in a timely manner.

## **8. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

The team certifies that Lassen College offers a range of degree and certificate programs and that these programs are consistent with the college mission and is provided in a manner conventional to community colleges and consistent with eligibility requirements.

## **9. ACADEMIC CREDIT**

The team found that Lassen College awards academic credit in a manner conventional for community colleges and consistent with generally accepted good practice.

## **10. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT**

The team examined course outlines, syllabi and the draft catalog and did find evidence that programs do have program purpose statements that are available to the public. The college has developed student learning outcomes for thirty-six degrees and certificates. The team affirmed that the college has initiated an assessment process of student learning outcomes at the degree and certificate level.

## **11. GENERAL EDUCATION**

The team certifies that Lassen College has a clear general education component in its degree programs and that writing and computational skills are reflected in these requirements. Students are introduced to several areas of knowledge, consistent with the practice at California community colleges and accepted general education courses appropriate for higher education.

## **12. ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

The team found no evidence that faculty and staff was restricted or denied opportunities to think, speak, or write regarding issue involving academic values. The college's academic senate has adopted the American Association of University Professors statement on academic freedom. Governing Board policy also includes a statement on academic freedom. As stated in the self-study, that a statement of academic freedom is listed in the college catalog. After conducting interviews with faculty members, the team confirmed that the college embraces academic freedom.

## **13. FACULTY**

At the time of the accreditation visit the college had 34 full-time faculty members with an array of expertise that aligned with college offerings. Faculty responsibilities are defined in board policy and in outline in the collective bargaining agreement.

## **14. STUDENT SERVICES**

The team reviewed the student services provided by Lassen College and found them to be consistent with the needs of the student body and the college mission statement.

## **15. ADMISSIONS**

The team found Lassen College admission policies in the draft catalog and other publicly available documents. These policies are consistent with those required of California community colleges.

## **16. INFORMATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES**

Lassen College operates libraries at the Lassen College campus only, and provides access to its library collections and electronic data basis. The team found that students (except inmates) can access the Library via internet. The Library houses computers for student use, and holds a collection of books, periodicals, and other publications. The team found that the Library provides satisfactory level of resources to support instructional programs.

## **17. FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

The team found that Lassen College has exhibited a record for fiscal challenges during the past several years. As stated previously, the college student enrollment during the 2002-2003 academic year was 2,658 full time equivalent students (FTES). However, an enrollment audit was conducted by the California Community College Chancellor's Office, which disallowed a significant amount of FTES. As a result of this audit, the college must repay ten million dollars to the California Community College Chancellor's Office. During the 2006-2007 academic year, the college generated 1,538 FTES. Employees have not received a cost of living pay raise during past six years. Lassen College is anticipated to experience deficit spending in the amount of \$250,000 during the 2009-2010 academic year.

The college has developed and implemented a financial recovery plan in an effort to support student learning programs and services. However, if the college's annual enrollment growth is not met, expenditures in the general fund do not decrease, and an additional increase in the state's deficit, the team concludes that the college will not be able to meet this Eligibility Requirement.

## **18. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

The team examined the latest external audit available for the district (2006-2007) and was informed by appropriate district officials that the draft 2006-2007 audits contain several findings. The California Chancellor's Office has appointed a special trustee, who has helped the college develop and implement a fiscal recovery plan.

## **19. INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND EVALUATION**

The team found evidence that the college has initiated planning for all important aspects of college operations. However, the team found that additional work remains to refine and coordinate this planning and make good use of evaluation efforts.

## **20. PUBLIC INFORMATION**

Lassen College develops and publishes (via hard copy and web) a catalog annually, in which all of the requisite information is contained. In addition the college publishes a faculty handbook and other documents that contain important information regarding college operations. These documents are readily available on campus and online.

## **21. RELATIONS WITH THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION**

In the self study contains a statement, which state that the college has communicated fully and openly with the Accrediting Commission. The team found that during the previous seven months, the college has disclosed information required by the Accrediting Commission. The team found that the college has conducted the self study in accordance with the Accrediting Commission. The found no evidence the college has not met this Eligibility Requirement.

## ACCREDITATION THEMES

### **Dialogue**

After meeting with employee groups the team confirmed the college has been involved actively in attempting to keep all employees informed regarding institutional quality and improvement. There were several communication methods revealed to the team, such as the use of email, internet, and hosting several college wide meetings throughout the academic year. The dialogue sessions engaged employees to discuss program review, preparation of self study, planning, and implementation of policies, shared governance issues, campus climate, budget, research, student achievement, student learning outcomes, and technology. The self study stated that the newly appointed superintendent/president schedules open forum meetings to engage dialogue with employees. The president/superintendent produces newsletters for all employees so that employees can access and review them at their convenience.

The team confirmed that there are a number of venues held at Lassen College to engage in meaningful dialogue. However, the team could not confirm how many employees are taking advantage of these attempts to increase meaningful dialogue regarding important issues. The team suggests the all employee groups to take steps to ensure that every dialogue sessions guides ongoing self reflection and continuous improvement.

### **Institutional Integrity**

The team was provided sufficient evidence, documentation, and support prior to and during the visit. The evidentiary materials and supporting documents demonstrated to visiting team members that the college represents itself honestly and truthfully to all stakeholders. The team found no evidence that board policies have been breached regarding academic freedom, or working conditions.

The team found that the catalog was reviewed and updated every two years by all constituent groups. The catalog contains relevant information regarding the status of programs and services offered at the college. The team also found that current and prospective students who enrolled at the Lassen campus were welcomed and treated with respect and honesty. Students are advised clearly what will be expected of them in order to be successful. In contrast, the team found that students (inmates) who enrolled in correspondence courses were not provided the same level of support services. Students (inmates) were not afforded adequate academic advising or counseling services. The team found that without adequate advising or counseling services, these students could not be assured that their academic goals could be achieved. The team concluded that by not having academic advising or counseling services would prevent these students from finding their unique learning abilities, which will help them reach academic goals.

## **Student-Learning Outcomes**

The self study indicated that the college has taken significant steps in the development of SLOs at course, degrees, certificate and institutional levels. The college's curriculum/academic standards along with the Student Learning Outcome Review Subcommittee were primarily responsible for developing SLOs.

After reviewing course outline of records and interviews with employees, the team found that college level of knowledge of SLOs appears to be at the developmental level. In other words, administrators, faculty and staff are fully engaged in the development, but not have conducted meaningful assessment of SLOs. The team recommends that administrators, faculty and staff continue efforts to elevate their knowledge and skills necessary to reach the "proficiency" level as described in the ACCJC's Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness. The team recommends that administrators, faculty, and staff attend professional development workshops, which will be presented by colleagues from other community colleges that have implemented relevant SLOs.

## **Evaluation, Planning and Improvement**

The self study revealed the college has recently demonstrated a committed to create an integrated comprehensive planning model, which has resulted in the creation of several planning documents. However, after reviewing written evidence and interviews with groups and individuals, the team found that the college has reached the initial stages of the developmental level. The team found little evidence that quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed to support that the systematic cycle of evaluation, planning and improvement, which leads to appropriate resource allocation. The team suggests that administrators, faculty, and staff who serve on Consultation Council, Strategic Planning Council, and Student Learning Outcome Coordinating Committee should continue to learn how to analyze data, which will be used to help set priorities or seek means of supplying resources to meet goals established for the college.

## **Organization**

The self study described that the college has developed and continues to develop and refined its participatory governance handbook. The self study stated the handbook was used as a guide to help constituent groups learn how to conduct participatory governance appropriately. After conducting interviews with groups and individuals and reviewing documents, the team found that in the college organizational structure, all constituent groups have an opportunity to participate in all relevant decision-making campus groups.

### **Institutional Commitments**

The self-study stated that the Lassen Community College District Board of Trustees approved Lassen College's mission statement in 2007. The college will review and revise if necessary the mission statement along with a statement of philosophy, and vision in spring of 2008. The team found that the college has shown a new commitment to regain credibility with its community to provide quality education. This commitment was evident from conversations with students and employees during the team's visit.

## **Standard I**

### **Institutional Mission and Effectiveness**

#### **IA. Mission**

##### **General Observations**

Lassen College appears to have made an admirable effort in meeting the educational needs of its students in accordance with the college mission statement. In keeping with the mission statement, the college has instituted common policies and practices in an effort to provide consistent and effective instructional programs and services to students. The college has also begun to make progress in giving more attention to dialogue and working to develop SLOs in all areas.

The college's mission statement has been approved by the Board of Trustees and is published in the college catalog, on the college web site, and other appropriate publications. As of 2004-2005, the Strategic Planning Council is now charged with reviewing the college mission statement annually.

The college's strategic plan grew directly out of the mission statement. The plan is used to guide the college in all aspects of its operation, including the college's budget development and allocation of funds. The college reviewed its governance structure in spring 2005 to ensure that its decision-making processes were aligned with the mission statement and strategic plan goals. Staff interviewed by the visiting accreditation team was aware of the mission statement and felt it was followed in carrying out the business of the college.

Lassen College has developed a well articulated mission statement, which the team found to be fundamental in defining how a college will operate within its local and global community. Standard 1: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness requires the institution to demonstrate a strong commitment to a mission that emphasizes achievement of student learning and to communicating this mission internally and externally. The college has a clearly written and visible mission statement. The mission is broadly disseminated. The current mission statement was "tweaked" and approved by the governing board in December 2007. At the end of the 2002 comprehensive accreditation visit, the visiting team recommended the following:

"That the board, in consultation with the college and community, consider adopting a more focused statement of mission which would more specifically define the students it intends to serve and the basis for allocation of resources to the various programs of the college, and develop measures and timelines by which to measure its success in fulfilling that mission. The college should focus on its mission statement to guide its policy development and policy revisions."

## **Findings and Evidence**

A prior revision to the mission statement was completed and approved by the board of trustees in October 2004. The current mission statement is more focused on the population to be served; therefore it meets part of standard (1.A.1). The college mission statement is published in numerous venues such as the board policy manual, catalog, schedule, faculty handbook, and on the web (1.A.1) (1.A.2).

Conversely, the institution is still working to meet Standard 1.A.3. This standard focuses on the college's ability to integrate dialogue on the mission and institutionalize goals and plans on a regular basis. In fact, the special site visiting team in July 2006 recommended that Lassen upgrade its planning process by incorporating the use of research and assessment (1.A.3). The self study refers to Lassen College's development of an integrated planning structure (Page 9). However, an examination of the reference document found the strategic master planning document is a plan to plan. Also, the 2006-2007 Educational Master Plan is somewhat dated because it repeatedly referred to target dates in 2003, 2005, 2006, and 2007. While the college has made some progress in meeting a majority of the recommendations made in July 2005, areas such as planning, research, and the evaluation process model, remain incomplete. (1.A.3) (1.A.4). The 2008 team found that in order to meet this section of the standard, the college must make an concerted effort to support student learning, measure that learning, assess how well learning is occurring, and make changes to improve student learning (student learning outcomes). The 2008 team notes that the college has acknowledged that there is more work to be accomplished in this standard. For example, the institution has placed student learning outcomes on several committee agendas.

## **IB. Improving Institutional Effectiveness**

### **General Observations**

The team found that during the past seven months the college has initiated opportunities to practices on-going dialogue regarding improving student learning and institutional processes. This was evident in a meeting with the Consultation Council and with individuals that discussed these topics and the progress made in establishing and assessing student learning outcomes. The team also was told of workshops that faculty and staff members have attended since the last accreditation visit in order to learn more about developing student-learning outcomes for their courses and programs.

The college appears to be working diligently towards achieving this standard requirement by identifying methods to evaluate its' effectiveness both quantitatively and qualitatively, the campus has instituted a Strategic Master Plan, as well as a revised program review process. Various committees are responsible for planning at their level, and the Consultation Council oversees the broad involvement of campus staff and students in decision-making. The Academic Planning, Enrollment Management/Student Services Planning, Facilities Planning, Human Resource Planning and Institutional Technology committees reviews and make recommendations towards the college's progress in meeting its goals on an ongoing basis, and program review well be completed every six

years. The program review form asks explicitly for respondents to evaluate their program qualitatively and quantitatively.

The college appears to have developed a broad-based, participatory system of resource allocation. The Institutional Planning and Budget Development Process Handbook will serve as a guide to allocate resources according to data provided by the campus researcher. The self-study shows that 87% of faculty and staff agreed on the accreditation survey that a review of programs and services is integrated into college planning processes. Planning agendas for this Standard lists several plans that college is to address to meet this standard.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The self study revealed that at the end of the academic year, the college's Curriculum Committee/Academic Standards Subcommittee of the Academic Senate submitted to the board the learning outcomes for 36 degree and certificate programs. In addition, learning outcomes for 345 of the 612 courses offered at the college were approved by the board at the end of 2006-2007. The learning outcome recommendations to the board followed a year-long dialogue with the faculty and staff; the outcome of the committee's work impacted the SLO development at the course, program, general education, and the overall institution level (1.B.1). Clearly, this has been a difficult topic area for the college, especially when there was less dialogue with the college administration due to lack of trust. The faculty and staff began work on student learning outcomes for the non-instructional areas such as student services at the end of the spring 2007 semester and the development of these learning outcomes is a "work in progress". Standard (1.B.2) focuses on institutional goals. The institution is required to articulate its goals and state the objectives derived from them. The seven institutional goals developed are a good start but are very broad and need to be refined and objectives created in the context of the mission. Nevertheless, selected academic and nonacademic department discussions about student learning outcomes have been engaging and produced positive outcomes.

The 2008 team found that that the college faces a daunting task in developing the ability to utilize systematic planning for goal setting and decisions for institutional effectiveness. The working draft of the Comprehensive Institutional Master Plan is a document which starts to address standard (1.B.3).

The college's shared governance and collegial consultation processes offer the opportunity for broad-based dialogue on planning, allocation of resources, and institutional improvement. The key will be the ability of college leadership at all levels to work in a collegial fashion to achieve and sustain educational quality. The effectiveness of the Consultation Council, Faculty Senate, Strategic Master Plan, Faculty and Staff Development Plan, Budget Development Plan, and other college initiatives is highly dependent on broad-based input from stakeholders throughout the college (1.B.4).

With the strategic goals, although they need refinement, and the budget development process in place the college is engaged now in discussions on the planning and budget for the current and upcoming year. The Annual Fact Book is now available which contains data on student demographics, retention, persistence, graduation rates, and other information to assist with quantitative analyses and data-drive decision-making (1.B.5).

The college has made some progress in its planning processes with the blueprint of a planning document which was sent to the Governing Board. Other planning documents include the draft Strategic Master Plan, Educational Master, and Faculty and Staff Development Plan, Matriculation Plan, and Student Equity Plan. These planning documents are still underdeveloped and resemble plans to plan (1.B.6).

On a parallel course, the college's systematic evaluation of its instructional and non-instructional programs has a long history. The adoption of an instructional program review (IRP) process dates back to 1991. This review process has been evaluated and revised numerous times over the last 17 years. The current version of instructional review process was adopted by the academic senate on March 5, 2007. The systematic review of noninstructional programs started in 1997. The current process requires the responsible administrator to evaluate their respective non-instructional programs. Yet, the systematic and total review of the non-instructional programs is still unfinished (I.B.7)

### **Conclusions**

The self study description and evaluation of the college's process for improving intuitional effectiveness is not complete, even though the college has made good strides in some areas, as documented in the college catalog and committee and board minutes. Members of the college community continue to expand educational opportunities on Standard I through workshops, seminars and reading materials. However, more needs to be done to have the college community thoroughly understand the use of student learning outcomes or SLOs.

The 2008 team found that the college has not fully met the requirements of Standard I. Standard I states:

“The institution demonstrates strong commitment to a mission that emphasizes achievement of student learning and to communicating the mission internally and externally. The institution uses analyses of quantitative and qualitative data and analysis in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation and reevaluation to verify and improve the effectiveness by which the mission is accomplished.”

The college has widely disseminated its mission statement both internally and externally. However “a culture of evidence” is lacking; the institution is missing an institutional effectiveness action plan that includes data on student learning outcomes both for the instructional and noninstructional areas.

Lassen Community College needs to continue to educate the board and the college constituents in the area of institutional effectiveness related to standard I; this education may have sequential components such as awareness, development, proficiency, sustainability, and continuous quality improvement.

**Recommendation 1 (previous Recommendation #19 - 2002): Institutional Planning and Decision-Making**

The college must implement and evaluate ongoing student learning outcomes and institutional planning processes, which should be based on data and research that results in a strategic plan, and incorporate all other college planning documents, such as an educational master plan, a technology plan, and a facilities plan. These processes should guide future enrollment management decisions, resource allocation, and most importantly educational programs and services for the students and the community. The processes should be evaluated, using agreed-upon criteria, on an annual basis to determine the effectiveness of the governance groups and leadership responsible for them, as well as the success of the planned outcomes and actions stated in the plans. (Standards IA.4, IB.3, 4, 5, 6, & 7, IIA.1c, IIA.2e, IIA.2f, III B.2a&2b, III C.1&2, IIID.1 – d, IIID.2 a – g, III D.3, IV A.3, IV A.5)

## **STANDARD II**

### **Student Learning Programs and Services**

#### **II A. Instructional Programs**

##### **General Observations**

The 2008 team found that although the college has significant work yet to do in the area of student learning programs and services, the college has spent much effort and made a great deal of progress within a relatively short time. Respondents demonstrated commitment to their institution and an understanding of the challenges they have faced and continue to face. The college community has pride in its accomplishments and in the new spirit of collegiality that has helped to make this progress possible.

As regards the college's stated mission to provide lower division arts and sciences, the team found ambivalence in scheduling priorities addressing the commitment to delivering courses leading to transfer. The team also found the college's commitment to offering basic skills instruction (including ESL) to be indeterminate.

Student services have yet to integrate student learning outcomes and student surveys and other institutional data to direct and improve services to students. The noninstructional program review (NIPR) process has recently commenced. Despite strong progress in this direction, the college lacks a systematic student enrollment and retention plan based on analyzed outcomes data. Nevertheless, the college should provide the same level resources, regardless of increasing costs and declining enrollment, to strive to meet standards to the best of its ability.

##### **Findings and Evidence**

Lassen Community College offers a variety of general education and occupational instructional programs in both traditional delivery and via correspondence, to students both on campus and at outreach centers, including correctional facilities. Community interest surveys have been conducted, and a "robust" strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) will be analyzed by the college to set priority. (II.A.1. a, b).

The college has made substantial progress on identifying student learning outcomes for its degrees, certificates and instructional programs. The college's faculty has identified course outcomes for a majority of its courses.

The college has clearly established faculty driven, and consistently functioning processes for the development and curricular review of courses and of certificate and degree patterns. Most vocational programs have active advisory committees, though advisory committees for business, journalism, and vocational nursing do not have records of recent meetings, and advisory committees for automotive technology and cosmetology (which lack full-time faculty and have been limited in scope), are not active. (II.A.2.a, b)

The team found that currently 71 percent of FTES is generated through traditional instructional modes and 29 percent is generated through correspondence mode, both to community and incarcerated students (16 percent incarcerated, 13 percent community). In addition to individual faculty evaluations and regularly scheduled instructional program reviews, the college collects evaluative data from correspondence classes. Each correspondence course student receives an evaluation form specific to evaluating the correspondence delivery mode. These anonymous reviews are returned to the individual instructors, and the team found anecdotal evidence of individual instructors adapting correspondence packets and materials in response to student feedback.

College staff reports that the division chairs coordinate with the dean of instruction in schedule development for each semester, to maximize student access to the general education core and facilitate student progress. The two-year advising plans discussed in the self study appear to be discipline specific descriptions of the area of concentration without reference to scheduling guidance. (II.A.2.c, d)

The instructional program review process, which schedules reviews every two years for occupational programs and every four years for nonoccupational instructional programs, requires a review of each course in the program and of the certificate and /or degree pattern. This process addresses the status of the student learning outcome process as well as, when appropriate, employment information and alignment with transfer/articulation status.

The college has developed planning procedures and a schedule for the completion of program reviews, both instructional and non-instructional. The college has developed a process, which involves the Consultation Council to create a resource allocation priorities list. However, this process has not yet gone through a complete cycle, and there is already consideration of how the process may be changed. Consequently, the college does not yet have a systematic evaluation and integrated planning process for evaluating instructional outcomes. The college has established the procedures that should enable them to meet this standard, but as yet this standard is not met. (II.A.2.f)

The team was unable to validate the college's procedures to assure fairness in its departmental mathematics exams. (II A.2.g)

College staff reports that 70-75 percent of courses have learning outcomes in place, and course syllabi are expected to include those learning outcomes. The college's course outlines clearly stipulate conformance to the Carnegie unit. A recent ad hoc review of correspondence delivery led to a more uniform standard for intensity and rigor in delivery and expectations of students, by requiring an instructor-generated "lecture" component. While evidence suggests that this guideline is being followed, the team did not find documentation that this is an institutionalized requirement. (II.A.2.h) The team also found that the college has institutionalized a mechanism for regular effective contact in correspondence courses.

The college catalog states a philosophy of general education criteria and general education student learning outcomes for the associate degrees deriving from that philosophy. These outcomes encompass the requirements of Standard II.A.3. a-c. The college does not yet have in place the means to assess these outcomes fully. Moreover, while General Education Student Learning Outcome 6 calls upon the student to “demonstrate an awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities and articulate the value of aesthetics and creativity,” the general education pattern requires only three units in Area C, encompassing both arts and humanities, suggesting the possibility of a student’s very narrow exposure to “the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.” (II.A.3.a-c)

All of the college’s discipline-specific degree and certificate programs include focus on an area of inquiry. Excepting art, biological science, math, and physical science, the college’s discipline degree patterns are occupational. In addition, the college has general education degrees leading to transfer following the core requirements of the California State Universities, the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum, and a liberal arts degree with a minimal interdisciplinary distribution pattern. (II.A.4)

The college reported pass rates on state licensure exams for vocational nursing (88 percent) and cosmetology (91 percent) and information on students employed from the welding and gunsmithing programs, demonstrating that the college succeeds in the goal of students completing occupational programs meeting employment and other applicable standards for licensure. (II.A.5)

The college has a transfer center and an articulation officer. The college participates in the California Articulation Number (CAN) system, thus assuring the transfer credit of CAN courses. The schedule of classes states that the college has articulation agreements with other colleges and that more information can be obtained in the articulation office. However, the team found no clearly stated transfer of credit policy. Nor did the team find evidence that the “institution certifies that the expected learning outcomes for transferred courses are comparable to the learning outcomes of its own courses.” To meet this requirement would require that all institutions from which a student transfers to Lassen College have identified and reported their learning outcomes. Thus, the ability to meet the standard of comparable course outcomes among institutions is not completely within the control of the college. (II.A.6.a)

The college’s Curriculum Committee Handbook states the processes to inactivate and to terminate programs. The team did not find evidence of a policy to allow students to complete studies in discontinued programs. (II.A.6.b)

The team found that the college’s publications, print and electronic, represent the institution accurately, within the constraints of publication deadlines and the pressures of maintaining web information with limited staffing. Given the intense scrutiny under which the college has operated for several years, it has regularly reviewed most institutional policies and procedures. (II.A.6.c)

The college's academic senate has adopted the American Association of University Professors statement on academic freedom. Governing Board policy also includes a statement on academic freedom. (II.A.7.a)

The college catalog, but not the schedules of classes, states the expectations of academic honesty and consequences for violations. (II.A.7.b)

The college does not require conformity to specific codes of conduct or seek to instill specific beliefs or worldviews, nor does it offer curricula in foreign locations. (II.A. 7.c, 8)

### **Conclusions**

After conducting interviews with faculty and administrators, and reviewing written documents, the team concluded that the college has not met this standard. The team found limited progress in assessing course outcomes, and found no evidence of progress on assessing program, certificate or degree learning outcomes. It was reported to team members that assessment of program and degree learning outcomes will occur after courses have been assessed and courses have been mapped to the programs and degrees to which they relate. Since assessment of student learning outcome attainment has only begun, there are no data on which to base the awarding of degrees or certificates (II.A.1.c, II.A. 2.b, II.A.2.i).

The team found no evidence of an institutionalized comprehensive mechanism for review of the correspondence delivery mode. The college has a variety of templates for sequencing of courses for completion of degrees (administration of justice and liberal arts) via correspondence. The three-year scheduling matrix provides a plan for which courses will be offered in which semester, but does not specify a schedule of day and/or evening offerings or scheduling to avoid conflicts among core general education courses.

The college has completed one annual cycle under its new instructional program review process. However, the team found that the college's programs are not yet at the point at which a complete assessment and improvement cycle is in place for programs. The outcome assessment-improvement cycle for courses is nascent for a limited number of courses. (II.A.2.e)

## **II B. Student Support Services**

### **General Observations**

The college centralized campus student services in fall 2007 to provide a one-stop service point to students. The college offers only day hours for these services; thus, students attending day classes at the campus have access to all services provided. Evening-only students, who number 350, or 24 percent of total enrollment, have the same access to counseling services only during the two weeks before the start of term and the first week of classes. While the library provides evening hours, the learning center and tutorial services are unavailable to evening-only students. Weekend service hours are primarily food service for residence hall students with notable exceptions of special music events held in conjunction with the larger community. Given the distance from the campus and the specialized nature of correspondence course offerings to incarcerated students, the college is challenged to assure equitable services regardless of location. The college does provide the following basic functional services for incarcerated students: assessment for course placement, application and registration functions and Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) counseling services, as well as some general student counseling contact for non-EOPS students.

The college's catalog accurately provides information on general information about its name and contact information, mission, offerings, calendar, financial aid opportunities, available learning resources, names and degrees of administrators and faculty, and names of governing board members. The 2007-08 catalog truncates the statement on academic freedom. It clearly states requirements for admissions, fees; degree, certificate, and graduation requirements and major policies affecting students and where to find other policies. (II.B.2. a,b,c,d)

The college's website provides additional sources of information, with multiple references to contact the college for more information. The team noted within the website broken links and no access to an online application. In general, the college's publications require careful proofreading to eliminate typographical errors and represent the college to the community as a model of higher education. (II.B.2, II.B.2.d)

Since fall 2006, the counseling department has grown from one full time EOPS counselor and one full time DSPS counselor. In fall 2007, two additional full-time counselors were hired (matriculation/EOPS counselor and one general counselor). With the recent addition of these counselor positions, the college is better able to meet the general academic advising and support needs for non incarcerated students. (II.B.3.c)

While the diversity of the student body is limited, the institution does provide some programs and activities to support and enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity. The college has developed a formal Student Equity Plan that provides descriptive statistical data; however, the plan does not provide analysis of the student groups who are underrepresented in the college community. (II.B.3.d)

The addition of the Native American Studies Outreach and Retention Center, which serves the student body at large, has demonstrably benefited the community's Native American students. Connections with the local rancheria and other Native American communities have resulted in the college's hosting the second largest Powwow in Northern California. The Native American Studies Outreach and Retention Center staff and other college administrators have met with transfer institutions to discuss building formal connections to facilitate student transfer. Additionally the Native American Studies Outreach and Retention Center staff has met with local high school athletes as well as tribal leaders to ensure Native American student success at Lassen Community College and beyond. (II.B.3)

The addition of the Native American Studies Outreach and Retention Center program is a vibrant addition to the college. The program staff is committed to the success of this student population and services are well integrated. The number of Native American students increased by one percentage point (23 students) in the past year. This is a positive area of growth for the college in numbers of students and with the nearby Native American community. (II.B.3.b, II.B.3.d)

The Associated Students are actively engaged in leadership development activities. The college has supported student personal and leadership development through providing faculty and administrative advisors to a variety of student organizations. Notable is the recent success of the Phi Theta Kappa organization. (II.B.3.d)

The work completed to date on student services offered via the college website is attractive and well formatted; however, the online services are not complete, and there is confusing information around basic matriculation steps. Due to the recent implementation of a new database system, Datatel, students can view and manage their student records in a secure electronic environment. Some services such as orientation and completing an admissions application are scheduled to be accessible through the web in the next year. While the evidence suggests that progress is being made, several of the web information pages still need substantial information added and directions to students in order to ensure that students have access to all services regardless of location (incarcerated students excepted). The website is a good indication that the institution is working toward the standard to provide systematic and accessible information to all students regardless of location. (II.B.3, II.B.3.e)

Student Services has developed three general SLOs, and they do have a draft plan for non-instructional program review. The Dean and department chairs are currently in discussion on how best to measure the SLOs. The noninstructional program review is scheduled for the 2008-09 year.

## **Conclusions**

The team found that the college has partially met this standard. After reviewing written documents and conducting interviews, the team was unable to validate equity of counseling services for incarcerated correspondence students versus on-campus availability of counseling services and length of student appointments. Incarcerated students are unable to access the college's online services, and they must rely on the resources available to them in their facilities' law libraries. Instructors of correspondence courses find it necessary to provide research materials within course packets or to place texts on reserve in the correctional facilities' law libraries. (II.B. 1).

While the college has made improvements in providing support services for students enrolled in correspondence courses, only community (non-incarcerated) students enrolled in correspondence courses can access learning support services on campus and on-line. The college needs to evaluate the needs of students who are not able to attend classes on campus during the day and of incarcerated students. (II.B.1, II. B.3.a – d)

The team found that the catalog does not clearly state transfer requirements or policies on acceptance of transfer credits, though a statement on transferability was found on the college's website. Due to corrections-systems restrictions, incarcerated students do not have access to the general college catalog and schedule information available to non-incarcerated students (II,B.2.a,b,c).

Despite the identification of SLOs, student services have yet to integrate the assessment of the SLOs fully into the planning and review cycles. The institutional technology plan does reference the general SLOs developed through student services. The missing link is the use of assessment to maintain, design and evaluate student advising. Data from the new information system will improve this area especially to develop services for early alert and for students on probation and disqualified students. (II.B.4)

## **II C. Library and Learning Support Services**

### **General Observations**

Student surveys indicate improvement in overall satisfaction with learning resources support, despite the loss of a significant staff member. (II C.) The team observed what was reported in the self study, that the library collection is housed on a second floor that is inaccessible to individuals who cannot climb stairs. Library staff is available to secure research items from the second-floor stacks upon request. (II.C)

The college's library maintains a limited hard-copy collection, and participates in inter-library loan programs as well as subscribing to a variety of online databases. (II.C.1.a) Given the limited staffing, the college has striven to provide both hard-copy and online reference resources to its students, and the team notes that the library is one of the few learning support services available to evening students. (II.C.1.a., b) The team noted with concern, though, that the Learning Center and tutorial services to on-campus students are available only during daytime hours. (II.C.1.c)

The college faces a special challenge in that a substantial number of its enrolled students participate through correspondence instruction, and many of them are remote from the campus; the incarcerated student population faces substantial information-access restrictions that are imposed by their institutions. The college provides inter-library loans and online access to a variety of databases for off-campus community students. Incarcerated students have access to law libraries within their institutions, and faculty teaching correspondence courses in which incarcerated students enroll report placing texts on reserve in the libraries of correctional facilities. The team also observed that research materials may be photocopied and included within the correspondence packets for incarcerated students. The team observed that the college's faculty members faced some frustrations with the limitations imposed by the correctional facilities, yet the faculty teaching correspondence courses in which incarcerated students enroll make extra efforts to see that those students' material learning resource needs are met to the extent practical. This is a laudable effort to address a situation beyond the college's control. (II.C. 1.c)

### **Findings and Evidence**

The team found that the college's learning center/tutorial services are not available on campus in the evening, the team observed that off-campus correspondence students had reduced access to tutorial support. The team recognizes the colleges recently adopted standard requirement of a minimum of six instructor-initiated feedback contacts for correspondence courses. These required contacts are institutionalized in the curriculum approval process for courses to be delivered by correspondence. While these contacts do not replace face-to-face instructional support, they are a positive enhancement to effective contact, especially for incarcerated students who have no email access to their instructors. (II.C.1.c)

The team observed standard electronic protection monitoring for the library collection and was unable to review security for Learning Center resources. (II.C.1.d)

The team did not review inter-library loan documents or evaluation of services. No concerns were reported to the team. (II.C.1.e)

The college uses the program review process as the means by which programs are evaluated. A program review of the library was last done in 2002 and another is not scheduled until spring 2010. Thus, the library has not been formally evaluated recently. As to meeting student needs, the college did conduct surveys in fall 2006 and 2007, parts of which asked questions that addressed how adequately the library is meeting the students' needs. (II.C.2)

The team found that the college offers a distinctive variety of instructional programs and makes significant efforts to serve students across its wide service area. In keeping with its stated mission, the college should deliberately evaluate the adequacy of its efforts to offer general education, transfer, and basic skills instruction to students both day and evening.

The college has designed a solid instructional and noninstructional program review process which, if followed according to schedule, can result in consistent improvement of student learning. When the college's capacity to develop data-based qualitative analysis is in place, this process can be even more effective in promoting effective teaching and learning.

### **Conclusions**

After reviewing written evidence and conducting interviews with faculty and administrators, the team concluded that the college has not met all requirements listed in Standard II.

The college needs to assess its delivery of student services and learning resource availability to assure that all students have equitable access.

The college has done a good job of moving ahead on identifying SLOs for its degrees, certificates and instructional programs. The college has started writing the course outcomes (A.1.c). The faculty has played a significant role in this process. However, only minimal progress is reported in assessing the course outcomes and no progress has been made on assessing program, certificate or degree learning outcomes (A.2.b). It was reported to team members that the assessment of program and degree learning outcomes will come later after courses have been assessed and courses have been mapped to the programs and degrees to which they relate. Since assessment of student learning outcome attainment has only begun, there is no data on which to base the awarding of degrees or certificates (II.A.1.c, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.i).

Standard II.B.4 does not appear to have been met because the college uses non-instructional program reviews to evaluate student support services but these program reviews have not been done other than in counseling and advising. Consequently, there are no evaluations on which to base improvements to the services (II.B.4).

The college uses the program review process as the means by which programs are evaluated. A program review of the library was last done in 2002 and another is not scheduled until spring 2010. Thus, the library has not been formally evaluated recently. As to meeting student needs, the college did conduct surveys in fall 2006 and 2007, parts of which asked questions that addressed how adequately the library is meeting the students needs (II.C.2).

Through observations of evidence and interviews, the team encourages the college to respond to the following guidelines in order to meet this standard:

- Review the course offerings of the college to be certain they address and meet the mission of the institution (II.A.1).
- Systematically carry out program reviews to evaluate all programs and use the results to improve the programs and meet student needs (II.A.2.f, Standard II.B.3.e, & II.B.4).

- Measure the achievement of stated student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs and degrees. Use the results to improve the attainment of the outcomes (II.A.1.c, A. 2.b, e, f, i).
- The student services learning outcomes listed on page 87 should be reviewed for appropriateness in addressing the mission of student services and the skills, knowledge or abilities students can demonstrate as a result of using student services (II.B.3.c).
- Develop processes to provide the same services to evening students as are provided to day students (II.B.3.a).

**Recommendation 2: (previous Recommendation #14 - 2002) Student Learning Outcomes**

The team recommends that the college achieve a sustainable level of assessing student learning outcomes, which can be used for continuous quality improvement. Administrators, faculty, and staff need to continue to conduct meaningful, timely, and inclusive dialogue with all constituent groups to identify, develop, implement, and assess student-learning outcomes at the course, instructional and non-instructional programs, and degree levels and use the results of those assessments to improve student learning, services, plans, and institutional effectiveness. (Standards IB.1, IB.4, IB.7; Standard IIA.1c, IIA.2a, IIA.2b, IIA.2e, IIA.2f, IIA.2g, IIA.2i, IIA.3, IIA.6, IIA.6a, IIB.1, IIB.3.e, IIB.4, IIC.2; Standard III; and Standard IVA.1, IVA.2b, IVB.1b)

**Recommendation 3 (previous Recommendation #17 & #18 - 2002): Institutional Research**

The college must fully develop, implement, and evaluate its research capabilities (staff skills, data analysis/interpretation and use of data) assuring the college has the appropriate resources and staff to perform the necessary research, data collection, and analysis to meet all accreditation standards. The college needs to conduct research on programs and services, student achievement and learning outcomes, and institutional effectiveness, such that program reviews and stated learning outcomes can draw on this resource to improve the effectiveness of the college. The results of the research need to be used by the leadership and all governance groups in their deliberations, dialogue, and decision-making. (Standards IB.3, IB.4, 5, 6, 7, IIA.1a, IIA.2e, IIA.2f, IIB.3a – 3e, IIB.4, IIC.2, IVA.1 -4)

## **Standard III Resources**

### **A. Human Resources**

#### **General Observations**

Over the past seven months, the college has undergone a complete reworking of its planning, implementation and evaluation systems. Human resources are a shared responsibility between all sectors of the college, based on a shared governance model recently implemented.

When a vacancy occurs or a new position is proposed, the supervisor and the area administrator prepare the appropriate form housed in the office of human resources. This form requires approval from administration and allows review and editing, as necessary, of the job description for accuracy and completeness. Job analysis is conducted by the director of employee relations under the direction of the superintendent/president, dean of instructional services, or the dean of administrative services.

The self study identifies resource issues and presents several planning documents that show considerable effort and discussion in preparation. The team found that the college states in the planning agenda, a need to utilize, review and evaluate the majority of these plans. (Recommendations 4, 18 & 19 2002) (III.A.1-6)

Program review and the 2007 staffing plan help direct the human resources plan with staffing needs. Hiring is conducted via the procedures presented in the Applicant Screening and Selection Procedures document. Board policy 4103 describes the minimum qualifications for hiring of instructional and noninstructional faculty. Faculty qualifications are identified in the Lassen Community College Verification of Faculty to Meet Minimum Qualifications of Instruction Resource Handbook, which is updated annually. (See recommendation 18 - 2002) (III.A.1.a)

The team reviewed documents and conducted interviews to determine that faculty and staff evaluation procedures for faculty and non-instructional staff are presented in the respective bargaining agreements. The team was informed that all supervisors were required to attend evaluation training on the Facts, Rules, Impact, Suggestions, and Knowledge (FRISK) documentation method to ensure that evaluations were appropriate, comprehensive, and useful. The FRISK manual contains practical guidelines for evaluators in documenting unsatisfactory employee performance. The governing board developed the annual performance objectives for the superintendent/president. Provisional classified employees are evaluated initially on the fifth and eighth months. Permanent classified employees are evaluated annually during the month of May. Educational and classified administrators are evaluated initially within six months and annually no later than January 1<sup>st</sup> of the academic year. Contract and tenured faculty are evaluated on the same standards and procedures outlined in the bargaining agreement. The exception is the timeline of evaluation. Contract faculty (non contract and probationary) are evaluated annually. Regular tenured faculty shall be evaluated once every three years. Part time/hourly faculty members are evaluated the first semester of employment and then every other semester until two satisfactory evaluations is received. From this point forward, part time/hourly faculty members are evaluated once every six semesters.

The board policy manual systematically develops personnel policies and procedures that are available for information and review. As stated in the self-study planning agenda, the confirms that the college needs to revise and update these policies to reflect changes in Title V and the bargaining agreements while implementing these policy changes into the college planning strategies. (III.A.3)

The self study stated that the college is dedicated to issues of equity and diversity. The Faculty and Staff Diversity Plan were adopted in 2000. The Student Equity Plan was adopted in 2007. The team found that the Office of Human Resources is currently developing a draft equal opportunity plan. Diversity activities are held on campus. A paid consultant was brought on campus to lead a series of diversity training for student services employees as well as faculty and administration employees. In addition, annual sexual harassment training sessions are offered. (III.A.4)

The self study stated that the Faculty and Staff Development Committee was reestablished in January 2007, and contains representatives from all constituent groups. A joint workshop was scheduled with the Community College League of California and the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges to provide information on effective participation in governance (May 1, 2007). Training was delivered by Fresno Pacific University Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution (March 15, 2007 and September 4, 2007). The focuses of the training sessions were conflict resolution, working through challenges, healthy communities, healthy communication and trust building strategies. The payroll office completed a 2008 payroll reporting workshop including new laws in effect for 2008; the purchasing technician attended a 1099 reporting concepts 2008 workshop in order to complete W9 and 2099 as required by the Internal Revenue Services.

The team learned that student learning outcome workshops were held and some faculty and staff were able to attend a limited number of conferences and workshops to improve currency in their respective fields. (Recommendation 2 - 2002) (III.A.5.a)

The self study stated that the Faculty and Staff Development Committee developed the Faculty and Staff Development Plan 2006-2007. This plan included a program of professional development opportunities for all campus employees. After reviewing documents, the team found that this plan only covered programs for the 2006-2007 academic year. Evaluation of the plan has not been addressed. No additional planning is currently being developed. (III.A.5.b)

### **Findings and Evidence**

The team found that all appropriate bargaining units are consulted when a job description requires significant changes or redevelopment. All positions will be classified prior to opening. New positions will be established only by the action of the governing board. The college has the challenge of implementing the newly established procedures. As the majority of these plans and procedures have been established over the past six months a complete cycle for testing and implementation has not occurred.

The team found that the college's human resources plan has been developed and integrated into the Lassen Community College Comprehensive Institutional Master Plan. As with the other planning documents referenced in all four standards, there is no apparent link to the overall institutional planning and budgeting. (III.A.6)

After reviewing documents and conducting interviews, the team found that new job descriptions have been written for all identifiable positions. However, the team noticed that in the instructional job descriptions there were no references to student learning outcomes as part of either desired qualifications or experience. (III.A.1.a)

After random sampling of faculty files, the team found that the currency of the evaluations was inconsistent. Of the seven tenured faculty files reviewed, four were compliant. Of the seven part-time instructor files reviewed, none were in compliance. The evaluation forms for faculty did not mention student learning outcomes. (III.A.1.b&c)

The team found that formal codes of ethics have been approved for all constituencies of the College (Lassen Community College Code of Ethics for Management and Confidential Employees, Lassen Community College Classified Employees, Lassen Community College Faculty Code of Ethics, Lassen Community College Code of Ethics for Administrators, and Lassen Community College Code of Ethics for Board of Trustees). (III.A.1.d & III.4.c)

After reviewing documents, the team found that the current human resources plan proposes timelines for hiring and repositioning key faculty and administrative positions. Faculty hiring is planned over a three year period. Unfortunately, the position of dean of instructional services was just recently released after a very short term. The director of employee relations and the chief business officer are interim positions. The associate dean of student services position was restructured to the dean of student services/institutional research. Of concern is that this hiring and repositioning of these positions proposed in the human resource plan are not directly linked to the budgeting and strategic plans. (Recommendations 4, 10, 15 & 17) (III.A.2)

After visiting the Human Resources and Employee Relations Office, the team found that all personnel files are securely stored as required by law. (III.3.b)

### **Conclusions**

The team found that the college has not met this standard. The team suggests that the college must integrate all constituent planning and policy documents with the strategic and master plans. The integrated master/strategic plan must consistently be evaluated, reviewed and utilized in daily and long-term operations. Staff evaluations must be conducted according to the policies of the bargaining agreements and governing policies. The centrality of student learning outcomes needs to be an integral part of faculty job announcements/descriptions and especially faculty evaluations.

The team suggests that the college must establish and maintain compliance with all staff evaluations as directed by the bargaining units and the governing board. The college must fill all administrative/management vacancies as quickly as possible while consistently using established hiring policies and practices. The college needs to revise and update the board policy manual to reflect changes in Title V and the bargaining agreements while implementing these policy changes into the college planning strategies.

In order to fully meet this standard, the college must complete the development of a district equal employment opportunity plan and implement training of all employees on the equal employment opportunity plan requirements. The Faculty and Staff Development Committee must engage in a dialogue of shared governance to plan, implement and evaluate professional development opportunities provided annually. The Faculty and Staff Development Committee must continue to offer faculty workshops for student learning outcomes implementation, assessment and review. The team found that college has not met this standard.

### **Recommendation 4: Employee Evaluations:**

The college must take steps to assure that evaluation processes of all personnel are current, and the evaluation processes seek to assess effectiveness of personnel and encourage improvement. Evaluation of faculty members must include, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes. (III.A.1.a&b)

**Recommendation 5: (previous Recommendation #10 - 2002): Administrative Positions**

The college must fill all administrative/management vacancies as quickly as possible while consistently using established hiring policies and practices. (Standards III A.1a, IIIA.2)

**Recommendation 6: (previous Recommendation # 15 - 2002): Faculty Staffing Plan**

The college must implement and assess the effectiveness of a staffing plan that will ensure full-time faculty members are proportionally distributed, based on a long-term plan, which results in an effective course schedule. Faculty must be assigned to a course schedule that will meet the demands of students, so that they can achieve their academic goals in a timely manner. (Standards IIIA.1a, III.2, III.6)

**B. Physical Resources**

**General Observations**

The self study states that the college plans, builds, and maintains its physical resources in a manner that assures effective utilization and the continuing quality necessary to support programs, activities, and services. The management of physical resources for Lassen College is largely the responsibility of the director of facilities and his staff of maintenance, grounds and custodial workers. This includes day-to-day maintenance and repair of the campus and longer term planning and programming of maintenance, repair and improvement projects needed to sustain the college's infrastructure. In this area, a number of noteworthy accomplishments can be highlighted. In general the campus environment 'looks good' and provides students, faculty and staff with safe and secure access to college facilities. Classroom and lab facilities were furnished and equipped in an effective manner and there was evidence of sound oversight in these important areas. Room and building signage as well as navigational signage were well-placed, easy to read and appeared to be accurate and up to date. Americans with Disabilities Act compliance with room numbering was evident.

**Findings and Evidence**

The team listened to many comments from students, faculty and staff regarding the hard work and timely response of the maintenance team in clearing the campus during snowy weather to ensure the facilities were ready for students and staff when they arrived for classes. These and other anecdotal comments and evidence provided clear recognition that the facilities/maintenance team understood and appreciated the importance of their work in supporting student access and success, institutional effectiveness and mission accomplishment. (III.B. 1.a)

After conducting interviews and reviewing documents, the team found no evidence that an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan had been completed for the college. A self evaluation was done in 1993 and there was a review and update prepared in January 2000 addressing a number of corrective actions. There is no systematic means for planning annual architectural barrier removal projects for the college to ensure compliance with the many aspects of the ADA and the guidance contained in the California Disabilities Access Guide (CaDAG). (III.B.1.b)

The team found that the college's Facilities Master Plan has been created that outlines future plans and projects for the college. After reviewing documents, the team found that this plan contains good detail on a wide variety of projects for the college to include estimated costs, funding options (e.g. SMSR) and timing. Outcome measures are included with some of the projects to detail expected benefits from the project to the campus community.

Through the budget planning process, there appear to be requests generated to replace/refresh classroom furniture and non-instructional equipment.

### **Conclusions**

The team found that the college has partially met this standard. After reviewing documents and conducting interviews with employees, there is no clear linkage with the planned/programmed projects and the institutional goals and strategic directions for the college. Similarly other than project completion, there are no data measurements apparent that would define the need or requirement that the project is addressing and/or what benefit the project's completion would have on furthering the college's mission or goals. (III.B.2.a)

The team found no evidence that there is a regular replacement schedule in place that can be used to quantify costs and needs in this area. The team believes that a sinking fund to cover this ongoing cost or a means of systematically planning for this requirement would be beneficial to maintenance of a functional student learning environment. (III.B.2. b)

### **Recommendation:**

**See recommendations # 7 and #8**

## **C. Technology Resources**

### **General Observations**

The self study stated that the college has accomplished a great deal of work during the last year to improve information technology capabilities in order to deliver and maintain vital service. Funded largely through a Title III grant, the college has deployed the Datatel system for the college. (III.C.1) After conducting interviews and reviewing documents, the team found that under the direction of the IT director, staffing roles and responsibilities have been realigned to ensure this capability is optimized for the college. (III.C.1.a.) A technology master plan has been created and is now incorporated in the Comprehensive Institutional Master Plan. This plan includes linkage to college goals and includes goals and objectives that are crafted to support improvement and institutional effectiveness in this vital resource area for the college. A first ever noninstructional program review (NIPR) has been completed and will be available as a data source to 'inform' future planning in the IT arena. Work has begun on a comprehensive inventory of IT assets to include permanently installed server/hub type of infrastructure as well as desktop assets and office/classroom/lab equipment. More effective planning and budgeting for this resource will depend on the completion of this inventory work and development of a sustainment model for replacing and refreshing IT infrastructure. (III.C.1.c and d)

### **Findings and Evidence**

The team found that a subgroup of the Institutional Technology Committee developed the Educational Technology Plan. The intent of this plan is to identify technology resources to be used to support student learning programs and services. While the Instructional Technology Master plan does contain goals and objectives, the team believes that the college must present a clearer linkage between these goals and objectives and College wide goals and strategic directions. This will help assign priorities to needed technology improvements for the institution as they relate to overall institutional effectiveness and mission accomplishment. (III.C.1.a)

The team confirmed that staff received on to use Datatel for collecting data to help the college make appropriate decisions. Staff and students can receive training on Microsoft desktop software through online training programs. (III.C.1.b)

The team found that the college has no formal planning process or adequate financial resources to replace, upgrade, and maintain its technology infrastructure to meet institutional needs. (III.C.1.c)

After meeting with employees assigned to the information technology department and reviewing several documents, the team suggests that data sets and baseline information need to be developed that can be regularly evaluated at the beginning of the planning cycle to develop objectives and action items that will require funding through the budget process. Similarly, a set of expected outcomes that can be measured to evaluate the effectiveness of resource expenditures as it relates to student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness needs to be developed. (III.C.1.d)

### **Conclusions**

The team found that the college has not fully met this standard. After reviewing written documents and through interviews with staff, the team found that the college should make effort to ensure that technology resources and infrastructure are updated on annually. College personnel are provided quality training on an ongoing basis. The team found that the college must carry out its' plan to support technology to meet the needs of learning, teaching, college-wide communications, research, and operational systems.

### **Recommendations**

See Recommendations #7 and #8

## **D. Financial Resources**

### **General Observations**

The self study highlights a number of noteworthy achievements in the area of resource development and allocation. This is clearly a critical function for the college and one that has received a great deal of attention and positive progress as highlighted below and in the discussion associated with other ACCJC standards. An essential aspect of the resource allocation process is the need to link planning to resource allocation using data to 'inform' the resource allocation decisions.

The college fact book provides a starting point for data sets that can be used to evaluate a host of college wide operations. NIPR and IPR are already being used as data inputs to help with resource allocation decisions. A number of environmental scans and surveys were observed and will be very useful, indeed essential, tools necessary to demonstrate a data driven planning and resource allocation system for the college. The development of the Multi-Year Fiscal and Academic Recovery Plan (February 2008) has included two essential components, that, taken together, provide an executable 'road map' for moving the college toward fiscal solvency and compliance with the ACCJC Standards for Planning and Resource Allocation:

1. **Corrective Action Matrix (Annex A):** This document provides comprehensive compilation of open action items associated with both the ACCJC accreditation standards and the action items associated with the chancellor's oversight of Lassen College's fiscal recovery plan. These are critical steps in ensuring the college achieves both compliance and fiscal solvency. While there are a number of critical action items that are still being refined to include timelines for completion and actual financial targets, the basic structure provides a timely assessment of progress and needed actions.
  
2. **Comprehensive Institutional Master Plan (Annex B):** This document pulls together a host of draft and previous planning documents to form a single source document to provide the college with a strategic plan and the component plans for IT, facilities, education, student support services and financial planning. While this too is still being refined, it provides a basis for planning the 2008-09 academic year and a more systematic basis for out-year planning that will include a demonstrable planning cycle that must include evaluation of data at the start of the cycle and evaluation of outcomes at the end of the cycle to ensure goals, objective and directions have been achieved. The missing component of this comprehensive plan is a robust set of data that is used by the college community with understanding and confidence. (Recommendation 17 and 19, ACCJC Progress Report, October 2007)

### **Findings and Evidence**

The team found that the college has been struggling with defining and finalizing its planning processes. (IV.D.1.a) There is ongoing work being done to define data sets, outcomes and other measures of merit that are to be considered in the resource allocation process. To the extent this is the current situation, the college is not able to clearly demonstrate a link between planning and resource allocation as required by Standard III for each resource type. (IV.D.1.b&c) However, there is clear evidence that the tools necessary to eventually achieve this linkage, in a predictable and effective manner, have largely been developed. (IV.D.1.d)

Per the self study and confirmed through interviews, the college has been dealing with two challenges in the area of financial management for several years. The team confirmed that the college's financial crisis was a result of declining revenues/enrollments, and the significant loss of eligible FTES funding through the minimum conditions review. (IV.D.2)

The college has attempted to be in compliance with the ACCJC standards for management of this critical resource and overall fiscal recovery and financial solvency that is being directed by the California Community College's Chancellor's Office. The past year has seen a focused effort at addressing these two critical areas. As an initial first step, the college and board have worked hard to stabilize the administrative team and develop a more collegial 'team' approach by the entire college community focused at addressing the many shortfalls that have been identified. (IV.D.2.d) After conducting interviews with individuals and groups, the team found that the college appears to have formed a solid team consisting of all constituents groups. These constituents groups are demonstrating a growing trust and collegiality, which is evident throughout the college community. As a result, the college has developed two critical planning documents, described above, to address the two main challenges they are dealing with. While these organizational planning tools (Comprehensive Institutional Master Plan and District Corrective Action Matrix) are still being refined, they do provide the basis of a planning and tracking system that should enable the college/district to regain financial stability and provide a planning basis for out-year development of student programs and services that are responsive to community needs and move the college toward institutional effectiveness and mission accomplishment.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The team found that an initial draft, which delineates a noninstructional program review process, has been completed in the administrative services area. This program review process will provide the basis for additional initiatives aimed at improving efficiency of the financial management system. (III.D.2.g.) Evident in this effort and in discussions and interviews, is that the current chief business officer is working hard to create data files and historical documentation in a host of important financial management areas that have not effectively been tracked over the past several years. The team concluded that this data will be essential to completing much needed analysis (e.g. cost-benefit, total cost of ownership, etc.) needed to evaluate decisions regarding programs and services offered by the college. More efficient expenditure of scarce resources is essential to continue on a path to successful financial recovery.

The self study stated that the Multi-Year Fiscal and Academic Recovery Plan contain supportive evidence of an emerging culture of data-driven planning. After conducting interviews and studying fiscal projections contained in the Multi-Year Fiscal and Academic Recovery Plan, the team concluded that the college has developed a process to track FTES growth in educational areas along with the resources that are being expended in those areas. This analysis will provide the basis for a more effective/efficient allocation process that improves overall productivity for the college.

The self study describes how the Corrective Action Matrix provides the college with a comprehensive compilation of actions required to move the college/district toward compliance with both the ACCJC standards and the State Chancellor's Minimum Condition Report requirements. After conducting interviews and studying documents, the team concluded that it is imperative that the college continues to track these action items and ensure appropriate actions are taken to complete each area.

Through conducting interviews and reviewing documents, the team found that the college has made a conscience decision to continue deficit spending through at least the 2008-09 academic year. While there appears to be adequate reserves on hand to allow this spending plan to be effective, the team concluded that there must be a corresponding careful tracking of expected revenues and expenditures over time to ensure this planning does not result in deeper long term deficits.

### **Conclusions**

After studying the self study, conducting interviews, and reviewing documents, the team found that the college's Comprehensive Institutional Master Plan provides a framework for integrating financial resource allocation with institutional planning. However, the team concluded that there needs to be a more visible/actionable link between institutional mission and goals and the financial resource allocation decisions. This linkage needs to begin with evaluation of data and end with an assessment of outcomes and institutional improvement. The college has demonstrated during the previous several years to not have the capacity to sustain fiscal solvency, the team concluded that the college has not meet this standard.

### **Recommendation 7: Financial Planning**

The college must, as part of the strategic planning process for the college, develop and implement a set of baseline data, which are used to evaluate performance involving financial management and planning (i.e., expected revenues and expenditures over time to ensure this planning does not result in deeper long term deficits). It must develop objectives and action items, and evaluate outcomes, based on these data, which are necessary to achieve goals. The college should incorporate data into the overall strategic planning process for the college. (IIIB.2a & b, IIIC.2, IIID.1, 2, 3)

### **Recommendation 8: Fiscal Stability**

The college must carry out its fiscal and academic portion of the Multi-Year Recovery Plan and the Corrective Action Matrix, which delineate how future revenues and expenditures will provide the college a blueprint to fiscal solvency. The college must monitor performance of these financial actions and assumptions, and make appropriate corrective actions to ensure this financial recovery plan is completed successfully. (IVB.1c, IVB.2d)

## **Standard IV Leadership and Governance**

### **A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes**

#### **General Observations**

The college has made a concerted effort to improve its governance and campus climate by creating the Consultation Council and developing the Shared Governance and Collegial Consultation Process Handbook that delineates the roles and responsibilities of all constituent groups who participate in college governance structures and processes. As a result, participation has increased and is perceived to be more effective by the campus community after one full year of implementation. The team observed a college climate that is building trust among all constituent groups. All constituent groups have participated in institutional governance improvements and have completed considerable institutional work within a short period of time (August 2007 to present).

The Institutional Planning and Budget Development Process Handbook outlines the program review, integrated planning, and resource allocation processes and committees. However, the team concluded that it is too soon to determine the degree of success achieved as the college has not yet completed a cycle of these processes that will test whether the governance structure actually is effective. The governance structure must be continued by the college leadership and staff as they make decisions and perform their institutional work.

The governing board has recently changed its behavior of intervening in operational and administrative issues. Changes to the board agenda format have been made and some board training has taken place. The board recently completed a self-evaluation and is acting as whole. It is too soon to determine the sustainability of the board being a policymaking body only. The college is depending upon the new president to solve many long standing problems. During the visit, the team learned that the governing board hired the current superintendent/president without using a search and selection process by receiving a waiver from the California Community Colleges Governing Board. The new superintendent/president has a three-contract and the Board has appropriately been evaluating him. At the end of the comprehensive visit, the team concluded that the college appears to be poised now to address longstanding deficiencies in meeting the accreditation standards.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

As stated in the self study, and through interviews and evidence reviewed during the visit, the team confirmed that the college has experienced multiple changes in administrative leadership since the last comprehensive visit. This situation impacted the progress for

defining appropriate governance structures and processes for decision making which support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness. In fall 2005 the Consultation Council was formed. Throughout 2006-07, the Council developed the Shared Governance and Collegial Consultation Process Handbook. The Council revised the handbook based on its evaluation of participation, not on the outcomes of plans and actions achieved.

The college is currently using the 2007-08 edition that was approved by the Governing Board in February 2008. The handbook outlines roles and responsibilities of college leadership and committees within the governance structures and processes. The team determined that all the constituent group members understand their roles and responsibilities and are performing accordingly. Based interviews with all groups, trust among and between all groups is being achieved. (IV.A)

After conducting interviews and studying documents, the team found that the college used its agreed-upon processes to develop a shared value statement, revise its mission statement, and institutional strategic goals and all of these have been approved by the governing board. In fall 2007, each campus constituent group reaffirmed its Code of Ethics Statements. (IV.A)

To assess participation in governance, the college conducted a self study survey in fall 2006 in which the majority of faculty and staff participated. At that time, only 25 percent of the faculty and staff felt their input was used in decision making. The same survey was again administered to the same group in fall 2007, and 90 percent indicated they felt they had a voice in college decision making. Clearly, the college has made considerable improvement in the campus constituents' perception of the effectiveness of participating in governance. (IV.A.1-2)

The college's 2007-08 Shared Governance and Collegial Consultation Process Handbook and 2007-08 Institutional Planning and Budget Development Process Handbook clearly define faculty, administration, students and staff roles on how their input will be used for institutional policies, planning, and budgeting as they relate to their area of expertise. At the time of the team evaluation visit, the college was using its processes for rethinking the relationship between its Strategic Planning Committee and Consultation Council to determine a more effective governance structure to achieve integrated planning, resource allocation and assessment of institutional effectiveness. The college has not completed an integrated cycle of program review, planning, and resource allocation because the governance processes and structures were new as of 2006-07 and revised in November 2007 for the 2007-08 academic year. The team observed that the planning and budget process has an appeal process as the final step. This step allows for an informal governance process to still exist. The team suggests the Consultation Council review potential impacts whether this step in its processes is necessary. The success achieved with the processes and structures, and their sustainability, have not been evaluated because of the lack of full implementation of integrated planning with resource allocation. The college is still in the development stage of implementation due to the lack of a fully developed research capacity. A research function was created in December 2007 using existing staff. These issues were cited by the 2002 evaluation team in Recommendation 1 and 2. (IV.A.1-2, IV.2.a)

As evidenced by the Academic Senate Constitution and Bylaws, the Shared Governance and Collegial Consultation Handbook, the Curriculum/Academic Standards Committee, and the Student Learning Outcome Plan, the college and governing board relies on the faculty, its Academic Senate, Curriculum Committee and other appropriate faculty structures for making recommendations on student learning programs and services. (IV.A.2.b)

The implementation of participatory governance as outlined in the college's governance handbook as well as the governing board's new agenda format have resulted in improved relationships and communication among all the constituent groups. Other activities and events which have improved communication are the biennial convocations, the Superintendent/President's monthly emails, Updates and Musings, and the Dean of Instruction's weekly emails, Lassen Lowdown. The maintenance of weekly governance meetings, publication of minutes, and the president's open forum have also helped to provide a more transparent, open climate at the campus. As evidenced by the staff survey comparison, in fall 2006 the majority of the respondents believed that the administration, faculty and staff did not work together in a professional manner. In the fall 2007 survey that perception had significantly changed to 92 percent of the respondents believed that the administration, faculty, and staff did work together in a professional manner to improve the institution. In the fall 2007 survey, 60 percent of the respondents believed that policies and procedures are clearly defined and followed; and 80 percent responded that communication was open, honest and encouraged at all levels. (IV.A.3)

After conducting interviews with employee groups, the team found that the college demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationship with the Accrediting Commission. Although the college is on probation status, it continues to make an effort to comply with all requirements, standards and requests of the commission. The team found no evidence to suggest otherwise in commission files or at the College. (IV.A.4)

The current college processes and structures for effective governance and communication have only been implemented recently. The Consultation Council has the responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of its governance processes. As mentioned above, perceptions of effective participation in governance have been positive. However, the governance structure has not been used for completing all necessary institutional work because the college has not completed a cycle of integrated planning with resource allocation. The lack of one integrated college plan with measurable outcomes that has been evaluated does not currently exist; therefore, it is too early to determine the effectiveness the governance structure and institutional decision making. (IV.A.5)

## **B. Board and Administrative Organization**

As outlined by board policies 1110, 1200, 1206, 1210, 1226, 1230, 1250, 1560, and 3060, the college has a seven-member governing board that has ultimate authority for the quality of its educational programs, the financial stability and integrity of the institution, and for legal matters. Per the self study report, board policies are reviewed and updated as necessary on an ongoing basis. To ensure opportunities for community input, board policies 1300, 1360, 1370, 1400, 1520, 3100, and 3105 contain requirements for public participation at the board meetings including the adoption of the budget for the current year. In August 2007, the public comment section of the board agenda was moved to the beginning of the meeting to provide more access for the public. A review of governing board minutes from May 2007 to the present indicates the board acts as a whole. (IV.B.1.a-d) At the October 2007 governance board training session, the board learned that policy development should begin with the college governance process. For the college, the Consultation Council recommends to the president who makes the recommendation to the governing board for approval. The team observed that this new practice is currently being used. In February 2008 the governing board adopted the 2007-08 Shared Governance and Collegial Consultation Handbook. (IV.B.1, IV.B.1.e)

The college mission statement which focuses on student success is in board policies 1226, 2920, and 6150. In December 2007, the college implemented a research function structure; therefore, it is unclear how the board currently assesses the effectiveness of its educational programs and services and whether it is meeting its mission. The college is deficit spending due to enrollment decline and the return of overpayment of apportionment for inappropriate attendance accounting and state-required minimum condition practices. (IV.B.1, IV.B.1.b)

Board policy 1200 indicates that the governing board's first responsibility is to "select and evaluate the superintendent/president." The authority and responsibilities of the president are outlined in board policy 1240. However, there is no board policy describing the selection of process of the president. The current president was appointed without going through a complete search and selection process. In January 2008, the governing board through the special trustee received a special waiver of California Title 5 Regulations from the California Community College Governing Board to hire the interim president (originally hired August 2007) for the permanent position. On February 12, 2008, the governing board approved a three-year contract for the president. In the case of the previous president, governing board evaluations of him were not timely per the evaluation report of July 2006. The evaluation team determined the governing board is now following its evaluation policies with its new president. In October 2007, the president and board agreed to evaluation goals. In December 2007 another evaluation of the president was performed. The team validated that the board intends, per the policy, to complete the annual evaluation in June 2008. (IV.B.1, IV.B.1.j)

Board Policy 1206 addresses new board member development and within the last two years, the governing board has participated in board governance issues workshops held on the campus and attended trustee conferences. A new governing board member was sworn in at the March 11, 2008 meeting, and the team confirmed that the new member had received a special orientation on his roles and responsibilities. Per the self-study report, it is recognized by some board members that there is not enough local orientation and opportunity for training as a board due to the remoteness of the college. The college president stated he used the California League of Community Colleges trustee curriculum for the new board member orientation. (IV.B.1.f)

Board policy 1205 outlines the board self-evaluation policy and the instrument used to assess how the board operates as a body. The last evaluation was conducted in fall 2007 and the results were published and recorded in the November 2007 board minutes. The board has a code of ethics that is signed by all board members and the board policy 1225 Statement of Ethical Conduct addresses a variety of ethical issues and district purposes. It is unclear what the sanctions are if a board member does not follow the policy. (IV.B.1.g-h)

The board minutes of October 2007 and December 2007 indicate the board formally adopted the accreditation self-study before submittal to the Accrediting Commission. One board member served on the Self Study Report Steering Committee. Documents such as letters and progress reports from the commission are provided to the board by the administration at board meetings as evidenced by board meeting minutes. (IV.B.1.i)

In August 2007, the current president was hired as the interim superintendent/president after the previous interim president left after one month in the position. The prior president served five years and resigned in July 2007. During his tenure, nine administrative changes occurred, so the college has lacked stability. The college has experienced a very negative campus climate, per the July 2006 special evaluation team report and the May 2007 college progress report, over many years. However, as indicated earlier in this section there has been considerable improvements in governance and communication since the arrival of the current president. The governing board also has an appointed special trustee from the CCCCCO to assist the board and administration with meeting state minimum conditions, budgeting and achieving financial stability. The governing board has assigned the president the responsibility for the institution and its educational, legal, and fiscal well-being. His performance is being evaluated on a continuous basis using a special closed session board agenda item at each board meeting. (IV.B.2.c-d)

The superintendent/president's challenges are to provide the effective leadership needed to stabilize the college given its noted deficiencies in accreditation standards. In the short time since August 2007 various levels of institutional work such as program reviews, integrated planning, draft plans, and resource allocation has been achieved. The team determined that these activities are at the developmental stage of implementation; and they are not yet completed or evaluated. The college also has a new Dean of Instruction and an interim Dean of Administrative Services, a Dean of Student Services who has been at the college over a year, and a consultant in the Director of Human Resources and Employment Relations position. (IV.B.2.a)

The college has just recently created a research function that has resulted in the college's first fact book. However, at the time of the evaluation visit, there exists a lack of analysis and assessment of data to evaluate the effectiveness of the institution. Per staff members and governance groups, this fact is recognized as one that needs to be addressed to meet the accreditation standards. Therefore, the college is in the very beginning stage of implementing a research function that informs decision making and assesses institutional effectiveness. The college is attempting to perform integrated planning with all of its components. A new document, the Comprehensive Institutional Master Plan, dated March 7, 2008, is a working draft which compiles several existing draft plans into one document. The Consultation Council and Strategic Planning Committee indicated to the team that this document was the beginning step for integrated planning and budget allocation. This document and the college's new processes defined in its governance documents will be used for the 2008-09 budget. The college also has the Multi-Year Fiscal and Academic Recovery Plan which outlines both the fiscal and accreditation actions needed to be in compliance with the California Community Colleges and the Accrediting Commission. However, no one strategic or educational master plan exists that sets the future direction of the college first, and then outlines the actions required to achieve that direction. Based on the review of the minutes of the two planning groups, the team noted the lack of discussion of research, data analysis, and student learning outcomes to inform decisions on planning, plans, and budgeting. No evaluation of integrated planning with resource allocation and institutional effectiveness has occurred. The president has been initially successful in creating governance and communication processes that appear to be assisting the college as it begins its institutional work. The college constituent groups have done a considerable amount of institutional work in a short period of time to respond to the deficiencies in institutional planning and effectiveness as outlined in the accreditation standards. (IV.B.2.b)

The team found evidence that the college superintendent/president has initiated many effective communication activities with the communities served by the college since his arrival, but he is too new to his position to evaluate the outcomes of these activities. (IV.B.2.e)

### **Conclusions**

The college leadership and constituent groups have made considerable improvement in the perceptions of the effectiveness of governance participation. The college climate has improved and all constituent groups seem to be working in a more professional and collegial manner due to the new governance and planning handbooks, appropriate governance practices such as agendas and minutes, and new administrative leadership.

The college has not completed a cycle of program review, integrated planning, and resource allocation as the governance processes and structures are new. Therefore, the effectiveness of the governance structures and processes for achieving continuous improvement and institutional effectiveness can not be assessed. The college does not have a culture of evidence as it lacks a fully implemented research function. The college has spent considerable time and effort in designing processes and structures. However, these processes have not resulted in measurable institutional outcomes. The college's self-identified plans in the self study report are also process-based, not outcomes. A change in focus to a broader or "big picture" for future college directions is needed to meet the standards. The college has only partially met Standard IV.A because of its incomplete cycles of institutional work and a lack of an evaluation of them.

It is suggested that the governing board assure that the new president is achieving institutional goals by requiring evaluative information of the institution's performance. Staff development of the governing board, administration, and all campus constituencies will need to continue to sustain viable governance structures and processes that lead to effective institutional plans, outcomes and improvement. The college meets Standard IV.B.

**Recommendation**

See recommendation #1 2008