

# **EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

Cerro Coso Community College  
3000 College Heights Boulevard  
Ridgecrest, California 93555

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

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited  
Cerro Coso Community College on October 23 through 25, 2012

Dr. Roger W. Wagner, Team Chair

**Cerro Coso Community College**

**Visiting Team Roster**

**October 2012**

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Copper Mountain College

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## Summary of the Evaluation Report

INSTITUTION: Cerro Coso Community College

DATE OF VISIT: October 22-25, 2012

TEAM CHAIR: Dr. Roger Wagner, Superintendent/President  
Copper Mountain College

A ten member accreditation team visited Cerro Coso Community College in mid-October for the purpose of evaluating how well the institution achieves its stated purposes, analyzing how well the College is meeting Accreditation Standards and providing recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) regarding the status of the College.

Cerro Coso was established in 1973 as one of three colleges within the Kern Community College District (KCCD). It serves a population of 85,000 distributed over a service area of 18,000 square miles – the largest community college service area in the California. It operates two full-service centers, the Eastern Sierra College Center serving the communities of Inyo and Mono counties, and the Kern River Valley campus serving the unincorporated communities near Lake Isabella. This is in addition to a large full-service virtual campus.

In preparation for the visit, team members attended an all-day training session on September 14, 2012, conducted by the ACCJC and studied Commission materials prepared for visiting teams. Team members read carefully the College's Self Evaluation Report, including the recommendations from the 2007 visiting team, and assessed the evidence provided by the College on flash drives and reviewed data on the College's website.

Prior to the visit, team members completed written evaluations of the Self Evaluation Report and began identifying areas for further investigation and review. On the day before the formal beginning of the visit, the Team Chair visited the District office and met with the Chancellor, Vice Chancellors, and members of the board. Additionally, team members traveling to the Cerro Coso campus visited the Eastern Sierra College Center and the Kern River Valley campuses while en-route to Ridgecrest. During the same afternoon the team members met to discuss their views of the written report and materials provided by the College, and reviewed evidence and prior reports.

During the visit, the team met with approximately 35 faculty, staff, members of the Board of Trustees, students, and the President of the College, as well as various other college administrators. The team attended two open meetings to allow for comments from any member of the campus or local community.

Cerro Coso Community College staff prepared well for the team's visit beginning with developing an organized and well-written Self Evaluation Report. The team room was spacious, comfortable, and contained all the information that the team needed to complete its work. Team requests both before and during the visit were quickly met by college faculty

and staff. In addition to open forums and one-on-one interviews, the team had numerous opportunities to observe

Cerro Coso Community College dialogue in action during meetings, and feedback about the accreditation process was given freely and candidly in open forums. It is important to note that team members were greeted with hospitality and candor in every interaction and were provided with open access to all documents, faculty, staff, administrators, and students needed to gather evidence related to the accreditation standards. In sum, the College was well prepared and ready for the team's visit.

The team prepared for the visit by reviewing the Cerro Coso Community College Self Evaluation Report, responses to the previous accreditation team report, college publications, such as catalog and schedule, online resources as well as evidence provided on a flash drive.

Overall, the team perceives the College and its community of faculty, staff, students and administrators to be thoughtful, creative, caring, and very optimistic.

### **Major Findings and Recommendations of the 2012 Visiting Team**

As a result of the October 2012 visit, the team made eleven recommendations; five district recommendations and six college recommendations:

#### **District Recommendations:**

##### ***District Recommendation #1***

###### *Review and Update Board Policies on a Periodic Basis*

In order to comply with the Standards, the team recommends that the Board of Trustees establish a process to ensure that the Board's policies and procedures are evaluated on a regular basis and revised as appropriate. (IV.B.1.e)

##### ***District Recommendation #2***

###### *Board Member Development Program*

In order to comply with the Standards, the team recommends that the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the Chancellor, develop and implement a development program that meets the needs of the newer board members as well as board members who have a considerable amount of experience as a governing board member. (IV.B.1.f)

##### ***District Recommendation #3***

###### *Evaluate the Board of Trustees Self Evaluation Process*

In order to comply with the Standards, the team recommends that the Board of Trustees review the elements of its Self-Evaluation Process and ensure that the Standards' minimum requirements for a Self-Evaluation Process which are: 1) have clearly defined processes in place, 2) have processes implemented, and 3) have processes published in the Board's policy manual are included in the Self-Evaluation Process. The Board's policy 2E2 prescribes additional requirements when conducting the Board's Self-Evaluation. (IV.B.1.g)

***District Recommendation #4***

*Evaluation of Role Delineation and Decision Making Processes for Effectiveness*

In order to comply with the Standards, the team recommends the District conduct an evaluation of the new decision-making processes and evaluate how effective the new processes are in making decisions and in communicating the decisions to affected users. (IV.B.3.g)

**College Recommendations:**

***College Recommendation #1***

*Mission*

To fully meet the Standards, the team recommends the College establish a regular cycle by which to review the mission statement. (I.A, I.A.3, I.A.4)

***College Recommendation #2***

*Improving Institutional Effectiveness*

To fully meet the Standard, the team recommends that the College further improve and integrate all of its planning activities, including the development of a clear linkage of planning to college mission, program review, resource allocation, identified goals, and a means to evaluate planning processes for effectiveness. (I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.2.f, II.B.3, III.A.6, IV.A.5, IV.B.2, IV.B.2.b)

***College Recommendation #3***

*Improving Institutional Effectiveness*

To fully meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College ensure that all courses and programs are evaluated through an ongoing systematic review and that Student Learning Outcomes, Service Department Outcomes, Program Level Outcomes, and Institutional Learning Outcomes assessment results are integrated into the planning and allocation process. (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.i, II.C.2, II.B.4, IIIA.1.c)

***College Recommendation #4***

*Resources – Human Resources*

To fully meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures that incorporate effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes into the evaluation process that includes Adjunct faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving student learning outcomes. (III.A.1.b, III.A.1.c, III.A.3)

***College Recommendation #5***

*Resources – Human Resources*

To fully meet the Standards, the team recommends that student and staff equity and diversity plans be fully integrated with the College’s planning processes and include strategies geared toward attracting a diverse pool of qualified applicants able to contribute to the success of the College’s student population. (II.A.1.a, II.A.2.d, II.B.3.d, III.A, III.A.4.b)

### ***College Recommendation #6***

#### *Resources – Physical Resources*

To fully meet the Standards, the team recommends the College develop and implement a process which allows the public, students, and employees to report safety conditions and other issues of disrepair to physical resources. Process should include tracking to ensure all necessary repairs are made promptly and follow up action is possible to assure that physical resources at all locations where it offers courses, programs, and services are constructed and maintained to assure access, safety, security and a healthful learning and working environment. (III.B.1.a, III.B.1.b)

### **Team Commendations:**

During the visit, the team also recognized numerous noteworthy aspects of the institution:

#### ***Commendation #1***

The team commends the College for its strong, student centered atmosphere particularly for the active involvement of students in governance, for the large number of student support services and programs that enhance student learning, for its focus on student clubs and activities that tie students more closely to the institution, and for the open door policy that enables students to communicate with members of the College staff.

#### ***Commendation #2***

The team commends the College for working collaboratively in ensuring that all the centers/campuses are part of the dialogue in developing a governance process that is effective for such a large service area. The College has taken advantage of technology to make the conversation inclusive.

#### ***Commendation #3***

The team commends the College for having successfully passed a \$180 million bond, which provided resources for the College to construct new buildings as well as renovate existing facilities. This funding has allowed the College to expand its services to students and continue to meet their needs. The College has delivered each project in a timely manner, and within budget and with integrated sustainable features included in each design.

#### ***Commendation #4***

The team commends the College for developing program pathways to give students direction towards completing an educational goal and to serve as a dynamic tool of instructional planning and enrollment management.

**Accreditation Evaluation Report for  
Cerro Coso Community College**

**October 22-25, 2012**

**Introduction**

Cerro Coso Community College, located in the city of Ridgecrest, is one of three colleges that make up the Kern Community College District (KCCD), which includes Porterville College located in Porterville, and Bakersfield College located in Bakersfield.

While the Kern Community College District was established as a separate entity in 1968 to respond to the changing needs of its communities, educational services have been provided to residents for many years: at Bakersfield College since 1913; at Porterville College since 1927; and in the Ridgecrest area since 1951 by what is now Cerro Coso Community College.

The service area of Cerro Coso Community College covers over 18,000 square miles and includes the cities and communities of Ridgecrest, Mammoth Lakes, Bishop, Lake Isabella, Edwards Air Force Base, California City, Mojave, and Boron.

Cerro Coso offers a significant online program of classes and programs to serve the needs of students unable to attend classes at one of its physical locations. Enrollments in the online program peaked in the fall of 2010 with over 7,000 students enrolled in 145 courses offered in 213 sections.

After the comprehensive visit of October 2006, the Commission requested progress reports for October 15, 2007, and a combined Midterm Report and Special Report by October 15, 2009.

## **Response to College Recommendations of the Previous Evaluation Team**

### **Recommendation 1 (2006):**

*The team recommends that the Colleges, working with appropriate district leaders and with consideration of the unique conditions of each of the four sites in the district, complete the development, implementation, and assessment of the budget allocation model. (III.D:1.a-d; IVB.3.c)*

### **Findings and Evidence:**

Findings from the November 2007 follow-up visit concluded that the district had completed and implemented a budget allocation model and that there was broad constituent participation in the process and that the budget process was becoming more transparent and widely understood. The team noted that the process had not yet been evaluated leaving the standard partially met. In January of 2010 the Commission accepted the College's Midterm Report and Special Report acknowledging that evidence had been provided to support the Standards were being fully met.

### **Conclusion:**

The College has addressed this recommendation and now meets the Standards.

### **Recommendation 2 (2006):**

*The team recommends that the Colleges, in conjunction with district leaders, complete an organizational map that clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities between the entities and identifies an evaluation process that will provide for ongoing improvement. (IV.B.3)*

### **Findings and Evidence:**

Findings from the November 2007 follow-up visit concluded that the District and College had made progress in addressing the recommendation. However, in order to meet the requirements of the Standards, the functional map would need to be completed and adopted by the constituency groups. They also identified the need to develop an evaluation process. In January of 2010 the Commission accepted the College's Midterm Report and Special Report acknowledging that evidence had been provided to support the Standard was being fully met.

### **Conclusion:**

The College has addressed this recommendation and now meets the Standard.

**Recommendation 3 (2006):**

*The team recommends that the board adopt and implement the self-evaluation process being developed and routinely administer the process. In addition, the current ethics policy should be revised to include a procedure for dealing with violations of the policy. (IV.B.1.g & IV.B1.h)*

**Findings and Evidence:**

Findings from the November 2007 follow-up visit concluded that after a review of the evidence provided to the team and an interview with the members of the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor, the recommendation had been fully met.

**Conclusions:**

The College has addressed this recommendation and now meets the Standards.

**Recommendation 4 (2006):**

*The team recommends that to ensure a coordinated and integrated approach to achieving the goals and priorities adopted by the governing board, a District Strategic Plan be used to direct the Colleges' strategic focuses and Educational Master Plans. (II.A.1, II.B.4, II.C, IID.1)*

**Findings and Evidence:**

Findings from the November 2007 follow-up visit concluded that Cerro Coso's 2007 Strategic Plan was developed and guided by the 2006 Kern Community College District's Strategic Plan. After a review of the evidence provided the team concluded that the recommendation had been fully met.

**Conclusions:**

The College has addressed this recommendation and now meets the Standards.

**Recommendation 5 (2006):**

*The team recommends that the Colleges follow the Kern Community College District Policy 7D by evaluating adjunct faculty in a consistent, timely manner with procedures that assess current performance and promote improvement. (III.A.1.b)*

**Findings and Evidence:**

During the 2007 follow-up visit, the team concluded that while significant progress had been made in addressing the recommendation, it was not fully met. In order to be fully compliant with the Standard, evaluations needed to be completed on a significant number of adjunct faculty members. In January of 2010 the Commission accepted the College's Midterm

Report and Special Report acknowledging that evidence had been provided to support the Standard was being fully met.

**Conclusion:**

The College has addressed this recommendation and now meets the Standard.

**Recommendation 6 (2006):**

*The team recommends that the Colleges, with appropriate district-wide input, develop a written code of ethics for all employees. (III.A.1.d)*

**Findings and Evidence:**

During the 2007 follow-up visit the team concluded that there has been considerable constituent discussion and participation in revising the existing board policy on ethics; however, in order to fully - address the recommendation, the governing board will need to adopt the revised policy. In January of 2010 the Commission accepted the College's Midterm Report and Special Report acknowledging that evidence had been provided to support the Standard having been fully met.

**Conclusion:**

The College has addressed this recommendation and now meets the Standard.

**Recommendation 7 (2006):**

*The team recommends that the College develop and implement college-wide planning that:*

- a. Includes all sites (I.B);*
- b. Is driven by the College mission and goals (I.A.4);*
- c. Integrates and outlines a flow chart of interactions of all aspects of planning, evaluation and resource allocation (including appropriate staffing, impact on staff time and staff development) within the College, between the College and its sites and between the College and the district (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4; I.B.6; II.A.1; II.B.4; II.C.2; II.A.4; II.A.6; III.B.2b; III.C.2; III.D.1a; III.D.2g; III.D.3; IV.A.5; IV.B.2b);*
- d. Includes a technology plan that evaluates, supports and plans for the future of instructional, student services and administrative functions across the College's sites (III.C.1c; III.C.2);*
- e. Relies on involvement of college employees from different groups and sites (I.B.4, IV.A.1; IV.A.2; IV.A.3);*
- f. Incorporates measurable data outcomes (I.B.3; II.A.2f; II.C.2);*
- g. Guides decision-making (I.A.4; I.B.3; III.D.1c);*
- h. Is well-documented and widely disseminated (I.B.4; I.B.5);*
- i. Is periodically reviewed to assess the process and progress (I.B.6; I.B.7).*

### **Findings and Evidence:**

During the 2007 follow-up visit the team concluded that there has been considerable progress towards meeting this recommendation; however, the College needed to continue to develop the Technology Plan (7.d) in order to fully address the recommendation. In addition, plans should include benchmarks or targets associated with the goals and strategies. The team expressed concern that, as these plans continue to develop and are genuinely used as the basis for college activities, more research results would be necessary and that the allocation of research time would not provide the needed information for the College (7.g). In January of 2010 the Commission accepted the College's Midterm Report and Special Report acknowledging that evidence had been provided to support the standard having been fully met.

The current 2012 Accreditation Self Evaluation Report states in its response to previous recommendations that it had developed one annual integrated planning cycle, and beginning with the 2011-2012 academic year, it had a systematic process that based planning for educational, financial, physical, and human resources upon its mission, goals, and assessment of student achievement. While acknowledging the hard work that the College has undertaken to pull together the planning process into one fully integrated planning cycle, and to synthesize this planning process with the district's mission, goals, and plans, additional work is needed. The College has not regularly and systematically updated its mission statement, and there has been no formalized evaluation of the participatory governance and decision making process.

### **Conclusion:**

This recommendation has not been completely satisfied. See 2012 College Recommendation 1.

### **Recommendation 8 (2006):**

*The team recommends that the College fully implement its program review process and ensure that every program completes this process on an established timeline and that the College develop a clear process through which the results of program review are then used in institutional planning and resource allocation. (II.A.2.e; II.A.2.f; II.A.2.i; II.C.2; II.A.2.e; II.A.2.i; II.B.4; II.C.2.)*

### **Findings and Evidence:**

During the 2007 follow-up visit the team concluded that the College had made progress with this recommendation; however, the College needed to ensure that programs continue to complete their reviews according to the review cycle and to ensure that these reviews are consistent with other college plans. It was further recommended that the College consider a program review cycle that is shorter than six years. In January of 2010 the Commission accepted the College's Midterm Report and Special Report acknowledging that evidence had been provided to support the standard having been fully met.

The 2012 self-study points to a comprehensive review of programs and services including staggered six-year program reviews, external scans, community forums, and assessment of student readiness and achievement analysis. The College has made progress in meeting this recommendation however, not every identified program has undergone a review as scheduled and the integration of the six year program review and annual unit plans is not clear.

**Conclusion:**

This recommendation has not been completely satisfied. See 2012 College Recommendations #2 and #3.

**Recommendation 9 (2006):**

*The team recommends that the College progress in its development and implementation of student learning outcomes and their assessment, evaluate the outcomes and use the results for improvement and to inform institutional planning and resource allocation.*

*(II.A.1.a, b, c; II.A.2.c, d; II.B.4; II.C; II.C.2)*

**Findings and Evidence:**

During the 2007 follow-up visit the team concluded the college had made substantial progress in meeting this recommendation. However, several staff members expressed concern about their ability to make progress with the assessment phase without additional research assistance. The team concurred with this concern. Faculty needed aid in developing reliable and valid assessment measures and in interpreting the data (both quantitative and qualitative) obtained. In January of 2010 the Commission accepted the College's Midterm Report and Special Report acknowledging that evidence had been provided to support the standard having been fully met.

The 2009 Midterm Report stated that 100% of scheduled courses had defined Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), 65% of active courses had student learning outcomes and 34% have started assessments. The 2012 Self Evaluation Report indicates that progress has continued to be made in the development and implementation of student learning outcomes and their assessment and evaluation. The College utilized the CurricUNET database to track SLOs for the College and has an identified SLO Coordinator. The College SLO database is now housed in the College's CurricUNET data base, the migration of course level student learning outcomes has occurred. Program Level Outcomes have not been migrated into the database and currently are kept in individual departments. Institutional Learning Outcomes are not integrated into course level outcomes and/or program level outcomes. The College is unclear as to the purpose of Institutional Learning Outcomes or if they are needed. The Institutional Learning Outcomes were assessed using the CCSE survey but there has not been a college wide dialogue regarding the results of the assessment.

**Conclusion:**

This recommendation has not been completely satisfied. See 2012 College Recommendations #2 and #3.

**Recommendation 10 (2006):**

*The team recommends that the College carefully identify the needs of its diverse communities. The College must then develop and deliver appropriate educational programs and services that are consistent with the educational preparation of students and the diversity, demographics, and economy of the community. (IIA.2d; II.B.3; II.B.3.a; II.C.1; II.C.1c)*

**Findings and Evidence:**

During the 2007 follow-up visit the team concluded that Cerro Coso Community College has fulfilled this recommendation. It was noted as a concern that without continuing research assistance, it will be difficult for the College to continue to assess the needs of its various communities. The College was also reminded of the requirement to work with the Commission's Substantive Change Committee as it plans new programs in response to community needs. In January of 2010 the Commission accepted the College's Midterm Report and Special Report acknowledging that evidence had been provided to support the Standard having been fully met.

The 2012 Self Evaluation Report addresses this recommendation. The College has engaged its community through summits, external scans, and input from the business community and local high schools. As a result, new programs have emerged or been extended to outlying communities in Certified Nursing Assistant, Licensed Vocational Nursing, Business Office Technology and Renewable Energy Programs.

**Conclusion:**

The College has satisfied this recommendation.

**Recommendation 11 (2006):**

*The team recommends that the College establish a staffing model that includes:*

- a. self-examination using similar or like institutional models;*
- b. the assessment of program objectives;*
- c. minimum staffing levels by functional area; and*
- d. criteria for the establishment of high-quality instructional programs that culminate in identified student outcomes. (II.B.1; II.B.3.c; II.B.3.d; II.C.1.c; III.C.1.c; III.A.2; III.A.6)*

During the 2007 follow-up visit the team concluded that in order to fully comply with this recommendation, the College should continue to review its staffing at the various sites and should develop procedures for determining appropriate levels of staff. A systematic method for determining the allocation of staff should be developed. In January of 2010 the Commission accepted the College's Midterm Report and Special Report acknowledging that evidence had been provided to support the standard having been fully met.

The 2012 Self Evaluation Report addresses this recommendation. The College developed a staffing priority plan for all of its managerial and classified positions and vetted the plan

through its College Council. Based on a two-year self-study of the College's staffing structure from 2009 to 2012, the College undertook staffing reorganizations based on its integrated planning cycle which is updated with information contained in annual unit plans. The staffing plan is produced annually and is of many sources that supports the College's Educational Master Plan.

**Conclusion:**

The College has satisfied this recommendation.

**Recommendation 12 (2006):**

*The team recommends that the College establish, and implement a written policy, inclusive of all five sites, that clearly maps the institutional decision making process and defines the roles and responsibilities for all campus constituents. The role of leadership and the institution's governance and decision-making structures and processes must be regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness (IV.A.2a).*

**Findings and Evidence:**

The College identified this recommendation as part of its Strategic Plan (IV.A.2) and has produced a draft document entitled Participatory Governance Model – Governance and Procedures Handbook – 2007-2012 which clarifies the structure, methodology, and role of College Council. Sections also include the purpose and value of participatory governance, the committee and governance structures, budget development and a description of the responsibilities of the various college constituencies. Appendices include material on several committees, the flow chart for the planning process, templates for agendas and minutes, and appropriate information from the Brown Act and Title 5. The team concludes that substantial progress had been made on this recommendation. The College must complete the adoption of the draft document and incorporate procedures for the evaluation of the decision making structures and processes to assure their integrity and effectiveness and to fully address the recommendation.

The 2012 Self Evaluation Report addresses this recommendation. The College published its Participatory Governance Model which clearly maps the institutional decision making process and defines the roles and responsibilities for all campus constituencies. The document was last reviewed and update in June of 2010 and has been fully implemented.

**Conclusion:**

The College has satisfied this recommendation.

## Eligibility Requirements:

- 1. Authority:** The visiting team confirmed that Cerro Coso Community College is a public, two-year institution that is part of the California Community College System and authorized to offer degrees and certificates as established in the California Education Code. The College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), an accreditation body recognized by the United States Department of Education.
- 2. Mission:** The visiting team confirmed that Cerro Coso's Mission Statement is clearly defined and consistent with the Mission of the California Community Colleges. The College's mission statement is published in the College catalog and on the College's website. It clearly defines the College's commitment to achieving student learning.
- 3. Governing Board:** A seven member Board of Trustees governs the Kern Community College District. The District service area is divided into five segments for elected representation. Of the seven members of the KCCD Board of Trustees, two each represent central Bakersfield and southwest Bakersfield. One each represents Porterville, Ridgecrest and northeastern Kern County. In addition, a student trustee is elected annually from one of the District's Colleges on a three-year rotating basis. The team confirmed that the board sets policy, ensures the integrity and quality of educational and support programs offered by the College, and is responsible for the financial integrity of the College.
- 4. Chief Executive Officer:** The visiting team confirmed that Cerro Coso Community College has a full-time Chief Executive Officer who is appointed by the governing board. The current CEO was appointed and approved by the board in May of 2010, and is delegated the authority to administer board policy.
- 5. Administrative Capacity:** The visiting team confirmed that the College has sufficient and appropriate staff to provide the administrative services necessary to support its mission and purpose. Administrators are selected using appropriate state minimum qualifications, education, and experience to perform their duties.
- 6. Operational Status:** The visiting team confirmed that the College is operational with students actively enrolled in courses and programs that lead to associate degrees and certificates.
- 7. Degrees:** The visiting team confirmed that the College offers 24 Associate degrees and that the vast majority of course offerings are part of a degree or certificate program. The team further confirmed that the overwhelming majority of student enrollments are in these degree or certificate programs.

- 8. Educational Programs:** The visiting team confirmed that Cerro Coso's programs as identified in the College Catalog, are congruent with its mission, are based on recognizable patterns of study, and demonstrate appropriate quality and rigor. The team further confirmed that degrees of study are of sufficient length and content.
- 9. Academic Credit:** The visiting team confirmed that Cerro Coso Community College awards academic credit based on generally accepted practices in degree-granting institutions of higher education. All courses are reviewed and approved by the College Curriculum Committee.
- 10. Student Learning and Achievement:** The visiting team confirmed that Cerro Coso Community College defines and publishes the programs of study leading to an associate degree, certificate, and programs of study leading to transfer. Student learning and achievement is validated through the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) process at Cerro Coso Community College. Program level SLOs are published in the College Catalog and on the College's website. SLO assessments are systematically assessed on a regular cycle and centrally maintained for review and access. The visiting team confirmed that the College's expectations for student learning and achievement for their extensive online program are consistent with its traditional programs.
- 11. General Education:** The visiting team confirmed that Cerro Coso Community College defines, incorporates, and publishes specific requirements for incorporating into its degree programs a substantial component of general education. These components ensure breadth and knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry. All general education patterns are designed to include competence in writing and computational skills.
- 12. Academic Freedom:** The visiting team confirmed the College's commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. Kern Community College District Board Policy Manual sections 5.4A3 and 4B11 contain the district's commitment to academic freedom and faculty contracts contain statements of the guarantee and responsibility of academic freedom.
- 13. Faculty:** The visiting team confirmed that the College has an adequate number of full-time faculty. The College employs 56 full-time faculty with responsibility to the College that each meets minimum qualifications established by the State. Included in the collective bargaining agreement is the faculty member's responsibility for the development and assessment of student learning. While full-time faculty are evaluated there was no evidence that part-time faculty or others directly involved in student learning have student learning as an evaluation criteria
- 14. Student Services:** The visiting team confirmed that Cerro Coso Community College provides appropriate student services and develops programs consistent with supporting student learning and development within the context of a California Community College and of the institution's mission.

- 15. Admissions:** The visiting team confirmed that Cerro Coso Community College maintains an open admissions policy consistent with its mission and California regulations regarding open access.
- 16. Information and Learning Resources:** The visiting team found that Cerro Coso Community College provides specific, long-term access to sufficient information and learning resources. It provides these services in support of its mission to all students regardless of the student's location or learning format they are enrolled.
- 17. Financial Resources:** The visiting team examined the College and District funding base and financial reserves and determined they adequately supported student learning programs and services.
- 18. Financial Accountability:** Kern Community College District is audited annually by an external auditor which is reported to the Board of Trustees. The visiting team examined external audits and determined that no material findings were reported.
- 19. Institutional Planning:** The visiting team has confirmed that the College has an integrated system of assessment and planning and uses the results of these processes to make improvements. Program reviews address student learning and student success, and form the basis of an integrated Educational Master Plan. However, the system does not clearly link planning to mission and program review; nor has the system been evaluated for effectiveness. See College Recommendation 2.
- 20. Public Information:** The visiting team has confirmed that Cerro Coso Community College catalog and the College's website provide current and accurate information about the College and its programs.
- 21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission:** The visiting team has confirmed that Cerro Coso Community College conducts the Self Evaluation Report and accreditation process in accordance with the Standards, guidelines, and practices set forth by the Commission. It was also confirmed that the College complies with all Commission requests in a timely and appropriate manner, including the submission of annual and Midterm reports.

## **STANDARD I**

### **Institutional Mission and Effectiveness**

#### **A. Mission**

##### **General Observations:**

Cerro Coso Community College has a statement of mission which was approved by the Kern Community College District Board of Trustees on June 14, 2007. The mission defines the institution's educational purposes and is central to the establishment of student learning programs and services which align with the College's purposes, character, and student population inclusive of its five campus locations. The last full-scale review of the mission was completed in 2007.

The College has developed and implemented integrated planning efforts and established an Institutional Effectiveness Committee in spring 2011. The College's new integrated planning cycle was first used in the 2011-2012 academic year and is based on inputs including Annual Unit Plans (AUPs), Annual Section Plans (ASPs) and Annual Division Plans (ADPs). While this new annual planning process still stems from the College's mission, it uses data from AUPs, ASPs and ADPs to create more tangible guide points for strategic plan development. The College uses data and research to develop programs and services aligned with its student population, purposes, and goals.

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

By reviewing the College's Strategic Plan 2012-2013, and the Educational Master Plan, and meeting with the relevant stakeholders, the team was able to validate the College's assertion that it has a statement of mission that defines the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning. (I.A)

Based on the evidence examined and interviews conducted it is clear that the College has established student learning programs and services aligned with its purposes, its character, and its student population. Serving a diverse population of students at five different campus locations, the College has designed degree and certificate programs which are responsive to the needs of its community members. It is also clear that the College has continued to be responsive to student needs and trends, especially as it relates to its distance education services "CC Online." Increasingly, the College has used data collection efforts and survey instruments such as the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) to plan for student needs. While there was no evidence that there has been a clear strategy developed to deliver surveys to students or to systematically use and share the data harvested, it is clear that these data shall increasingly be tied to integrated planning efforts. (I.A.1)

The College completed a formal update of its mission in 2007. Subsequently it has been published in the College catalog and website. Since then it has not been updated in a systematic way which has led to any additional revisions approved by the Kern Community District Board of Trustees. Likewise, the College has not completed a regular or systematic

review of its mission since 2007. Although some revisions may have been made to accord with changes in the College's distance education strategy, these changes were not formally implemented. Some stakeholders, interviewed as part of the site visit, suggested that the current board approved mission is too broad to be an effective guide point for planning and decision making. They shared optimism that an updated, more focused mission may serve to recentralize the mission in terms of campus planning and decision making. For this reason, it is encouraging to note that a full review of the mission is in process and expected to be completed by the end of the fall 2012 semester. The team was able to review a draft of the mission from fall 2012 which had been shared at the College Council committee in October. (I.A.2, I.A.3)

The mission statement's status is presently in a state of flux; therefore, it is difficult to validate that it currently maintains a central role in defining the College's purposes, population, and commitment to student learning. Moreover, it is not possible to validate if the College has a regularly scheduled cycle for mission review or a set of criteria which might trigger an unscheduled review of the mission (such as an unexpected change in student population or another mitigating factor). The current inchoate status of the mission statement is also significant because it calls into question its immediate centrality to institutional planning and decision making. The College has done much work to implement its integrated planning efforts and to establish an Institutional Effectiveness Committee in spring 2011. As such, it would seem based, on the mission's revision at the tail end of this process, that the College's mission may become a derivative of other facets of the planning process rather than the driving, central force in the development or execution of the institution's institutional planning and decision making. (I.A.4)

### **Conclusion:**

The College develops programs and services aligned with its purposes, student population, and character. The College also has a statement of mission which has been approved by the Kern Community College District Board of Trustees. While the current status of the mission is in flux, the College has made great strides in developing an integrated planning process which should allow for the development of a mission statement which is ultimately linked to its planning and decision making processes.

The College partially meets this Standard.

### **Recommendations:**

#### ***College Recommendation #1.***

##### *Mission*

To fully meet the Standards, the team recommends the College establish a regular cycle by which to review the mission statement. (I.A, I.A.3, I.A.4)

## **STANDARD I**

### **Institutional Mission and Effectiveness**

#### **B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness**

##### **General Observations:**

The College has been very active in developing and refining practices that are covered under this standard. The College has mission and vision statements in place, as well as a set of declared values to inform its operations.

The College is working on several fronts to improve its institutional effectiveness—reviewing mission, establishing a more coherent planning cycle, and involving student learning outcomes results into the dialogue of the College. The College appears strongly committed to becoming a more effective institution.

The development of the current planning cycle, now being run for the first time, will help to provide a clearer direction of the District’s activities. As program review results become more a part of the planning and evaluation process, the opportunity for programs to improve will be strengthened.

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

There are several instances of dialogue regarding effectiveness and institutional processes. The creation of an Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) and its positioning as the key governance group in program review is a consequence of dialogue in Academic Senate and Department Chair meetings. Efforts to institutionalize student learning outcomes assessment and improvement are apparent in governance committees, in unit plan questions, and in some department minutes. Discussion of student learning is evident at the department level, less so at the College Council. (I.B, I.B.1)

The College sets out its goals in its Strategic Plan, scheduled to be updated every two years and currently in the process of being updated. These goals are accompanied by subsets of objectives or actions. While these objectives or actions are specific, they are generally not written in measureable terms. The College plans to address this in the new version of the Strategic Plan. (1.B.2)

While it will improve links among the various plans of the College and the District, the new cycle is still not fully integrated. Different components of planning have independent timelines and triggers that appear not to line up well. There have also been some instances where plans were not completed when called for in the cycle, including the Strategic Plan. (1.B.3, 1.B.4)

The College communicates matters of quality assurance with the public in various ways, including the website, a ‘Report to the Community’ as well as through presentations to community groups. The website publishes a link to the Educational Master Plan, while an

Institutional Effectiveness page includes unit plans and program reviews. An Accreditation page includes links to the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report and to all accreditation evidence documents. A planning page provides links to most plans. It is not evident that the College has systematically assessed its effectiveness in communicating assessment results or analysis to its internal or external communities. (1.B.5)

The College has made significant progress within the last year in developing an overall cycle of planning. The core first-level planning documents and the Annual Unit Plans have been upgraded and a standard dataset to support them has been devised. The unit plans require reference to the Strategic Plan when allocations are requested. Unit plans then inform higher level section and division plans, hopefully influence allocation decisions, and may trigger annual alterations of the Educational Master Plan. This new cycle is currently in its first run. These efforts are a consequence of what appears to be a rich culture of broad-based dialogue. (1.B.6)

The College operates a program review process on a six-year cycle for its academic and student service programs and is beginning to run reviews for administrative programs. Academic programs are defined as those that offer awards. The associate degree general education pattern is also considered a program for purposes of program review. Academic disciplines that do not offer awards have not been reviewed, but most or all of such disciplines' courses are likely to be reviewed next semester under a new General Education program review. The information required in program review appears to make for a thorough analysis of a program. Information from the reviews appears in subsequent unit plans, where it may be used in determining resource allocations. A concern with program review has been the fact that some programs have not gone through the process in the expected time. A few programs appear to not have been reviewed since prior to 2004. Perhaps because of the major effort to create this cycle, evaluations to review the plans and the process to ensure improvement are not yet in place. Once evaluation methods, using both qualitative and quantitative information, are utilized, they will in turn need to be evaluated. (I.B.7)

### **Conclusion:**

The College has made great efforts to increase its effectiveness in planning. It has worked to make its program review process more consistently completed, but further work is necessary. Formal evaluation processes remain to be put into place to ensure that these efforts are fruitful and can continue to be improved.

The College partially meets this Standard.

### **Recommendations:**

#### ***College Recommendation #2***

##### *Improving Institutional Effectiveness*

To fully meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College further improve and integrate all of its planning activities, including the development of a clear linkage of

planning to college mission, program review, resource allocation, identified goals, and a means to evaluate planning processes for effectiveness. (I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.2.f, II.B.3, III.A.6, IV.A.5, IV.B.2, IV.B.2.b, ER 19)

***College Recommendation #3***

*Improving Institutional Effectiveness*

To fully meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College ensure that all courses and programs are evaluated through an ongoing systematic review and that Student Learning Outcomes, Service Department Outcomes, Program Level Outcomes, and Institutional Learning Outcomes assessment results are integrated into the planning and allocation process. (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.i, II.C.2, II.B.4, IIIA.1.c)

## **STANDARD II**

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

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

##### **General Observations:**

The College has made significant progress in the identification and assessment of Student Learning Outcomes at the course and program level. These outcomes are integrated into the annual unit plans. Program Reviews are conducted every six years; it is unclear what relationship the program reviews have on the annual unit plans, especially as time lapses between the program review and annual unit plan. The College utilizes faculty expertise in development, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum. The Distance Education program has been reviewed and modified and a Director of Distance Education has been hired. The College has made efforts to improve basic skills offerings including a recommendation to remove basic skills courses from the distance education format. This recommendation was based on the analysis of student achievement data of online learners when compared to traditional classroom learners. The College has improved integrating planning processes to improve instructional programs that lead to student success but needs to better integrate program review into its annual unit plan process. The District and the College have a policy for Academic Freedom that is stated in Board Policy 5.4A.3, BP 11E-1A, and in the College Catalog. The District and the College also provide students with a Student Handbook. Library services provide adequate access to the library and other learning support services through augmentation of web enhanced services.

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

The College offers eight Associate in Arts degrees, 16 Associate in Science degrees and 19 Certificates of Achievement. The College mission is broad enough to allow each of the degrees and certificates to align to the mission statement; however, it is unclear if courses are reviewed for alignment to the College mission through the curriculum development process. (II.A)

The College reviews courses, degrees and certificates through six year program reviews, annual unit plans, course level student learning outcomes, program level student learning outcome assessments, and periodic curriculum review through the curriculum committee. The College reviews incorporate review of curriculum appropriateness to the College mission. The College hosts a substantial number of online courses and programs utilizing the Moodle Learning Management System. Real-time observations were made in three of the college's online courses and were determined to be of high quality and integrity representing the same standards of similar courses offered in the traditional classroom. (II.A.1)

The College has conducted several studies to determine the needs of students within its communities. The College has conducted two comprehensive external scans to determine impacts on student learning. The Cambridge West Partnership focused on future labor markets and curricular opportunities for improvement and expansion and curricula

improvement. In addition, the College has contracted with external agencies for the following: Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (EMSI) to provide data on employment trends in the region; Smarter Measure, a web based diagnostic tool to determine Internet readiness diagnostics for its students; Community College Survey on Student Engagement (CCSE) to review institutional practices and student behaviors related to student learning; and a SPAR study on Basic Skills student success trends. These studies have been reviewed by college faculty, staff and administrators, and have informed program revisions and instructional methodologies. (II.A.1.a)

Through its Curriculum Committee, the College evaluates the instructional methodology appropriateness to content and student learning outcomes of each course. A Distance Education (DE) addendum is approved for each course that is taught through distance education and/or Interactive Television (iTV). Once courses are approved for distance education or an alternative mode, the course is evaluated in the same manner as all other courses including scheduled reviews of student learning outcomes. The College's DE program allows students in remote areas within college boundaries to have access to higher education. The 2011 review of Distance Education resulted in the hiring of a DE director to provide leadership. The director revised faculty training to an online basis, improved proctoring support, revised policy on regular effective contact, and recommended that Basic Skills classes were not appropriate for Distance Education. (II.A.1.b)

The College has evidence that it has established Institutional Student Learning Outcomes, Program Learning Outcomes, Service Learning Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes align with the College mission. While 100% of all course and program SLOs have been identified, 70.97% of courses and 64.3% of programs have on-going assessment cycles identified. The College does use assessment data to inform curriculum, instruction and service processes within the colleges. The self-evaluation notes several instances in which the SLOs were basis for discussion with changes to curriculum, instruction, assessment benchmarks, and assessment tools. Course level SLOs are entered into the CurricUNET data base but Program Level Outcomes (PLO) have not been entered into the data-base; PLO information is housed in individual departments. Progress on assessment of PLO's are self-identified on the annual unit plan documents. Faculty are involved in assessment of both student level outcomes and program level outcomes. The College has evidence that course level outcomes and program level outcomes are linked. There is less evidence that program level outcomes are linked to Institutional Learning Outcomes. The College is unclear as to the role of the Institutional Learning Outcomes. Student Learning Outcome identification and assessment information is included in program review documents and annual unit plans. (II.A.1.c)

The College has a Board Policy (64A) which recognizes the Academic Senate with respect to academic and professional matters. The policy indicates that the board will rely primarily on the Academic Senate for curriculum development, review, and revision. The Curriculum Committee, a subcommittee of the Academic Senate, has established policies and procedures for curriculum development and review as noted in the Curriculum Handbook. Curriculum is managed through the CurricUNET data base, which also tracks SLOs and PLO's. Curriculum development and revision are proposed by faculty through discussion which is

supported by advisory committee recommendations and/or student learning outcome evaluation. As noted in the self-evaluation, Faculty Development has been offered to adjunct faculty with mixed results. 35/130 part-time faculty attended SLO training, 19 of the 35 attendees have completed assessments or 14.6% of the total adjunct faculty; this has improved since the self-evaluation was conducted. Part-time faculty involvement in assessment of SLOs is now facilitated by department chairs. The College has not established a working schedule of SLO assessments for all courses and programs, nor has it reached consensus on sampling methodology for courses to ensure consistent longitudinal studies. The faculty in each discipline decide how often to assess outcomes, but must demonstrate that SLOs and PLO's have been assessed through the six-year program review process. The College maintains web-based programs that provide for and support student services that students could obtain on the main campus. These services are interactive and provide students with opportunities for orientation, counseling, advising, development of student education plans, and library databases and services. The College has a Director of Distance Education and a staff sufficient to support a large online program. (II.A.2, II.A.2.a)

The College utilizes multiple means to identify competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, and programs including general education and Career Technical Education. The competency levels are determined by faculty based on faculty expertise, advisory committees, industry standards, regulating bodies, and transfer institutions. This information is disseminated in committee meetings. The College acknowledges that it must improve in validating requisites with statistical analysis. (II.A.2.b)

Evidence supports the assertion that the College's course outlines of records are reviewed for appropriate breadth, depth, and rigor. Dialogue among faculty about instructional quality occurs within the curriculum committee and faculty meetings. The College has established prerequisites and co-requisites and advisories to establish appropriate rigor for courses and direct course sequencing. (II.A.2.c)

The College utilizes multiple teaching methodologies to improve student success for its diverse student population. Staff development activities have been developed to address teaching styles and modalities to improve student success. Technology has been introduced in lectures in the form of smart classrooms to enhance the learning environment. Career Technical Education courses have utilized cohort models to improve success. Basic Skills courses have been expanded, and a pilot program that embeds basic skills into the curriculum is in process in health careers and industrial technology. The College makes use of technology to provide for a large online academic program that is held to the same standards of rigor and integrity of the traditional classroom. (II.A.2.d)

The College reviews its courses and programs through on-going systematic review for relevance, appropriateness, achievement of learning outcomes, currency, and future needs and plans. The College reviews programs every six years and has developed a program review process that reviews each program for relevance, appropriateness, currency, achievement of student learning outcomes, and future needs and plans. In addition, each program review includes student demand, patterns of course offerings, student performance, and student learning outcomes. This process is ongoing with improvements through

evaluation after each cycle. The College acknowledges that not all programs have been reviewed within the six-year cycle, noting that the Fire Science program did not complete a review within the time frame, and as a consequence has been removed from the College schedule. (II.A.2.e)

The College has developed and evidence supports, a planning process that incorporates SLOs into planning processes including course, program, general education, and institutional SLOs. The College has adopted a three tier process of review which leads to resource allocation and institutional effectiveness planning processes; however, it is not clear how the six year program review cycle is incorporated into annual resource allocation. (II.A.2.f)

The College does not use departmental course or program examinations. (II.A.2.g)

The College has policies on the award of credit based on student achievement of a course's stated learning outcomes and units of credit. Evidence supported through interviews noted that the course outline of records have identified SLOs in place of measurable objectives. This was a faculty driven decision to include a course description and SLOs with measurable benchmark outcomes. The College is compliance with federal guidelines for the assignment of credit hours and supplements this requirement with Student Learning Outcomes as an additional requirement for award of credit for courses and degrees. The catalog includes the following statement: "Evaluation of Student Achievement is made in relation to the attainment of specific course objectives". The College has a policy on the credit hour and published these policies in the College Catalog, which is published on the College's web site. (II.A.2.h)

Evidence supports that the College awards degrees and certificates based on student achievement of a program's stated learning outcomes. A review of the College catalog degrees provides evidence that the College adheres to the standard. Each degree includes a component of general education that supports the stated learning outcomes for the program. (II.A.2.i, II.A.3)

The College has established learning outcomes for general education that incorporates basic content and methodologies of major areas of knowledge including the Humanities and Fine Arts, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. Student Learning Outcomes have been identified and are in process of being assessed. (II.A.3.a)

The College has established learning outcomes for lifelong learning that include oral and written communication, information competency, computer literacy, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis/logical thinking, and the ability to acquire knowledge through a variety of means, which are identified and assessed in the general education requirements. There is little evidence that course and program level outcomes are linked to Institutional Level Outcomes outside of the curriculum database. (II.A.3.b)

The College has integrated requirements to enhance students' cultural awareness and appreciation of their personal and social responsibilities. The College has also developed extracurricular activities to enhance students' exposure to culture awareness. During the site

visit, the team observed a DSPS student forum held during the lunch hour in the College cafeteria. DSPS students described their disability and how it impacted their college education and how the College's support services have helped them reach their educational goals. (II.A.3.c)

The College catalog and curriculum evidence support the College's assertion that all degree programs include focused study in at least one area of inquiry. All degrees offered by the College require a minimum of 18 semester units in a specific area of study. The College has established program pathways that allow students to develop a two-year educational plan based on course offerings that lead to completion of a degree or certificate. (II.A.4)

The College publishes a catalog that includes information regarding college policies and programs of study. Gainful employment information is available on program web pages. Program Learning Outcomes are included in class syllabi. Information is provided to students regarding student expectation in each class. (II.A.5)

The College publishes policies on transfer-of-credit, award of credit and articulation agreements, and the appeal process in the Catalog. The College uses the ASSIST website to assist in the evaluation of incoming transcripts. (II.A.6, II.A.6.a)

The College has a policy on Program Discontinuance. The policy allows for two types of program discontinuance, one that allows for program discontinuance if program review is not completed after three years for CTE, and seven years for General Education. In addition a program may be discontinued based on lack of interest, relevancy, or other academic reasons. During the site visit, College administration acknowledged that it is in process of discontinuing the Fire Science Program due to lack of a current program review. The Machine Tool program was discontinued due to lack of labor/market need. (II.A.6.b)

Evidence exists to demonstrate the College accurately represents itself in published documents including the catalog, website, and other official publications. The College presented evidence that it reviews institutional policies, procedures, and publications to assure mission appropriateness and integrity. The self-evaluation acknowledges throughout Standard II that this is an ongoing process. The College publishes Program Pathways that inform students, faculty, and student support services of course offerings within programs over a two-year schedule. These pathways are the basis for schedule development. This provides a transparency for students as they plan programs of study. These pathways are published in the College Catalog and website. (II.A.6.c)

The District and the College have a policy for Academic Freedom that is stated in Board Policy 5.4A.3, BP 11E-1A, and the College Catalog. The District and the College also provide students with a Student Handbook. (II.A.7)

Both the District and the College have published in their policies the importance of faculty having the right to pursue their disciplines through investigation, selection of textbooks, and instruction. It also reminds faculty of making appropriate distinctions between facts made as a faculty member and those of a private citizen. This policy is cited in the faculty contract,

and in Board Policy 5.4.A3. During faculty evaluations, students have the opportunity to speak as to the fair minded views of the faculty member. Students are also asked if they have been treated fairly and equally as other students taking the course. (II.A.7.a)

Students are informed of District and College policy and affirmation of student academic honesty and the consequences for dishonesty. District Policy 4F8G, the Student Handbook, and College Catalog, describe in detail the definitions for plagiarism and cheating. The Student Conduct Policy is also described in the College Catalog and in District Policy 4F8 A, B, C, D, and E. In this policy, specific definitions and examples are provided and the right of the faculty member in dealing with acts of student dishonesty. The policy reminds that it is not only the responsibility of faculty to report acts of dishonesty, but all members of the campus community. The Academic Senate's Pedagogy and Technology Committee developed a summary of recommendations for techniques for assuring online student authentication and integrity. The recommendations present best practices that address online uses of cheating, plagiarism, and other course authentication/integrity concerns, as in the use of anti-plagiarism techniques. (II.A.7.b)

The District Board Policies, Student Handbook, Student Conduct Policy and the faculty contract, speak to the expected codes of conduct. The documents, such as the Student Complaint Policy describes the possible four levels in attempting to resolve a concern. District Board Policy 1B.3 provides the "Goals of Community College Education" such as: National Heritage, Morals, Ethical, and Spiritual Values, Knowledge and Skills, and Cultural Appreciation. The various pieces of information are disseminated to appropriate constituents by either in a flyer, contract, policy, or in board policy. While evidence was provided that supports the standard, a self-evaluation was not offered. (II.A.7.c)

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

### **Conclusion:**

The evidence submitted supports the self-evaluation description and ascertains that the degrees and certificates offered align with the mission and that the institution ensures that its programs and services are appropriate to an institution of higher education. The Standard addresses methods the College has utilized to determine which fields of study are offered. Student achievement data is reviewed and evidence submitted to ensure curriculum revisions have taken place to improve student success.

The College has developed methods for assessing degrees and certificates for student success and modality of instruction. Evidence submitted supports the ascertain that the College has reviewed its curriculum and determined which courses, degrees and certificates are appropriate to offer through Distance Education or other non face-to-face modes of delivery. The Self Evaluation Report notes that diagnoses have taken place which resulted as faculty recommendations that basic skills courses not be offered through Distance Education.

Information on gainful employment was not easily accessible in the catalog but is available through the College's website and should be included under each program's description. Information regarding transfer was readily available.

Faculty determine competency levels based on expertise, advisory committee recommendations, external regulations/standards, and content review. The College may want to consider incorporating methods to validate the continued use of prerequisites with statistical analysis. Faculty course outlines of records are reviewed for appropriate breadth, depth, and rigor. Dialogue among faculty about instructional quality occurs within the curriculum committee and faculty meetings.

The College partially meets this standard.

**Recommendations:**

*See College Recommendation #3, Improving Institutional Effectiveness*

## **STANDARD II**

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

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

##### **General Observations:**

Cerro Coso Community College is committed to providing students with the support services they need. To that end, the student services division as a whole regularly assesses its practices and services and makes changes accordingly. Every department participates in program review; and similarly, every department is involved in Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), in addition to having developed Student Department Outcomes (SDOs) that have been helpful in assessing the needs of the individual departments. It should be noted that some departments are less developed than others, and that the Cerro Coso Strategic Plan is not in synch with the District Strategic Plan given the newly revised process. Student Support Service goal linkages to the College goals and to the current Strategic Plan are still in progress of utilizing its findings. Therefore, it has been identified that the institution has not been able to track its progress of new programmatic implementation.

There are ten Associated Students of Cerro Coso clubs that work to provide an environment that encourages a connectedness and sense of belonging which supports and enhances student understanding and appreciation of diversity. A concern of the team is the limited use of data specific to the Student Equity Committee and how this data can be used to meet the needs of students as there is no current plan in place.

Since the last accreditation visit, the institution has fully addressed the recommendations related to the Colleges' student support services, and has made significant progress toward the level of services for students as a result.

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

Students at Cerro Coso Community College can avail themselves of many student support services, all of which are available onsite and online. The team noted the warm and student friendly atmosphere characterized by students, staff, and faculty. The staff has maintained its committed and student friendly attitude while going through a period of change and reduction in administrative leadership and classified staffing. Many have taken on multiple roles and duties to ensure that students continue to be served. The team found that all student services units have developed student learning outcomes and program reviews, which are updated every six years. Most of the programs have assessed their SLOs through various means (surveys). Through staff development efforts, the student support services areas are well on their way to creating a climate of planning and assessment given the current changes that have been made within the planning cycle. (II.B)

All student support services including counseling and advising are offered in person and online so students, regardless of their location, can receive support. Academic advising is provided by counselors and classified advising specialists. Both assist students with all aspects of the

matriculation process; however, it is expected that the counselors help students with their first educational plan. The College ensures that counselors are appropriately prepared by supporting their yearly training at the CSU and UC meetings. In turn, counselors train the academic advisors. (II.B.1)

The team found that the institution evaluates its distance education student support services for comparability to face to face programs in student services through the Student Experience Survey. It was found that the two delivery methods compare consistently and range in the eightieth percentile. Some measures of the survey indicate that the online student services compared surprisingly better than those services provided onsite. Student Departmental Objectives are evaluated via this methodology as well, which identified satisfaction levels of customer service, timelines, etc. (II.B.1)

Students are provided the fundamental tools for navigating the College experience. They are given a current catalog, which describes the policies and procedures of the College, as well as needed information on specific services and resources. Information within the catalog is precise, accurate, and current. (II.B.2, II.B.2.a, II.B.2.b, II.B.2.c, II.B.2.d)

The institution assures the quality of its student support services through the (SLO) assessments that provide focus on specific services, activities and strategies to determine whether the intended outcome is being achieved. Student Services established and implemented Service Department Outcomes (SDOs) to assess student satisfaction with, and usage of student service programs. Summaries of student comments for the Student Satisfaction survey both onsite and online reference numerous comments of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the level of student support services. Since the last accreditation visit, the institution has fully addressed the recommendations related to the Colleges' Student Support Services, and has made significant progress toward the level of services for students as a result. (II.B.3)

Online services are a major focus for Student Services. The institution assures equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to its students regardless of location or delivery method. Department and program meetings are conducted face-to-face and via teleconferencing, allowing for participation of staff and faculty from all sites. (II.B.3.a)

The Associated Students of Cerro Coso Community College has recently changed its name to the Student Government of Cerro Coso Community College (SGCC) to be more identifiable to the College constituency, particularly in view of the responsibilities that students exercise throughout the student leadership program. The SGCC supports an equitable approach to managing the student budget in collaboration with several divisions on campus. While there are no formal leadership courses, students participate in several student leadership conferences in the state throughout the year. The Student Trustee meets via teleconferencing with all colleges within the District prior to each board meeting to gather information that will be shared during the monthly meetings. A newly developed group of student senators is responsible for participating on all of the shared governance committees at the College. While the activity of encouraging student participation continues to be a work in progress, the Student Government leadership is committed to making continuous efforts that foster

greater student participation, input, and involvement. This level of student participation contributes to, and provides an environment that encourages personal and civic responsibility, as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development for all its students. For instance, workshops and classes on personal development are offered regularly through several different Student Services departments. This is in addition to the opportunities for engagement through the Cerro Coso Student Government Association. (II.B.3.b)

The institution has designed and continues to maintain and evaluate counseling and academic advising programs that support student development and success, and prepares faculty and other personnel responsible for the advising function. This has been accomplished via the dialogue between the Vice President of Student Services and counselors and advisors on a regular basis. The team found that a very high percentage of students that are registering for courses without completing the steps of matriculation are due to the large number of part-time students. It is suggested that efforts be made to close this gap. (II.B.3.c)

The team observed that the institution maintains and provides services that support and enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity throughout its population of students participating in the EOPS, DSPS, CalWORKs, and Associated Students of Cerro Coso (ASCC), currently referred to as the Student Government of Cerro Coso (SGCC) who support and fund campus wide events. (II.B.3.D)

The admissions process and placement instruments are regularly evaluated. A Student Experience Survey is used to ensure the College's consistency and effectiveness. Cerro Coso Community College ensures access by providing an online application in both English and Spanish. All assessments are available in computer based and paper/pencil versions, and all have gone through rigorous state validation. All records are permanently, securely, and confidentially maintained and backed up. Records since 1981 are stored in the document management system. (II.B.3.e, II.B.3.f)

The team found that the institution is unified in its efforts to develop effective student learning and student departmental outcomes. The team found that the SLOs in student services have reached outcomes at the stage of proficiency, and various assessment approaches have been listed in their plans. However, SDOs are still in the process as it has not gone through a full cycle. SDOs were created to be a complement to the collective workings in Student Support Services Departments. (II.B.4)

The College updates its Educational Master Plan twice on an annual basis, which then provides a mechanism for reviewing departmental/program needs as part of the new planning mechanism established at the College. Again, due to the recent development of a relatively new planning and resources allocation process, the team suggests that the College continue to move forward. (IIB.4)

### **Conclusion:**

The Student Support Programs and Services are robust and their staff is friendly and supportive. Programs are regularly reviewed and improvements are being made as a result of program reviews, and Annual Unit Plans. Students report high degrees of satisfaction with

student support programs and are particularly pleased with the opportunities afforded to participate in governance activities and in student clubs and organizations. Since the last accreditation visit Cerro Coso Community College Student Support Services have made progress in formalizing, yet redesigning aspects of the student learning, and departmental outcomes process, the program review process and their annual unit plans.

The Student Support Services Department has embraced these processes and understands their purpose and importance. The Student Services Executive Council has an inclusive membership, and the entire council reviews and provides feedback to each department as it presents its program review and SLOs, and SDOs. The dedication of the Colleges' administrative leadership, staff, and student leaders will be afforded the use of data informed decisions as these processes mature. However, the team suggests that Student Support Services make every effort to follow up with aligning its departmental goals with the District and College Strategic Plan.

The College meets this Standard.

**Recommendations:**

None

## **STANDARD II**

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

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

##### **General Observations:**

The library is housed across five campuses with the main library housed at the Ridgecrest campus. The College maintains services at Eastern Sierra College Center, Bishop and Mammoth Public Library, and the Kern River Valley site which houses a small reference collection only. The College has added a 24/7 online “chat with a Librarian” to assist students with research. (II.C)

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

The College states that it has adequate resources to meet the needs of student learning. The library collection includes over 27,000 eBooks, five print periodical subscriptions and audiovisual materials (but only 1.2% of VHS titles are closed captioned) that students may access through web based applications. These resources are available for distance education students and at distant sites. In addition, the College has developed Learning Assistance Centers at each of its sites to provide learning support. Through partnerships at remote centers the College has worked to improve learning assistance to students. The College acknowledges that this has been an area in which dialogue has taken place and improvement plans implemented during spring 2012. The newly implemented programs have not had time for assessment prior to the team visit in fall 2012. (II.C.1)

Faculty expertise is sought informally and relied on as the library purchases are made. The Librarian is a member of the Curriculum Committee and reviews new curriculum to ensure that the library can support the curriculum. Tutoring is provided through Basic Skills funding and is adequate at current levels. (II.C.1.a)

The Ridgecrest campus has one full-time librarian faculty and a 1.5 FTE Library Classified Staff member and adjunct librarian faculty at its remote sites. Staff note that the annual unit plans have recommended additional staff; however, the College does provide online library access for students. The College offers a formal course, Instruction to Library Research and Bibliography, as a one-unit graduation requirement for the Associate Degree. The librarians have partnered with faculty to develop course specific tutoring materials. The College operates an open lab and provides informal assistance to students that are not tracked. (II.C.1.b)

The Library has both web based and operational hours to serve students allowing student access to learning services. The College has an extensive collection of online resources to support the Distance Education programs and students at remote sites. (II.C.1.c)

The College has adequate security of its resources and maintains its library. The Library is part of the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) for borrowing and lending services, and

loans and eResources usage are tracked on a monthly basis. The Community College Library Consortium (CCLC), bibliographic databases, expands the College's collection of material. The College has a joint agreement with the Mono County Office of Education to expand library services. There is evidence that the College evaluates library and other learning support services to assure adequacy in meeting identified student needs with the exception of the Kern County Law Library and Mammoth Lakes joint-use facility. The College utilizes electronic reference to the extent that the budget for printed reference has been eliminated. (II.C.1.d, II.C.1.e)

The Library has identified administrative and student learning outcomes which are assessed and inform institutional level planning. In addition, library services are assessed through student and staff surveys and formal evaluation of staff. The Learning Assistant Centers collect data on tutoring usage statistics and student achievement. Feedback on student achievement and involvement is provided to counselors and faculty. The Library participates in institutional planning and evaluation. (II.C.2)

**Conclusion:**

The Library and Learning Services have adequate resources for students and faculty, and are in the process of adequately distributing those resources between the five college sites. The Library and Learning Resource Center relies progressively on electronic materials to meet the needs of its diverse student population. The Library relies on faculty expertise in the purchase of material for the library. Tutoring services are adequate. The College maintains computer stations for student use and has a replacement policy in place.

The College meets this Standard.

**Recommendations:**

None

## **STANDARD III**

### **Resources**

#### **A. Human Resources**

##### **General Observations:**

Cerro Coso Community College has policies and practices in place to assure that qualified personnel are hired to support learning programs and to improve institutional effectiveness. These policies and procedures are available for information and review and administered in an equitable and consistent way. The College secures the confidentiality of all personnel records, and all personnel are able to access their records in accordance with the law.

Employees at the College expressed pride in working at Cerro Coso Community College. The general sense expressed by those working for the college is that the faculty and staff at the College are highly qualified and passionate about teaching and serving students. All personnel are also supported in their efforts through staff development initiatives. The majority of the time, it appears that the College evaluates all personnel systematically and at stated intervals.

The College demonstrates an understanding of issues of equity and diversity, and assesses its record in equity and diversity although it was not clear that there was a consistently applied system for creating and maintaining appropriate programs and practices to support diverse personnel.

Additionally, the College has satisfactorily addressed concerns made by the previous site visit team in all areas of Human Resources. The department continues its efforts in the area of evaluating employees in a manner that is timely, formal and documented. Since the last site visit, the College prepared and disseminated to the College community a written code of ethics for all levels of employees as well as a comprehensive Code of Ethics that applies to all students. Staffing sufficiency is reviewed annually via the annual unit planning process. Additionally, a newly revised Strategic Plan, which drives the Educational Master Plan, receives input from the College community and is documented through a clearly defined set of flowcharts that support planning, resources allocation and evaluation of process for Cerro Coso Community College. In this way, a framework for integrating human resource planning with institutional planning is established by the College. (III.A)

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

The District maintains hiring procedures for both faculty and staff which comply with general guidelines set forth by the state and state wide academic senate. All hiring is conducted through the District Human Resources Department with involvement on a case-by-case basis by college-specific personnel. The District continues to use job descriptions and job announcements (both web based and in hardcopy format) for all open positions. For staff and administrative positions, these announcements are based on defined job descriptions inclusive of qualifications, and a list of representative duties to be performed. In the case of

faculty positions, job descriptions and announcements are essentially synonymous and inclusive of minimum qualifications, salary, benefits, and representative duties. Departments and programs are required to submit an Annual Unit Plan. A review of all requests for staffing is then reviewed and considered as part of the unit plan's review using the new position request form. (III.A.1, III.A.1.a)

Board policies and collective bargaining contracts identify the processes for systematic and regular employee evaluations. In October 2012, the Human Resources Manager compiled a list of delinquent evaluations and has made sufficient progress in addressing overdue evaluations. Upon receipt of employee evaluations, Human Resources reviews the documents to ensure that an improvement plan is developed when warranted. (III.A.1.b)

While faculty are engaged in the development and assessment of student learning outcomes, these activities are not identified within faculty job announcements. Full-time faculty members are evaluated in terms of their participation in SLO efforts via a teaching portfolio (Agreement between the Kern County Community College District and the Kern County Community College Association/California Teachers Association/National Education Association.) Moreover, the team is unable to identify evidence associated with any personnel beyond full-time faculty members who are evaluated in terms of their effective contributions to student progress toward achieving stated student learning outcomes. (III.A.1.c)

Ethics standards are specified in the Leadership Employment handbook, Standards on Professional Ethics adopted by the Academic Senate, classified staff union contract and in the Board of Trustees' policy. These policies and standards are integrated into the planning and practices of the College in support of its Mission. (III.A.1.d)

Faculty and classified position requests go through the Annual Unit Plan process. New positions are requested on a New Position Request form. Faculty and classified staff hiring are being discussed and prioritized for 2012-13. (III.A.2)

The process by which administrative positions are requested is less systematized. A need for an administrative position may be identified and emerge through dialogue in Administrative Council or in other forums. There does not appear to be a mechanism by which the College's administrative needs are systematically evaluated. In the College's self-evaluation, they recognize that "...since the last site visit..., the College has had four vice presidents of Academic Affairs..." They also note that in the same time period, the College has experienced a change in the Superintendent/President and Vice President of Student Services positions. Moreover, the College discloses that in the past 16 years, they have experienced a high level of personnel turnover in the Chief Instructional Officers. The position has been vacant seven times in that period of time. This causes a significant level of instability and loss of focus by the leadership of the College with such a high level of turnover over an extended period of time. The fall 2009 IPEDS data identifies several staffing categories where the College is below its *Comparison Group Median* (instructional research, non-professional, other professional). Instruction/Research at the College totaled 101 compared to their comparison group at 126; other professional: 8 with the comparison group at 29; non-

professional: 77 with the comparison group at 86. Nevertheless, interviews with campus stakeholders frequently emphasized confidence and enthusiasm for the College's leadership team, its hard work, its members' ability to balance multiple responsibilities, and its inclusive and dynamic administrative style and tone. (III.A.2)

All new faculty hired meet state minimum qualifications for the discipline in which they teach. Only degrees from institutions accredited by recognized United States accrediting agencies or foreign country degrees which have been evaluated by acceptable reviewing organizations are accepted. Selection committees for administrators have representatives from the different college constituencies. Committees for hiring new classified staff members typically include the supervisor of the area doing the hiring and two classified employees, at least one of whom is of the same classification as the position being hired. (III.A.3)

The College's policies include a published Equal Employment Policy, and bargaining agreements include criteria for fair employment practices and procedures and require that the College follow these policies and procedures in a fair and equitable manner. (III.A.3.a)

Personnel and payroll records are kept in fire-proof cabinets located in secure areas accessible by only authorized employees. A published policy allowing employees to view their employee files is established and followed and requests are handled in a timely manner. (III.A.3.b)

The College currently has in place a process that requires members of hiring committees to attend diversity training sessions and is informed of college goals for diversity of its workforce in order to serve on a hiring committee. The District and College publish policies and supporting documents regarding equity and diversity available to all staff and students. The College provides for diversity and equity awareness activities for staff and students throughout the academic year. However, the team was not able to identify any active program in support of, or strategy to support, diversity and equality operating at the College. (III.A.4, III.A.4.a)

To monitor its record in employment equity and diversity, the College ensures that open positions are posted to diversity recruitment sites. In conversations with stakeholders it emerged that while it was felt that the College is satisfied with its record in equity and diversity for hiring diverse faculty and administrators, there was less confidence in terms of staff diversity. This may be a product of the College's unique geography and footprint. Despite the College's commitment to diversity and attempts to foster a positive environment for staff and students of all cultures and heritages, the employee base continues to be out of balance with the ethnic representation of its student body. A review of the employees by ethnicity data shows the current employee/student body representation ratio to be disparate. (III.A.4.b)

Employees of the College are treated with integrity. Board policies and collective bargaining agreements provide procedures for resolving contractual issues such as grievances. In conversations with faculty, staff, and administrators, it was repeatedly noted that the

College's leadership structure and campus culture are productive, open, and honest. Personnel were enthusiastic about their employment at the College suggesting that they are treated with integrity and respect. (III.A.4.c)

The site visit team found that the College provides all personnel with opportunities for continued professional development. In the past, these opportunities occurred principally through flex day activities that occur at the beginning of each semester. However, evidence from and interviews with the College's Professional Development Committee indicates a new and fruitful emphasis on ongoing opportunities for professional development such as "Lunch and Learn" meetings scheduled throughout the semester which may allow for a sustained focus on a topic of particular interest to employees of the College. These activities are offered in a variety of modalities to support the diverse needs of faculty and staff and to allow for participation across all campus locations. While the College recognizes that the evaluation of professional development opportunities have been inconsistent, a plan is in place to develop standardized assessment instruments to assess the various types of activities offered. Staff development activity presenters are also encouraged to develop their own outcomes and assessment methods for activities which they present. In this way, professional development activities at the College have become a means by which the College is developing learning outcomes and assessments related to improvement of student learning. (III.A.5, III.A.5.a, III.A.5.b)

More recently, the College's Professional Development Committee has implemented a year-long professional development plan approved by the College Council which aligns the College's staff development opportunities with its educational master plan goals and ACCJC/WASC Standards and also includes a tentative calendar of the next year's activities. Surveys have also been conducted to help ensure that professional development activities are offered based on employee needs. Interviews suggested that there is a productive dialogue and much synergy and teamwork between faculty, classified employees, and administrators in terms of articulating the college's professional development vision. (III.A.5.a)

The current program review process and the strategic planning process at the College indicate that human resource planning is integrated with institutional planning and the results of this process is used as the basis for improvement. However, as evidenced in the College's Self Evaluation Report, there is a self-identified gap occluding the ability of the human resources unit to assess its effectiveness in program and service areas on a continuing basis. (III.A.6)

### **Conclusion:**

The College has made exceptional strides in meeting Standard III.A. It has addressed the recommendations from the 2006 Reaffirmation report. The College employs qualified personnel who support student learning programs and services although the team suggests that the College develop clearer definitions of faculty job descriptions and announcements. Professional development opportunities for all employees are available. Personnel are evaluated regularly and through systematic processes. The College recognizes the important

role that diversity and diverse personnel play on its campus. Human resources planning is integrated into campus planning and decision making.

The College partially meets the Standard.

**Recommendations:**

***College Recommendation #4***

*Resources – Human Resources*

To fully meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures that incorporate effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes into the evaluation process that includes Adjunct faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving student learning outcomes. (III.A.1.b, III.A.1.c, III.A.3)

***College Recommendation #5***

*Resources – Human Resources*

To fully meet the Standards, the team recommends that student and staff equity and diversity plans should be fully integrated with the College's planning processes and should include strategies geared toward attracting a diverse pool of qualified applicants able to contribute to the success of the College's student population. (II.A.1.a, II.A.2.d, II.B.3.d, III.A, III.A.4.b)

## **STANDARD III**

### **Resources**

#### **B. Physical Resources**

##### **General Observation:**

The College has physical resources that support student learning programs and improve institutional effectiveness. The College's current draft Facilities Master Plan supports the College's Educational Master Plan and its Mission. Future physical resources needs are integrated into the planning of the College. Many facilities projects have been recently completed by making use of the funds provided by the 2002 Measure G bond funding. The bond totaled \$180 million. Some of the recently completed or planned repurposing, remodeling and building projects include: The main building, East Classroom building which includes labs, Fine Arts building, Gymnasium, Maintenance and Operations Plant, and a Community Theater. The solar project and Library buildings are new additions to the College campus. The Fine Arts building was recently remodeled, which included an addition of about 11,000 square feet of classroom space.

The College continues to effectively use these funds to renovate, remodel, repair, build and replace current physical and technology resources in order to meet the student's needs as anticipated through the integrated planning process.

The general appearance and accessibility of the buildings at the campuses visited were appropriate and maintained in good working order. Regular, systematic evaluation of facilities is conducted and documented through the Annual Unit Planning process that culminates in the scheduled maintenance priority list for each year.

The College encompasses a service area of about 18,000 square miles with a service population of about 85,000 persons. In order to properly service this wide geographic area, the College has established five physical campuses with an extensive online service program. In order to meet the needs of students in isolated areas of the College's service area, off campus centers in Burroughs High School (Ridgecrest), California City High School (California City), Kern County Sheriff's Department (Bakersfield) and Owens Valley Career Development Center (Bishop) are being utilized for specific class offerings.

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

The College has sufficient physical resources that support student learning programs and improve institutional effectiveness. With the passage of Measure G, the College's \$180 million general obligation bond in 2002, the College has been able to expand and modernize at many of its Centers and Campuses. The improvements that have either been completed or are scheduled to be completed in the near future include modernization to the main campus physical plant, existing infrastructure and technology. The physical resource planning is integrated with the College's Mission and instructional planning. (III.B)

By reviewing the Strategic Plan 2012-2013 and the Educational Master Plan, visiting classrooms and facilities on the Ridgecrest campus, the Mammoth campus, as well as the Kern River Valley campus, located at Lake Isabella, the team was able to validate the College's assertion that the College building plans renovates and maintains facilities that support effective programs and services. In the College's Self Evaluation Report, they believe that the College partially meets Standard III.B.1.a and have presented an Actionable Improvement Plan that, when fully implemented, will fully satisfy the Standard. The team believes the College planning process demonstrates the College currently meets this standard and will be strengthened as the College's planning process completes its first cycle of implementation and assessment. (III.B.1, III.B.1.a)

The current procedure for reporting and tracking incidents of disrepair or safety concerns to physical resources is not well defined or publicized. The Self Evaluation Report notes in part that, "...employees encountering any [problems] with facilities or physical resources are asked to send an email to [M&O]..." A review of the College Self Evaluation Report, interviews with key personnel, and a review of the evidence provided demonstrates the College recently implemented a data storage system called "School Dude" that allows for a systematic digital method of reporting issues of disrepair or hazards that are discovered to physical resources. This system is in the testing phase and is not currently well publicized and not commonly used as the primary method of submitting work orders. The current commonly used method of reporting such deficiencies include emails sent to the Maintenance employee directly. No follow up or tracking mechanism is currently in widespread use across the campuses or centers. The College's Self Evaluation Report calls for a plan to be developed to resolve this concern. However, there does not seem to be evidence that this process has yet been developed. (III.B.1.b)

The College continues to support long-range capital planning to support institutional improvements and goals that are outlined in the draft Facilities Master Plan, Strategic Plan, and multi-year Educational Master Plan, in support of student learning. Moreover, these plans, supported by a number of college committees, which comprise of members across the College community, effectively plan and utilize funds from the Measure G Bond initiative to accommodate future growth within the College. As mentioned above in Standard III.B.1.a, one area of improvement is needed relative to a priority list establishing an order in importance for all capital expenditures and physical resource allocations. (III.B.2)

The College has effectively integrated planning and fiscal resources, through an updated Educational Master Plan, that is supported by Program Reviews, Annual Unit Plans, and a draft Facilities Master Plan to ensure that the wide range of college assets are used to support student learning on a long-range basis. (III.B.2; III.B.2.a; III.B.2.b)

### **Conclusion:**

The main Indian Wells Valley campus, the Eastern Sierra College, Mammoth and South Kern Centers, and the Edwards Air Force Base and Kern River Valley campus provide students with a variety of instructional options including a well-established online option for

enrolling in classes. Facilities have been modernized, improved and augmented to enhance the physical learning environment.

The College partially meets this Standard.

**Recommendations:**

***College Recommendation #6***

*Resources – Physical Resources*

To fully meet the Standards, the team recommends the College develop and implement a process which allows the public, students, and employees to report safety conditions and other issues of disrepair to physical resources. Process should include tracking to ensure all necessary repairs are made promptly and follow up action is possible to assure that physical resources at all locations where it offers courses, programs, and services are constructed and maintained to assure access, safety, security and a healthful learning and working environment. (III.B.1.a, III.B.1.b)

## **STANDARD III**

### **Resources**

#### **C. Technology Resources**

##### **General Observation:**

Technology at the institution is managed by the Information Technology (IT) department. According to the department's current Annual Unit Report and information provided by employees during the site visit, the department consists of one new manager, four PC technicians, and two technical support specialists. This department provides support and training for the 240 faculty and staff computers along with the 453 student lab computers. The department, in collaboration with technology advisory committees such as the Technology Replacement Team, integrates planning and fiscal resource allocation into the implementation, maintenance, and replacement of all college technological resources.

Additionally, the College has satisfactorily addressed concerns made by the previous site visit team in all areas of technology resources. The College has prepared and published a flow chart that highlights the interaction of departments relative to planning, evaluation and resource allocation within the College. A newly prepared Technology Plan is currently available to guide planning and resource allocation in support of future plans for instructional, student services, and administrative functions across the College's sites and campuses.

The technologies network provides access to numerous technologies and applications to college constituents (faculty, staff, and students). In addition to the comprehensive Banner system, which is used for student records, registration, financial aid, human resources, budgeting, and purchasing, additional resources supported by the IT department include: media enhanced classrooms, smart classrooms, wireless (WiFi) access, multiple computer labs, email/Helpdesk services, Moodle (learning management system), Luminus portal, WebAdvisor (web self-services), the College website, and CurricUNET (curriculum development software).

The College uses Moodle as their Learning Management System (LMS) for all online classes. This LMS appears to meet the needs of the students and provides an environment that supports the stated SLOs for each class. Technical support for students and faculty is provided through the IT department employees. Additional Moodle guides and manuals are available online to assist those who wish to be "self-served" relative to LMS processes available for classes delivered through Distance Education.

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

The institution makes decisions regarding the use of technology services, facilities, hardware, and software by examining several areas: IT, Program Review, the Annual Unit Plan reporting process, the Strategic Master Plan and the Educational Master Plan. The College is currently evaluating the relevant data to determine the effectiveness of its online classes, to

determine what, if any, changes should be made to their current course offerings, through Distance Education, in support of effective student learning and the needs of the students. (III.C; III.C.1.a)

The College continues to provide sufficient opportunities for professional development in the area of technology. Two Technology Institute in-service days, covering a wide variety of technology topics, are offered annually for all faculty, classified staff, and administrators. To evaluate the effectiveness of the training, IT conducts post-class surveys that are completed at the end of the classes and workshops. The College, in its Self Evaluation Report, recognizes that the absence of assessing the employee surveys for the effectiveness of current professional development opportunities is currently a short coming of the faculty and staff development program and has identified improvements and a course of action that is designed to produce the desired outcomes in addressing this issue. (III.C.1.b)

During the student orientation process, student affairs employees train students in the use of WebAdvisor, a secure web application that allows the student to access college information and their person profile—part of their official records at the College. The training and support for students using Moodle (the College’s LMS) or other technologies on the College is effective and available 24/7 through online training modules as well as face-to-face training offered by Student services employees. (III.C.1.b)

Management and staff seemed commonly aware of the College’s ongoing budget for equipment replacement and upgrading technology. Moreover, the process for technology resource allocation is well defined and can be found in various documents, such as Program Reviews, Annual Unit reports, Facilities Prioritization List, and the Technology Priority Report. Future technology improvements are being planned for through the College planning process that includes the College’s Technology Resource Team, which informs the Resources Support Plan and the Annual Budget. The College maintains a technology replacement plan that seems complete and detailed in its scope and depth. However, the link between future needs, technology warranty program costs, and budgetary allocation, is not defined in a clear and consistent manner. The College recognizes this shortcoming and is currently addressing the issue through effective dialogue and planning at various levels of the College constituency. (III.C.1.c)

All campuses are directly supported by personnel from the IT department. These personnel are based at the main campuses. For urgent issues of IT support or hardware failure, assistance is provided promptly, either through phone/web contact, or a non-scheduled appearance by the necessary IT personnel. Computer upgrades and replacements at all sites occur on a regularly scheduled basis. The College’s Hardware Replacement Plan is an effective method of planning for necessary replacement of IT hardware on a scheduled basis allowing for systematic planning allowing for integration of fiscal resources with technology needs. (III.C.1.d)

As part of the program review and annual unit planning processes, technology planning is integrated with the institutional planning process and requests are generated at the unit level. Technology needs are identified and brought to the annual planning process where those

needs are prioritized. The prioritization of technology needs is based on identified student learning needs and institutional effectiveness. The planning process allows for evaluation of current processes and identifies needs for improvement with a link to resource allocation and added to the upcoming yearly budget. (III.C.2)

**Conclusion:**

There is an effective technology infrastructure at the College both in terms of personnel, software applications, and hardware. Bond funds in cooperation with general fund resources have been made available to build a dynamic array of technical support for academic programs and college operations. Technology resource planning has clear planning processes and is tied to college planning processes. There is evidence of clear goals, a timeline for evaluation, and continuous quality improvement. The IT department staff is knowledgeable and work well in supporting the technology and in the planning arena. There have been great improvements in the planning process for infrastructure, computing services and information, which have all contributed to increased benefits for students, faculty and administrators. To further support student learning and success, the team suggests the College develop a more clearly defined plan for total cost of ownership of technology infrastructure.

The College meets this Standard.

**Recommendations:**

None

## **STANDARD III**

### **Resources**

#### **D. Financial Resources**

##### **General Observations:**

The District and College take a conservative approach to budgeting and management of financial resources. Control of expenditures is strong and well managed. The finance team at the College and the District is professional, competent, and experienced.

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

Overall, a review of the audit statements confirms that the District's overall budget is being well managed. In spite of the difficult economic times, the conservative approach to expenditures has ensured that the reserves have grown from a fund balance of \$14.3 million in 2006 to \$34.7 million in 2011. This allows for the District to cover the \$13 million in state deferrals of apportionment. Although 2011 shows a loss of \$9.6 million, this primarily is a result of transferring in excess of \$10 million to the debt service fund to fund anticipated future COP payment obligations. A strong fund balance means the District has the finances necessary to both fund institutional improvements as well as protect the District from potential state future state cuts. Financial resources appear sufficient to ensure fiscal solvency. (III.D)

Review of the annual integrated planning cycle demonstrates that the mission statement is included in the planning process. The College report card tracks progress on such things as SLO assessment and annual unit plan completion. Board Policy 3A1 directs that "the annual budget shall support the District-wide master and educational plans". The College's annual unit plan template requires that resource requests be linked to the College strategic plan, program review, or SLO assessment gaps. (III.D.1.a)

The budget allocation model for the District, first developed in response to a 2006 recommendation, has been reviewed twice, and once since the Midterm Report. It contains evidence that after the Midterm Report was filed, a Budget Allocation Model Evaluation Committee was formed, met, and formulated nine issues for evaluation. Other multi-college districts were surveyed to inform the committee's work. Representation from Cerro Coso Community College was included on this committee. The evidence confirms that a second, thorough evaluation has occurred. The District charges each college for its centralized services, including child development centers. Ongoing fiscal costs are included in the District's budgeting process, such as long-term debt and OPEB obligations. At Cerro Coso Community College, annual unit plans inform non-labor, non-utility budget requests. New staffing position requests are also included. (III.D.1.b)

The District projects out multiple years to assist in long-range planning. The District budgets for long-term liabilities. For example, the audit statements show that a bond (\$84 million) has been taken out to fund OPEB liabilities and make budgeting for this major expense more

predictable. Numerous COPs have been taken out by the District, and the financial crisis in 2008 caused unpredictability in interest payments. The District has refunded these COPs to lock in interest costs and appears to be appropriately budgeting for COP payments. A COP payment schedule was provided. The District transferred an additional \$10+ million to support the \$42.9 million dollar COP payment due in 2014. The fiscal impact of salary adjustments and FTES projections in a multi-year format are part of the fiscal planning. One sentence in the self-study states that “The College is expected to budget for scheduled maintenance projects and contingencies.” This assertion was confirmed through the provision of a schedule of maintenance projects paid for by general unrestricted funds, and was provided for fiscal years 09/10 and 10/11 for approximately \$158,000 and \$283,000 respectively. (III.D.1.c)

The budgeting processes are made known to the College constituencies through Board Policy. Work sessions are performed with the Board prior to adopting annual budgets. Budget presentations are made to the board. Constituent groups have input District-wide through the Consultation Council. At the College, a budget development process is guided by a sub-committee of College Council called the Budget Development Committee, which has representatives from all employee groups. The committee’s role is outlined in the Participatory Governance Model manual. (III.D.1.d)

Policies exist which govern approval processes for financial transactions. Banner software supports the approval and reporting system. Budgets are developed in a timely manner, but little information is given about the process for the way in which allocations are made to support institutional improvement. The Standard requires evidence that funds are allocated to support college goals and student learning. A review of Annual Unit Plans reveals examples of resources being allocated to requests made in the plans, but it is unclear as to the way in which requests were prioritized. As well, not all areas of the College have participated in the new Annual Unit Plan process. Audit recommendations are implemented if they are “feasible, reasonable and cost effective.” The 2010-2011 audit reportedly had only minimal findings. After meeting with the Budget Development Committee and the College Council, it appears that the budget and budgeting process have credibility within the College. There was a sense of pride in regards to the collegiality between the constituency groups. (III.D.2.a, III.D.2.b)

Monthly financial reports are distributed to budget managers throughout the District. Categorical and grant program reports are regularly generated to track budget and compliance reporting dates. Regular budget reports are made to the board and multi-year budget projections are developed. The managers have access to financial information through the MIS system. The report notes that the College’s participatory governance process provides avenues for dissemination, but does not cite evidence. However, a review of minutes from the District Consultation Council and from Cerro Coso’s College Council meetings show budget updates occurring. Reports are also prepared for higher level managers. (III.D.2.c)

The external audits verify that federal programs and state programs are used with integrity in a manner consistent with the intended purposes. OPEB bond proceeds have been invested in

the JPA trust that is administered by the League of Community Colleges. The report coordinated at the District which is distributed to all grant and categorical project managers is a good tool to track external compliance reporting deadlines and is a good internal communication tool. The Cerro Coso Community College Foundation is an auxiliary organization. The District recently added a district-wide compliance officer position to assist grant directors in complying with fiscal monitoring, compliance and other administrative requirements. There is no indication in the recent audits of any problems with this Standard. (III.D.2.d, III.D.2.e)

The District has a goal of maintaining a district wide reserve of at least 10%. The District has strong reserves (over \$26 million at the end of 2010-11). This is enough to cover state deferrals of apportionment (around \$13 million) and leave more than a 10% contingency reserve. The District transferred an additional \$10 million to the debt service fund in 2010-11 to help plan for the long-term payments of the COPs. However, the Self Evaluation Report states that they anticipate drawing down reserves in the current year, stating that “a decision to use reserves was made for 2011-12.” The District and College should plan to address this budget situation. The District belongs to a JPA to manage risk. Because reserves are so large, no specific set-asides are built into budgets at the College or district level. \$70 million is set aside for COP and other debt payments by the District. A review of Cerro Coso’s recent financial reports shows that the College has ended the most recent fiscal year without deficit spending. (III.D.3.a)

Board approval is required for all contracts. Auxiliary organizations receive district financial services and audits of the Foundation were provided. The board is given reports on investments, many of which are investments of COP proceeds. The response does not address financial aid compliance reports and associated issues. In 2006 and 2010, there were findings in compliance reviews for financial aid. A copy of the 2010 response was provided stating that the College passed the audit. The audit was triggered due to an increase in the loan default rates. The College has opted out of the loan program. (III.D.3.b, III.D.3.f)

Appropriate financial information is provided throughout the institution. Audit statements are available for public review on the website. Monthly reports are distributed to all personnel responsible for managing resources. (III.D.3.c, III.D.3.h)

A copy of the latest actuarial study on OBEB liabilities was received and has been presented to the board. (III.D.3.d)

A review of the last five audit statements and the budget documents shows that the institution allocates resources for the repayment of any locally incurred debt instruments. (III.D.3.e)

Board Policy requires that all contracts must meet the public contact code requirements. An extensive contract database has been developed to help track and check items for contracts. Contracts are administered at the District level. The request for board action form helps ensure requests for board action on contracts are reviewed for appropriateness. A copy of the contract database was provided. (III.D.3.g)

The annual unit plans are the primary means of review and evaluation on planning and the use of financial resources to support planning at the College. Assessment/evaluation of the “new college-level planning process” that “was implemented during the 2011-12 year that incorporated a revised annual unit plan with requests for resources” was not formally conducted. Dialogue occurred in various participatory committees concerning any changes. A formal process has been used at the District level to assess the Budget Allocation Model. (III.D.4)

**Conclusion:**

Overall, fiscal management of the District, and hence Cerro Coso Community College, is conservative as evidenced by large reserves being built up in troubling economic times. Recent indications are that reserves are beginning to be used for operations and are projected to be needed in the next fiscal year. Overall, the District appears to be prepared for additional cuts from the state in the short term, but the longer term solutions are needed should this occur. This approach to fiscal management of the District and College protects the programs and services supporting student learning. One weak link in the integrated planning process should be addressed, namely that assessment/evaluation of the allocation of resources in the new college level planning process needs to be formalized and improvements from the assessment communicated to all constituent groups.

The College partially meets this Standard.

**Recommendations:**

*See College Recommendation #2, Improving Institutional Effectiveness*

## **STANDARD IV**

### **Leadership and Governance**

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

##### **General Observations:**

The College has responded to the 2006 Evaluation Report and developed and approved a governance model for decision-making and planning that considers all constituent groups. The 2010 Participatory Governance Model (PGM) identifies the College Council as the main governance body for the college. The document describes the role of College Council, its membership and constituent responsibilities, as well as the subcommittees their missions. It also states that the council and subcommittees must post minutes, agendas, and list of scheduled meetings on the internet/intranet to allow all campus members access to the information. Evidence was provided that validated that the council and subcommittees do post agendas and minutes on the College's intranet/internet.

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

The mission of the Kern Community College District is to provide outstanding educational programs and services that are responsive to their diverse students and communities. The College catalog informs the campus community, students, and general community the College's commitment to student learning, creativity, accountability, diversity, community partnerships, and to faculty and staff. It also provides the Strategic Goals, Vision, and Cerro Coso's College mission which is to: educate, innovate, inspire and to serve their clients. Two major documents: Elements of Decision Making and Participatory Governance Model (PGM) both describe the processes in making decisions and areas of responsibility. The College's Strategic Plan and the Educational Master Plan are developed by campus wide participation and ultimately determine the College budget. (IV.A)

Based on interviews from all constituent groups, there is a high level of satisfaction with the new Participatory Governance Model (PMG). There seems to be an understanding of the governance process. The College Council (CC) is the primary participatory governance body for the College. The council membership contains representation of the various groups within the campus community. The College president and Academic Senate president co-chair the council. The Academic Senate appoints five representatives and has formally identified having at least one faculty member that should be from either Eastern Sierra College Center (ESCC), South Kern/Kern River Valley (KRV). The directors from ESCC and KRV are official members of the council as well. The council conducts its meetings using video conferencing technology to facilitate attendance of all its members. The last Self Evaluation Report expressed concern that since the College has a large service area that not all campuses/centers of the College are able to participate in the dialogue of CC. The College has now satisfied this concern. (IV.A.1)

The College Council minutes, Academic Senate minutes, and subcommittee minutes discuss their connection to the College Council and their role within the governance model. The

PGM contains a flowchart for decision-making. The flowchart shows the six subcommittees of College Council (does not list the Institutional Effectiveness Committee) and the seven subcommittees of the Academic Senate. The flowchart also shows the other constituent groups' connection to College Council. The various levels of the administrative team are not only involved in the decision-making process of College Council, but also involved directly in providing information and recommendations to the College president. The PGM states that each representative is expected to keep their respected groups informed and is to provide feedback on policies/procedures, or matters of the CC. The College Council and its subcommittees maintain minutes in a College intranet/internet website that contains minutes, agendas, scheduled meeting times, and other general information, which provides documentation and information to the campus. This also affords those that are geographically unable to attend meetings to have input into the discussions and to keep up-to-date with information. Through the governance structure, annual unit reports, program reviews (if current) or SLO assessment data, and other data is connected to the Strategic Goals (not directly to the college mission) and are used for budget requests. The Self Evaluation Report identifies that the evaluation process to determine whether the College Council structure is effective has yet to be developed. The College has identified a plan to formalize the evaluation process. (IV.A.1)

The Strategic Plan is developed by college wide involvement, with representation from all areas. The 2010-2012 Strategic Plan identifies six goals, which were developed with consideration of the College mission, vision, and values statements. The College Strategic Plan is being revised to better link to the District Strategic Plan. It is through this plan that the Educational Master Plan and its annual updates drive the planning and budgeting process. The Annual Unit Plans require that requests and data be tied to the Strategic Goals. It also requires a review from the previous year data and an examination of both the Program Learning Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes or a Program Review Report. The College has responded to the previous visiting team's concern that the "decision making is not tied to planning, evaluation or improvement." The Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) evaluates all program reviews submitted for completeness and quality. Those that do not meet the defined rubric are returned to the faculty chair of the program for revision and again have the opportunity to resubmit. Once program reviews are approved by the IEC, they are then taken to the Academic Senate for finally approval. Approved program reviews may be used in the planning and budgeting process utilized by College Council. The campus constituents from all areas have an opportunity to be informed and involved in the information and recommendations sent to the College president. The Self Evaluation Report identifies that the evaluation process to determine whether the College Council structure and its subcommittee are effective has yet to be developed. (IV.A.2, IV.2.a)

The College developed and approved on June 10, 2010, the Participatory Governance Model document. The document states that there is a belief in the value of 'broad participation and involvement to college decision making by all members of the College.' The document defines the process and structure of participatory governance. It identifies the College Council as its primary body for setting the "Vision, mission, and long-term direction of the entire College." The role of the co-chairs and members are outlined with expected responsibilities. The membership includes all areas of the College, as well as the Associated

Student Body president and two Associated Student Body representatives and is co-chaired by the College president and Academic Senate president. The Self Evaluation Report did identify that a procedure for requesting student participation and a master calendar for maximizing participation for the council and subcommittees was needed. The document also describes the decision-making process, with a flowchart. While the Self Evaluation Report identifies the governance model being developed, it does not offer a self-evaluation in determining its effectiveness or satisfaction from the council members or campus community. For the district level, “The Elements of Decision-Making” describes the process for those areas that are considered district level. The newly established Consultation Council has representation from all three campuses and from all the various constituent groups. Board procedures outline the process for budgeting, with timelines and the role and progress for academic and professional matters of the Academic Senate. (IV.A.2, IV.A.2.a)

The Academic Senate’s role in governance is acknowledged in Board Procedures provided to faculty in Title 5. The Academic Senate represents all full-time and part-time faculty. The Academic Senate has six standing committees, whose membership is comprised of primarily faculty: Curriculum and Instructional Council; Equivalency Committee; Honors Committee; Calendar Committee; and Pedagogy and Technology Committee. There are also three standing committees whose membership includes both faculty and administration: Faculty Chair Committee; Career Technical Education Faculty Chair Committee; and Student Services Executive Council. The role of the Academic Senate is also affirmed in the “Participatory Governance Model” and in the “Elements of Decision-Making” documents. The Academic Senate president co-chairs College Council, along with the College president. Minutes of the Academic Senate and its standing committee reflect the work that is being charged to them and their responsibility for its work. The Curriculum and Instruction Council confirms the development and assessment of both Program Learning Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes. The faculty employs CurricUNET as a tool for housing CORs and assessment data. The institution relies on the recommendations of the Academic Senate for curriculum and student learning programs and services. (IV.A.2.b)

The District and College have established a governing process that ensures that all members of the District and College, along with the Board of Trustees, as well as the Student Trustee, are working collectively in addressing the goals and objectives of the District and College. The Academic Senate has specific areas of responsibility in ensuring students meet their educational goals and they are actively meeting that responsibility. Both at the District and College level, meetings are provided via live streaming video, to permit active participation of all representative members on councils, committees, subcommittees, or taskforces that are geographically too far to physically attend. Minutes are provided on the intranet or the campus website. Members of all the areas are required to report back to their various constituent groups for input and recommendations. Based on the interviews, evidence cited and offered in the Self Evaluation Report, active dialogue is occurring at College Council, the District Consultation Council, and each of their committees and subcommittees. There seems to be respect for each constituent’s role in ensuring the College sees improvements in all of its programs. The last evaluation team indicated that the work of the College does not end during the summer when faculty and other staff members are gone. The College now includes in the Participatory Governance Model, under “Meeting Schedule,” a statement that

indicates that summer meetings will be scheduled and held as needed. Summer meetings are determined by mutual agreement between the Senate president and College president. (IV.A.3)

The development of the 2012 Self Evaluation Report included all members of the campus constituents, including some community members. The Accreditation Steering Committee, which is a subcommittee of College Council, is charged to provide leadership in accreditation recommendations and reports. It determined early on to change the process that was used for the 2006 Self-Study, extending it beyond just the standard committee members to groups who had intimate knowledge of each of the standards. This process afforded more campus members to be involved in the research, writing, and review of the final Self Evaluation Report. It also provided the Chancellor and Board of Trustees subgroup an opportunity to review, before final adoption. Timelines were developed and adjusted when valid rationale was used, such as the hiring of the new Vice-President of Academic Affairs, who also is the Accreditation Liaison Officer. The College, upon receiving the letter from the Accrediting Commission, regarding being placed on Warning began to address each of the recommendations. The proactive work of the College resulted in the Commission removing the College from Warning after the submission of the Progress Report. In total, the College submitted the Progress Report, Midterm Report, with a Special Report, and a Substantive Change Report, and met all the required timelines. Based on the documentation reviewed and cited in the Self Evaluation Report, the College has also submitted and received approval from the Chancellor's Office for the Nursing, Administrative of Justice, Emergency Medical Technology, and Child Development Programs. (IV.A.4)

The College continues to use primarily an informal process for evaluating its governance and decision-making process. The 2006 evaluation team had identified that there, "was no evidence that the role of leadership and the institution's governance.....are regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness." This seems to continue to be true. The Participatory Governance Model document does not formally identify what the evaluation should be, or a specific time of when that process should occur. While the College has made updates to the budgeting process, a formalized evaluation for the governance and decision-making process is still lacking. The College Council did establish the Institutional Effectiveness Council (IEC) as a subcommittee, but has yet to incorporate the body into the overall College Council structure. Minutes from the IEC presented as evidence states that there seems to be confusion as to its role and who it reports to. The College has identified a plan to formalize the processes and structures for evaluation. (IV.A.5)

### **Conclusion:**

The District and College have actively considered the recommendations from the last Self Evaluation Report. They work together as a District and a campus to problem-solve and to determine how they can best develop a governance model for decision making that considers the major planning documents and data. Each area of the campus community develops specific unit plans, which then becomes the first draft of the annual update for the Educational Master Plan. The second level resource plans are used to build the budget and complete the Educational Master Plan. At this point, the cycle is reviewed by IEC and

determined if any revisions to the budgeting process are required. As indicated in the current Self Evaluation Report, a formal process of evaluation must be developed to assess the effectiveness of the governance and decision-making model.

The College partially meets this Standard.

**Recommendations:**

*See College Recommendation #2, Improving Institutional Effectiveness*

## **STANDARD IV**

### **Leadership and Governance**

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

##### **General Observations:**

Cerro Coso Community College gave evidence that it has the leadership and governance necessary to advance the mission and goals of the institution. Participatory processes are codified in the Elements of Decision Making manual, a District level document, and in the College's Participatory Governance Model (PGM) manual. The primary participatory governance group for the District is its Consultation Council and for the College is its College Council, with representatives from every constituency group. The College Council has a number of sub-committees and other participatory committees listed in the Participatory Governance Model including the Budget Development Committee, Facilities Committee, Technology Resource Team, Accreditation Steering Committee, and the Professional Development Committee. A new Institutional Effectiveness Committee has been established. Participatory constituencies on campus include Academic Senate, Administrative Cabinet, Student Senate and Classified Senate, and CSEA.

There has been some disruption in the College's integrated planning and resource allocation process, perhaps due to the significant administrative turnover the College has experienced. There is a new senior administrative team in place which, through various interviews and meetings during the team visit, appears to have renewed confidence and support of the various participatory constituencies described above. The overall climate which is being nurtured by the new president and vice presidents is providing hope that the increase in participation from the constituency groups in planning and communication efforts will lead to sustained improvements for student learning.

The District and College have clearly defined roles for leadership positions which are designed to ensure student learning programs and services are supported and improved. The governing board and the chancellor retain appropriate responsibility for decisions being made.

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

The District's governing board establishes policies which ensure educational quality as well as effectiveness of student learning programs and services. A review of board minutes demonstrates that updates do occur. There is, however, no systematic process found for regular review of board policies. The board has ensured the fiscal stability of the institution as demonstrated in the level of reserves carrying the District through difficult financial times and covering state deferrals of apportionment. The evaluation of the chancellor by the board occurs. (IV.B, IV.B.1)

Review of board actions, as seen in summary reports of actions from each meeting are on the District web site, confirms that the board acts as a whole, typically with unanimous

decisions. Board policy requires that board members sign conflict of interest statements. The Statement of Ethics includes the statement that board members are to take no action for personal gain. The ethics statement in Board Policy 2G includes the statement that the board members are to hold “the educational welfare of the students of the District as their primary concern.” (IV.B.1.a)

All of board policy and administrative procedures are available on the District website. The board has established in policy its vision, goals, and educational philosophy which support student learning. (IV.B.1.b)

Board Policy 2A1 and 2A2 demonstrate that the board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters and financial integrity of the District. Board actions are final and the ethics code includes a statement that individual board members uphold the final decisions of the board. Additionally, board policy contains a statement of good practice that the board “honestly debates the issues affecting its community and speaks with one (1) voice once a decision or policy is made.” (IV.B.1.c)

Board Policy 2B specifies the size of the board, and the appendix associated with this policy identifies when specific trustees terms are up for election. Board policy spells out the duties of officers concerning the management of the District, authority of the board, and operating procedures such as the definition of a quorum, how agenda items are added, and the regular meeting schedule. (IV.B.1.d)

Although there does not appear to be a written policy on review of board policies, a review of the summaries showing the actions taken at board meetings provides evidence that updates/changes/revisions to board policies do occur however, there is no evidence that reviews and updates take place on a regular basis. Minutes and action reports do indicate that the board acts consistently with its policies and bylaws. (IV.B.1.e)

The Self-Evaluation Report states that the chancellor and the board president are responsible for providing orientation to new trustees. An annual board retreat and encouragement for attendance at statewide workshops as well as regular “Work Study Sessions” are evident. There is no evidence that a formal Board Development program exists. (IV.B.1.f)

The board has a policy on self-evaluation (section 2E) and board agendas and minutes demonstrate that it has performed the evaluation on schedule, every two years, in 2007, 2009 and 2011. However, the Board needs to ensure that each of the minimum requirements for self-evaluation is part of the process. These include: having a clearly defined process in place, implementation of the process, and publishing the process in Board policy. (IV.B.1.g)

A Code of Ethics is contained in Board Policy 2G and identifies the way in which a behavior that violates the codes of ethics is to be handled. (IV.B.1.h)

The board was kept informed of accreditation processes as demonstrated in the minutes from October, 2011, April 2012, and by action taken at their August 2012 meeting to approve the self-study. (IV.B.1.i)

Board Policy 10A5 and 10A5B outline in detail the way in which the Board delegates administrative authority to the chancellor and to the College presidents. The chancellor's job description is additional evidence for this delegation. The chancellor is evaluated by the board and the chancellor evaluates the College presidents using the same instruments as for other managers and confidential employees as delineated in Board Policy 10E and Procedure 10E2 with the instrument used contained in Appendix 10E2. Board agenda and minutes from May 2011 demonstrate evaluation of the chancellor taking place. While the Chancellor receives annual feedback on performance there is no written evaluation of performance. (IV.B.1.j)

As described in the sections below, the president has the primary responsibility in ensuring the quality of the College. The president provides leadership in planning, hiring, budgeting for the College. Assessment of institutional effectiveness appears to be mainly done through dialogue in various participatory committees. A formal assessment of institutional effectiveness is lacking. (IV.B.2)

There is evidence of the resident providing leadership for evaluation of the organizational structure needed for staffing of the College. The president reorganized the administration, in a collaborative process, in 2011 which allows for better delegation of responsibilities. Evidence for the collaborative nature of this reorganization is found in minutes from College Council between September 2010 and February 2011. (IV.B.2.a)

Minutes and agendas of College Council meetings demonstrate an abundance of collegial discussion in workshops and regular meetings on topics such as participatory governance and College Council's role, reorganization, student learning, strategic planning and accreditation. In fall of 2010, collegial discussion on the Budget Allocation Evaluation Report demonstrates evaluation of the allocation of resources throughout the District and Cerro Coso's input into that evaluation. The president uses data and research in planning, examples of which are community focus groups and external and internal environmental scans in the Educational Master Plan. Annual Plans include links to improving student learning. One area of concern became apparent during the site visit which involves the need to establish formal assessment processes of institutional effectiveness and linking the results of the assessment to resource allocation and improvement of student learning. (IV.B.2.b)

Board policy outlines that the president is responsible for maintaining the policies, procedures, rules and regulations as set forth by the Chancellor, the Board of Trustees, CA Education Code and the general state and federal laws. (IV.B.2.c)

The College and District effectively control expenditures, as demonstrated by their budget allocation model and reviews of district audits since 2006. Sufficient reserves are in place to provide the time needed to adjust to any decreases in state funding. (IV.B.2.d)

The president works and communicates with the communities served by the College. The 2011 Report to the Community is a good example of a new communication tool to the communities served by the College. The president is also invested into the community through various activities such as Rotary, Chamber of Commerce and local museums. (IV.2.b.e)

As examined in detail under each section below, the District provides primary leadership in setting expectations for educational excellence and integrity. It provides appropriate operational support and coordination for the colleges. Board policy and job descriptions establish roles of authority and responsibility, especially as demonstrated in the Elements of Decision Making Handbook. The District serves as the liaison to the governing board for the College. (IV.B.3)

Written delineation of administrative responsibilities delegated to both the chancellor and the College presidents are contained in board policy. The chancellor's job description is additional evidence for this delegation, and the president's job description details the duties and roles of the president. The Elements of Decision Making handbook includes functional maps on the centralization and decentralization of offices district-wide. Cerro Coso's Participatory Governance Model manual also guides the processes used to make decisions at the college level. (IV.B.3.a)

Interviews of various Cerro Coso employees confirmed that, through their participation in district wide councils, there now is a general expectation of speaking up and asking for service when needed. Collaboration between the District and the College appears to be, in general, growing. (IV.B.3.b)

The District's budget allocation model has been revised twice since its inception. It provides adequate and fair distribution of resources in that it mimics the state wide allocation of resources to the entire CCC system in giving base allocations and funded FTES allocations to each college within the District. Charge backs are done for district services provided to the colleges. Colleges are expected to budget for scheduled maintenance needs. Cerro Coso Community College has included numerous repairs and facility upgrades in its general fund budget allocations. (IV.B.3.c)

Board Policy requires that the annual budget shall not exceed estimated revenues for the budget year excluding district wide or college reserves. Board policy does allow for the inclusion of a separate request to use district wide reserves. The District has sufficient controls in place for its expenditures. The board approves the budget allocation each year. The board decided in 2011 that the colleges would not be held harmless if their expenditures were higher than their allocations because the individual reserves held for each college are more than adequate to cover any anticipated losses. (IV.B.3.d)

Based on job descriptions of the Chancellor and College president, this Standard is met. Board policies also outline their respective duties and roles. The president is evaluated by the Chancellor. (IV.B.3.e)

Because of the size of the District, communication from the board is facilitated through live streaming on the internet. The Chancellor's Cabinet meets regularly. Some committees with representatives from all colleges, such as the Budget Allocation Model Development Committee, are formed for specific tasks. Other committees are standing committees, such

as the District Consultation Council, and demonstrate participation and communication throughout the District. (IV.B.3.f)

The Elements of Decision Making Handbook includes functional maps on the centralization and decentralization of offices district wide. This document was a revision of an earlier Process of Decision Making manual and is scheduled to be reviewed again in 2014. The Chancellor is responsible to lead this review process. (IV.B.3.g)

### **Conclusion:**

The College meets the standard which defines an environment of collaborative dialogue regarding decision making. There is a written Participatory Decision Making manual. The College is honest in, and shows integrity in its communications with the community and with external agencies.

The board has instituted and regularly performed a self-evaluation. There is a process for dealing with behavior that violates a code of ethics for governing board members. There is evidence that board policies are updated, but there is no evidence that it is done in a systematic and timely manner.

The chancellor and the College president have clearly defined roles for leading in the planning, budgeting and selection and development of personnel. The chancellor has assigned full responsibility and authority to the president for operation of the College. The president communicates with and is involved in the communities served by the institution. Budget and expenditures are controlled by the president and the District. The District provides distribution of resources through a fair allocation model that is adequate to support college operations and is periodically assessed and revised. The primary tool for roles being defined for governance and decision making structures and processes are found in the Elements of Decision Making manual which was last evaluated and revised in 2011.

To continue fostering a culture of evidence, the president should ensure that the new system of research supports the College's needs for informing improvements in student learning through the planning process. Further, there is a need to establish formal assessment processes of institutional effectiveness and linking the results of the assessment to resource allocation and improvement of student learning

The College meets those parts of this Standard for which it has control; however, the District only partially meets this Standard.

### **Recommendations:**

#### ***District Recommendation #1***

##### *Review and Update Board Policies on a Periodic Basis*

In order to comply with the Standards, the team recommends that the Board of Trustees establish a process to ensure that the Board's policies and procedures are evaluated on a regular basis and revised as appropriate. (IV.B.1.e)

***District Recommendation #2***

*Board Member Development Program*

In order to comply with the Standards, the team recommends that the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the Chancellor, develop and implement a development program that meets the needs of the newer board members as well as board members who have a considerable amount of experience as a governing board member. (IV.B.1.f)

***District Recommendation #3***

*Evaluate the Board of Trustees Self Evaluation Process*

In order to comply with the Standards, the team recommends that the Board of Trustees review the elements of its Self-Evaluation Process and ensure that the Standards' minimum requirements for a Self-Evaluation Process which are: 1) have clearly defined processes in place, 2) have processes implemented, and 3) have processes published in the Board's policy manual are included in the Self-Evaluation Process. The Board's policy 2E2 prescribes additional requirements when conducting the Board's Self-Evaluation. (IV.B.1.g)

***District Recommendation #4***

*Evaluation of Role Delineation and Decision Making Processes for Effectiveness*

In order to comply with the Standards, the team recommends the District conduct an evaluation of the new decision-making processes and evaluate how effective the new processes are in making decisions and in communicating the decisions to affected users. (IV.B.3.g)