

EVALUATION REPORT

Foothill College
12345 El Monte Road
Los Altos Hills, CA 94022-4599

A confidential report prepared for
The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited
Foothill College October 23 - 27, 2011

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**Ms. Drummond contributed significantly to the evaluation, but was unable to attend the October 24-27, 2011, site visit due to an emergency.*

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

INSTITUTION: Foothill-De Anza Community College District
DATES OF VISIT: October 24 – 27, 2011
TEAM CHAIR: Dr. Cindy L. Miles, Chancellor, Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District

A 12-member accreditation team visited Foothill College from October 23- 27, 2011, for the purpose of evaluating how well the institution is achieving its stated purposes, analyzing how well the College is meeting the Commission Eligibility Requirements and Standards, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement, and submitting recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) regarding the status of the College.

In preparation for the visit, team members attended an all-day training session on September 14, 2011, conducted by the ACCJC and studied materials prepared for visiting teams. The team chair and assistant conducted pre-visit meetings with the Foothill-De Anza Community College District Chancellor, Foothill College President, and Accreditation Evaluation Team Lead on September 15-16, 2011, to clarify expectations and assure that all arrangements for the visit were in good order.

Prior to the visit, team members reviewed the *Institutional Self Study for Reaffirmation of Accreditation* completed by the college on July 11, 2011, as well as recommendations from the October 2005 Comprehensive Evaluation, Midterm and Follow-Up Reports. They reviewed institutional policies and procedures, records, reports, board and committee meeting minutes, and other supporting documents. Team members completed written evaluations of the Self Study Report and identified areas for further review.

On October 24, 2011, the team convened to discuss their views of the report and evidence provided by the college and to finalize meetings and activities for the week. The full team participated in a tour of Foothill College and a welcome reception with college and district leaders, accreditation steering committee members, and members of the Board of Trustees.

During the four-day visit, the team held 46 meetings with more than 150 faculty, staff, college and district administrators, trustees, community representatives, and students. Team members viewed academic and student support facilities, observed classroom and online instruction, and visited the Middlefield campus and the Krause Center for Innovation, which provides technology-focused professional development for educators and community members. More than 40 individuals attended two open meetings, which allowed comment from any member of the campus or local community. The team coordinated its observations and findings on district matters with the team concurrently visiting De Anza College.

Overall, the team found the Self Study Report to be well written and organized, with an attractive and accessible layout. The report appropriately addressed the 2005 evaluation recommendations, Eligibility Requirements, and current Accreditation Standards. In several

sections, however, the report lacked adequate evidentiary support to demonstrate compliance with Accreditation Standards, and some online links to evidence documents were found to be broken or inaccurate. Nevertheless, college and district staff members were highly responsive to requests for missing or additional information, interviews, and follow-up conversations. The team's workroom was well equipped with excellent technology support and workspaces.

The current Foothill College accreditation self-study process was initiated with awareness building and planning activities August 2008 to January 2010. In February 2010, a new accreditation liaison officer was appointed and the Self Study Steering Committee began meeting. More than 70 employees participated on various self-study teams.

Despite significant budget pressure, leadership changes, and major institutional transformations since its last comprehensive evaluation, the visiting team found the college healthy, resilient, and steadfastly focused on building on its legacy of quality and innovation. Clearly, the college has made extraordinary effort in this transformative period toward meeting student learning outcomes (SLO), program review, and integrated planning standards, and in engaging the institution in dialogue regarding data-informed improvement.

The team greatly appreciates the cooperative support provided by college and district staff throughout the visit. Requests were met quickly, and employees were open and candid in their responses to team members' questions. Overall, the college and district were well prepared for the team's visit.

2011 Commendations

Members of the visiting team were impressed by Foothill College and its earnest, broad-based engagement in the accreditation process and cooperation with visiting team members and identified several areas calling for special recognition:

1. The college and district are well served by an exemplary board of trustees. The dedication of the board of trustees is remarkable, as is their vision and leadership in assuring high quality education and responsiveness to student and community needs. Board members are well informed, and their openness to discussing matters that impact student learning and institutional success is commendable.
2. The college is commended for its ongoing efforts to improve its collective decision making processes. The college's dedication to improvement is reflected in its creative new integrated planning and budget model centered on student learning and its efforts to streamline and clarify the new system, which, although not fully implemented, shows great promise.
3. The college is commended for its commitment to innovative partnerships that lead to strong community involvement, recognition, and support for the many high quality and innovative programs it produces.
4. The college and district are commended for embodying their institutional value of environmental sustainability through numerous commitments and actions promoting conservation and stewardship of resources, ranging from board policies, major energy

saving projects, sustainable building designs, student- and employee-led initiatives, and rich curricular and co-curricular endeavors.

5. The college is commended for the high quality of its student body and student organizations. Student leaders are dedicated, professional, and actively engage in participatory governance processes to improve campus life and the learning experience for all students.

2011 Recommendations

The team offers four recommendations for ongoing institutional improvement in light of the ACCJC Standards.

Recommendation 1: Institutionalize Integrated Planning

To fully meet the Standards, the team recommends that the college institutionalize its new integrated planning model through a systematic cycle of evaluation, planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation. Evaluations should be informed by quantitative and qualitative data analysis in both instructional and non-instructional areas. Particular attention should be paid to communication and dialogue about both the process and its results throughout the college. (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, IV.A.3, IV.A.5)

Recommendation 2: Student Learning Outcomes

In order to meet the Commission's 2012 expectation for meeting student learning outcomes Standards that require the identification and assessment of appropriate and sufficient student learning outcomes, and the use of assessment data to plan and implement improvements to educational quality, the team recommends that the college accelerate the assessment of program-level student learning outcomes, service area outcomes, and administrative unit outcomes, and use the results to make improvements. (II.A.1.c, II.A.2.e, II.B.4, II.C.2)

Recommendation 3: Comparable Support Services

To fully meet the Standard, the college must ensure equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable student and learning support services regardless of location or delivery method. (II.B.3, II.B.3.a, II.B.4, II.C.1.c)

Recommendation 4: SLOs and Faculty Evaluation

In order to meet the Commission's 2012 expectation for meeting student learning outcomes Standards, the team recommends that the college and the faculty association work together to incorporate student learning outcomes into the faculty evaluation process. (III.A.1.c)

ACCREDITATION EVALUATION REPORT FOR Foothill COLLEGE

Introduction

Foothill College is a comprehensive public California community college that is one of the two colleges in the Foothill-De Anza (FHDA) Community College District. FHDA serves a metropolitan area of more than 1.7 million people in Northern California's Silicon Valley. The district was established in 1957, and the Foothill College campus in Los Altos Hills was completed and opened to students in September 1961. In 1967, the district opened its second campus, De Anza College, in Cupertino.

Foothill College serves the Santa Clara County communities of Palo Alto, Stanford, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, and Mountain View. The main campus occupies 122 acres in Los Altos Hills and is recognized for its Pacific-style architecture and park-like setting. Foothill College offers 133 degrees and certificates that support the core mission statement of basic skills, career preparation, lifelong learning, and transfer. This fall 2011, approximately 16,500 students are enrolled in day, evening, online, and face-to-face classes at the main campus and the college's more than 50 community and industry sites.

The college's primary satellite center is the Middlefield campus, serving approximately 4,000 students at its Cubberley Community Center location in Palo Alto. It is a full-service campus with student services, admissions, student activities, bookstore and labs. Middlefield campus offers general education, transfer, and vocational courses, as well as all noncredit courses. FHDA leases space for Middlefield campus from the City of Palo Alto and is seeking a site to purchase to expand and upgrade services.

Significant improvements to Foothill College facilities and technology systems have continued since the last comprehensive evaluation. In 2006, district voters approved passage of Measure C for a \$490.8 million bond (\$190 million allocated to Foothill). Nearly all of Foothill College's original classroom buildings, constructed in 1962, have been renovated and upgraded with state-of-the-art multimedia equipment. A comprehensive upgrade of aging technology systems across the district to new *Banner* modules for student, finance, human resources, and instruction was completed fall 2010, with degree audit and foundation system upgrades in progress. Improvements to make facilities more accessible and welcoming and to conserve energy and natural resources have been completed throughout the campus.

Major trends affecting the college since its last comprehensive accreditation evaluation include internal and external developments:

- Significant turnover of college and district administrators:
 - Foothill College: three permanent or interim presidents; 14 individuals in the four vice president positions, new deans in nine of the 12 dean positions
 - FHDA District: new chancellor and four new vice chancellors
- Four consecutive years of state budget cuts
- Fluctuations in enrollments, service area population and demographics

Among the many milestones Foothill College has achieved since its 2005 accreditation review are the following:

- Celebration of its 50th anniversary
- Opening of the first new buildings since the original campus opened in 1961
- Welcoming the 6th Foothill College president
- Numerous recognitions and awards for Foothill faculty, leaders, and programs
- New mission statement
- New integrated budget, planning, and governance structure
- New program review and SLO approaches
- Renewed focus on transfer preparation, basic skills and work force education

In the face of these significant challenges and changes, Foothill College remains a strong, committed institution marked by faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees dedicated to fulfilling its mission of serving its community and promoting student learning and success.

Responses to Recommendations of the Previous Evaluation

The accreditation evaluation team confirmed that Foothill College appropriately addressed the recommendations and requests for additional reports made in 2005 through 2010, including a Focused Midterm Report (October 2008), Follow-Up Report (October 2009), and Second Follow-Up Report (2010).

Overall, the team found evidence of the institution's ongoing work to meet previous recommendations to be in place. One lingering area of concern – though not a compliance requirement at this time—is conclusive evidence of the college's capacity to meet the 2012 SLO standards at the proficiency level related to the 2005 Recommendation 4. The college has made significant effort and progress toward SLO proficiency, and included two planning agendas devoted to this goal in its Self Study Report. This concern generated a new recommendation from the team in this evaluation related to accelerating SLO implementation to reach the level of proficiency by fall 2012.

2005 Recommendation 1:

“In order to fully meet the standard, the team recommends that the institution revise its mission statement to include its intended student population.” (Standard I.A)

This recommendation has been met. Since the 2005 evaluation, the college has reviewed and revised its mission statement twice. An initial review in 2006-2007 resulted in a published update that identified the mission along with vision, values and purpose and provided better clarity describing the college's intended student population.

In 2008, following the arrival of the new president, a new dialogue regarding mission, vision, goals, planning, and resource allocation led to revised a governance structure, and, ultimately, to a new mission statement adopted by the College Roundtable in June 2009, and approved by the district Board of Trustees in June 2010. The college's new governance group now undertakes an annual review of its mission statement, with a comprehensive college review and re-adoption of the mission statement every three years. The next thorough review is scheduled for 2012.

2005 Recommendation 2

“In order to assure the continued effectiveness of its ongoing planning and resource allocation processes, the College should establish clear written policies and procedures that demonstrate and formalize the flow of its planning protocol. Furthermore, these written policies should delineate the roles and responsibilities of the various College planning groups.” (Standard I.B.6)

This recommendation has been met. Since receiving this recommendation, the College has given serious focus to its planning and resource allocation model. In 2008, the new president and leadership team engaged a broad spectrum of the College community to review and recommend a more transparent and effective integrated planning model. The new integrated

planning and budget structure was adopted fall 2009, evaluated and revised in spring/summer 2010, and has been used for one full academic year at the time of this visit.

Evidence from work of the Educational and Strategic Master Planning (ESMP) and the Integrated Planning & Budget (IP&B) Task Forces indicates commendable achievements in developing, implementing, reviewing, modifying, and communicating this new integrated planning and decision-making process. The new process connects resource requests to program review data and moves through representative strategic initiative-based groups to a new overarching college participatory governance body, the Planning and Resource Council (PaRC), which makes resource and planning recommendations to the College president.

The new process and roles of all constituent groups in planning and budget decisions are delineated in the *Integrated Planning & Budgeting Governance Handbook*, approved spring 2010. The new model is integrated into the *Educational and Strategic Master Plan* (version 2.0) and is available on the college website and disseminated through numerous communications and meetings with constituent groups. The new structure is slated for annual review, with the next evaluation scheduled for summer 2012.

Recommendation 3:

“In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that to increase program effectiveness, the College undertake a detailed evaluation for all programs in student support and other non-instructional areas.” (Standard I.B.7)

Response

This recommendation has been met. The College has taken substantial steps to increase program effectiveness for all programs in student support and other non-instructional areas through new program review processes. Since the last visit, student support and other non-instructional areas embarked upon a comprehensive program review process in 2006, when it was under a three-year cycle, and again on an annual program review cycle in 2009-2010, with a limited number conducted in 2010-2011. Results of the latter two reviews are posted on the College website. A significant element of the new evaluation process is incorporation of a student survey that measures student awareness, utilization, and satisfaction, in addition to evaluation and reflection involving departmental faculty and staff. The team found evidence that the new annual program review model is considered to be more meaningful and inclusive and is being used to inform resource allocation and program improvements.

Recommendation 4

“The team recommends that all instructional and non-instructional areas inclusive of student services and other administrative service areas further develop well defined and measureable student learning outcomes and evaluate these outcomes to increase effectiveness.” (Standard II.A.2.a)

This recommendation has been partially met. The College responded to this recommendation in both the Focused Midterm Report and two Follow-Up Reports to the Commission, which detail progress in meeting this standard. The Commission notified the College that it expected to see continued and sustained effort in this area, while noting

“extraordinary effort toward developing and assessing [learning outcomes] on a continuous and sustainable cycle.”

Since the last visit, the progress made in the area of learning outcomes in both instructional and non-instructional areas is significant, particularly in the development of measureable outcomes statements. In the past five years, the college community has made a determined effort to establish a comprehensive cycle of inquiry and assessment in its teaching and learning environment, focused on continuous improvement.

The college employs the use of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in instruction, Service Area Outcomes (SAOs) in Student Services, and Administrative Unit Outcomes (AUOs) in Administrative Services. Additionally, the College has established institutional core learning outcomes, or the “4-Cs,” of communication; computation; creative, critical, and analytical thinking; and community/global consciousness and responsibility. All outcomes across the divisions are aligned with one or more of the 4-Cs, with the outcomes statements and alignments being highly visible on the College’s website.

A number of areas have completed a full cycle of evaluation, and there is evidence that results are used to inform improvements and resource allocation. However, the team notes that assessments are still being put into place and linked to decision making in a number of areas, including those at the program level in instruction (scheduled to be assessed this fall 2011) and those in some library and student support services areas. With the broad engagement of all college constituents, coupled with the use of new TracDat software implemented this fall, the team has high expectations that the College will continue its good progress in outcomes assessment to meet the fall 2012 deadline for proficiency.

Commission Action Letter Recommendation (January 2006)

“The commission recommends that the district develop and implement a plan to address the unfunded postretirement liability.” (Standard III.D.2.c)

This recommendation has been met. The team found the district to be fully compliant with GASB 45, having helped to form a statewide community college retiree benefits irrevocable trust through the Community College League of California in the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

Beginning in 2009-10, the district transferred its funds to the CalPERS California Employers Retiree Benefit Trust. The district has adopted a pay-as-you-go approach to addressing its unfunded postretirement liability by using general fund dollars to pay each current year’s costs for retiree health benefits (approximately \$7.6 million for 2009-10). The annual required contribution (ARC) to the trust, which is actuarially derived, is dependent on the district continuing to cover the expenses using the pay-as-you-go method for approximately the next 30 years. The district’s current liability is approximately \$110 million. The district has fully funded the ARC since the inception of the program.

Eligibility Requirements

The team found Foothill College to be in compliance with all of the eligibility requirements established by the ACCJC.

- 1. Authority:** The evaluation team confirmed that Foothill College is authorized to operate as an institution of higher education and to award degrees by the State of California, the Board of Governors of California Community Colleges, and the Board of Trustees of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District. The College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.
- 2. Mission:** The team confirmed that the college's mission is comprehensive and clearly defined. The Foothill-De Anza Community College Board of Trustees adopted a revised mission statement for Foothill College in June 2010. The mission statement is published in the college catalog, the schedule, on the college website, and various other publications. It defines the college's commitment to achieving student learning.
- 3. Governing Board:** The team verified that the Foothill-De Anza Community College District has a functioning, seven-member board of trustees. Five elected members serve staggered four-year elected terms; one student trustee is elected annually in May by the student body of each college. District policies and procedures establish the governing board as an independent policy-making body responsible for ensuring the fiscal stability and fulfillment of the mission of the district and its colleges.
- 4. Chief Executive Officer:** Foothill College has a full-time president who is selected by the board of trustees and has the requisite authority to administer board policies.
- 5. Administrative Capacity:** The team confirmed that the college has sufficient staff to provide necessary administrative services. It noted that the college has experienced high turnover in top administrative positions recently, which has generated some concern, but all key positions were found to be filled with qualified personnel.
- 6. Operational Status:** The team confirmed the college to be operational with more than 16,000 students actively enrolled in and pursuing a range of credit and noncredit, day, evening, distance, and on-site educational programs.
- 7. Degrees:** The team found that Foothill College offers 133 degrees and certificates that support the core mission statement of basic skills, career preparation, lifelong learning and transfer. The majority of the institution's educational offerings apply to these degrees or certificates.
- 8. Educational Programs:** The team confirmed the institution's principal degree programs to be congruent with its mission, based on recognized higher education fields of study, and sufficient in content and length. The team noted that the college had recently gone to great lengths to revise its mission statement and to assure that programs meet the mission.

- 9. Academic Credit:** The team found that the college awards academic credit based on generally accepted practices and state regulations. Units of credit are awarded per course consistent with the traditional Carnegie Unit and state regulations requiring community colleges on the quarter system to award one unit of credit for every 33 hours of student work. The college catalog and course schedule clearly specify the credits awarded for each course. The course outline of record for each course contains specific standards for awarding credit based on content, methods of instruction, and student learning outcomes.
- 10. Student Learning Achievement:** The team found that the college has defined expected learning and achievement outcomes for each of the programs and degrees it offers. The catalog lists requirements for every degree and certificate offered by the college. Student learning outcomes are defined for all courses, programs, and degrees (institutional level), and these outcomes align as they enter the assessment cycle. Course level learning outcomes are published on all course outlines. Assessment of student achievement occurs at institutional, program, and course levels.
- 11. General Education:** The team verified that all degree programs at the college, including the newer AA-T or AA-S transfer degrees, include both a General Education requirement and at least 27 units of study in a focused major.
- 12. Academic Freedom:** The team certified that the district has clear policies that protect faculty members' and students' right to free speech and intellectual freedom.
- 13. Faculty:** The team found that the institution has a substantial and sufficient core of full-time faculty (202 full-time and 358 part-time faculty members, as of fall 2011). Clear statements of faculty responsibilities regarding development and review of curriculum and assessment of learning are noted in Academic Senate Resolutions and the faculty collective bargaining agreement; however, faculty evaluations do not yet include a component on student attainment of intended student learning outcomes.
- 14. Student Services:** The team confirmed that Foothill College provides a comprehensive array of services that support student learning and development and are consistent with the student population and mission of the college. Major student services areas include admissions and records, bookstore, financial aid, counseling, matriculation, career and transfer centers, health services, outreach and retention, testing, tutoring, and student success services. The college also has numerous special programs such as CalWORKS, disability resources, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, student clubs, student government, service learning, intramural recreation, and support centers for veterans and international students.
- 15. Admissions:** The team confirms that the college conforms to the district's open-access admissions policy, which complies with the institutional mission and California laws and regulations. The admission policy is described in the college catalog and on its website.
- 16. Information and Learning Resources:** The team found the college's information and learning resources sufficient to support its mission and instructional programs. These

resources and services are provided through the Learning Resource Center, which includes the library, Media Center, and Tutorial Center, as well as through extensive electronic databases, reference materials, and eBooks available online. Recent budget constraints were noted to reduce the purchase of books and database subscriptions, but resources were found to be adequate.

- 17. Financial Resources:** The team confirmed that the district and college maintain an adequate funding base, financial resources, and plans for financial development adequate to support student learning programs and services despite recent state budgetary challenges. The district maintains the required five percent contingency reserve.
- 18. Financial Accountability:** The team verified that the institution demonstrates financial accountability through the findings of an annual financial audit conducted by an independent auditing firm, which are reviewed by the board of trustees in public session. These audits cover all funds of the district, including general, special, financial aid, bond, auxiliary, categorical and foundation funds. The team noted that the college and district have had excellent financial audit reports since the last accreditation visit.
- 19. Institutional Planning:** The team verified that the college undertakes a comprehensive annual planning and evaluation process, publicizes the results, and provides evidence of how the findings lead to improvement. With its new integrated planning, budget, and governance model, the college demonstrates its commitment to engaging all constituent groups in the systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation.
- 20. Public Information:** The team certified that the Foothill College catalog contains all of the requisite information and is available to the public in print and online.
- 21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission:** The team confirmed that the institution provides written assurance that it adheres to the eligibility requirements, standards, and policies of the ACCJC. In recent years the college has complied with all Commission requests for Follow-Up Reports and has submitted substantive change requests regarding distance education as required by Commission policies.

STANDARD I

Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

I.A. Mission

General Observations

The Foothill College mission statement defines its broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning. The mission guides the college's three-part integrated planning process:

- ▶ three core missions of basic skills, transfer, and workforce inform the educational and strategic master plan (ESMP)
- ▶ a fourth core mission of stewardship of resources contributes to budget and funding considerations
- ▶ departmental program reviews and the student learning outcomes and assessment cycle (SLOAC) support improvement of academic programs and services.

The Planning and Resource Council (PaRC) is the participatory governance group that oversees the annual collegewide affirmation, the annual affirmation of the mission statement, and the three-year, detailed review of the college mission.

Findings and Evidence

Foothill College's mission statement defines basic skills, transfer, and workforce as the three broad educational areas offered to its students. Though it refers to "all of our students," the revised mission statement does not explicitly name the student population. However, the college uses data from various sources to define the student populations, align the mission for serving those populations, and assess learning for continuous improvement. (I.A.1)

The college's response to the 2005 recommendation to "revise its mission statement to include its intended student population" was multifold. An initial review in 2006-2007 yielded a clarified statement of the mission in terms of the institution's vision, values, and purpose. In 2008, following arrival of the new president, broader dialogue regarding institutional mission and focus led to formation of the Educational & Strategic Master Planning (ESMP) Task Force, which was charged with leading revision of the mission statement in terms of student learning during 2009-2010, the first year of implementing the new governance process. (I.A, I.A.3)

These discussions led to a revision designed to align decision-making more directly with both the college mission and a streamlined program review process supporting student learning. The *Integrated Planning and Budgeting Governance Handbook* specifies that resource allocations for programs, initiatives, faculty, or staff positions will be considered only if the proposed expenditure has a plan that is aligned with the college mission (I.A.4)

Crucial in assuring this alignment are the four core mission groups – transfer, basic skills, workforce, and PaRC's Operations Planning Committee, which serve as, "the channel

between broad, institutional goals derived from the mission and the outcomes and purposes of the departments their members represent.” Although meeting notes and interviews confirm that PaRC has responsibility for the annual affirmation and the three-year review of the mission statement, the team noted that the list of PaRC roles in the *Foothill College Governance Handbook* (pg11) does not include mission review.

The board of trustees approved the mission statement in June 21, 2010. It is published in the college catalog and website and is posted throughout the campus. (I.A.2)

Conclusions

The mission statement is central to institutional planning and decision-making. The Planning and Resource Council is responsible for reviewing and revising the mission statement.

Recommendations

None.

I.B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

General Observations

Spurred by previous accreditation recommendations, the institution has undertaken major institutional dialogue about self-evaluation and institutional effectiveness centered on its mission, planning and budgeting planning process, governance structure, and student learning outcomes assessment system. These have resulted in a creative and comprehensive integrated planning and allocation process that incorporates assessment data, including that from SLOs to inform planning, resources request and prioritization, and implementation. Overall, the new planning process seems to be systemic and inclusive of constituency groups.

Additionally, the college has been commendably responsive to evaluate data and input, which has led to repeated modifications in both procedures and processes. As is common with any new process, consistency and communication remain challenges.

Findings and Evidence

The team found evidence that collegewide efforts to develop an integrated planning model linking program review and resource allocation have been considerable. This work has increased SLO and program review assessment at all levels, and refocused campus discussions about how and why decisions are made. (I.B.1, I.B.2)

The annual program review process incorporates SLOs and additional student achievement data to guide reflection and development of proposed improvements. The program review provides for a formalized reflection and planning system for both instructional and non-instructional programs. Program reviews are used to develop proposals that are considered at the core groups or are fed into prioritization plans generated at the division level. Still, the visiting team found gaps in understanding of the new processes and corresponding inconsistencies in prioritization of program reviews at the division-level (I.B.2, I.B.4)

The 2011 revised Educational and Strategic Master Plan (ESMP) established goals aligned with core elements of the college mission statement. The goals are sound, clearly articulated, and associated with appropriate metrics and have been widely distributed and presented at multiple forums. Since the goals are newly established, a full iteration of the continuous improvement cycle has yet to be completed. As such, at the time of the visit there was not yet adequate evidence as to the level of understanding or achievement of the stated goals. (I.B.2, I.B.3)

Although the institution is at the early stages of implementing its new planning and allocation model, there seems to be wide understanding and support of the basic elements of the process, particularly the shared governance structure. Feedback from site visit interviews was uniformly positive regarding the new decision-making process. Notably, classified staff and students were found to have greater involvement in both revising and implementing the new planning and allocation process. (I.B.4)

Data is infused into the planning process at multiple phases. Evidence indicates that data is provided at the planning and evaluation phases of the improvement cycle. Some areas of weakness include: limited use of both long-term data in program reviews and qualitative data for evaluation and program improvement. These gaps have been due in large part to a high turnover in research professionals. The newly-hired college researcher has begun to address these shortcomings. (I.B.3)

The planning process has multiple opportunities for input by multiple constituencies. Notably, students are actively involved in both the collection and sharing of student input, as well as in the decision-making process. As evidenced by meeting minutes, other constituencies are also well represented at all the stages of the planning and allocation process (I.B.4).

As evidenced by reports and the SLO assessment results, the college uses and shares course-level assessment data in regards to program quality. With the hiring of a new researcher and the further solidifying of the new quality improvement model, it is expected that data will be increasingly developed and shared. Currently, the College does not, but should assess whether it is effectively communicating information about instructional quality to the public (I.B.5).

The team found ample evidence that the College has an active and reflective approach to evaluating its planning processes. Meeting minutes and site visit interviews confirmed that the Integrated Planning and Budget (IP&B) Task Force has directed systematic evaluation and improvements to its processes. Moreover, IP&B has been responsive to issues as they arise. The team noted inconsistencies in full implementation of the new system, but this group seems to be both aware of these issues and thoughtful about solutions (I.B.6).

The institution has repeatedly assessed its evaluation mechanisms through a systematic review, as evidenced by survey results and meeting notes. As described above, the IP&B has led these evaluative efforts. As the processes have recently changed, there is not a complete understanding of how these modifications have positively affected student improvement. (I.B.7)

Conclusion

The college's re-energizing of the SLO system and re-working of the integrated planning process and shared governance structure has been significant. Establishment of core working groups seems to be providing important forums for dialogue, planning, and evaluation. Since this work is at its early stages, the effects of this work are largely unrealized. An active and responsive task force has led the evaluation and improvements of this effort. Nevertheless, the college has not enough time with the implementation cycle for this new system to thoroughly prove its effectiveness and sustainability.

The team has high expectations for success of this new system, but, as is reflected in the college's own planning agenda, it feels the college has not had ample time with the implementation cycle for this new system to thoroughly prove its effectiveness and sustainability. In addition, the revised planning process seems sound, but there is a need for more communication regarding certain phases of the process, particularly since several features of the process are developing. The core workgroups seem to be operating with different structures, funding resources, and prioritization processes, which suggest the need to intentionally communicate the respective processes to the college community.

Annual program review is a key element in the new integrated planning process, and great work has been done to strengthen and systematize the program, but the team found varying degrees of completion of annual program reviews. This variability in the completion of the program reviews along with the need for a more systematic and cross-disciplinary examination of the submissions, suggests the need for the establishment of an evaluative body and potentially a modification in review cycle. The need for a systematic program review body was identified in both the Self Study and through interviews with college personnel.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

To fully meet the Standards, the team recommends that the college institutionalize its new integrated planning model through a systematic cycle of evaluation, planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation. Evaluations should be informed by quantitative and qualitative data analysis in both instructional and non-instructional areas. Particular attention should be paid to communication and dialogue about both the process and its results throughout the college. (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, IV.A.3, IV.A.5)

STANDARD II

Student Learning Programs and Service

A. Instructional Programs

General Observations

Foothill College offers 133 degrees and certificates that support the core mission statement of basic skills, career preparation, lifelong learning, and transfer. The college's comprehensive educational offerings are available at the Foothill main campus in Los Altos Hills, the Middlefield campus in Palo Alto, and via distance learning through its Foothill Global Access program. Targeted programs are offered at more than 50 area high schools and industry sites.

A new Noncredit Division, launched in 2008, is headquartered at the Middlefield campus and provides growing offerings in adult basic skills, English as a second language, parenting education, courses for students with disabilities, and short-term vocational education. In addition, Middlefield campus serves as headquarters for the college's child development, paramedic, emergency medical technician and pharmacy technician programs.

Foothill College is noted for innovation, especially in its use of technology. New smart classrooms have been installed at both the Foothill and Middlefield sites with funding from the 2006 Measure C facilities bond, and college plans call for updates in classroom technology every five years. New programs have been developed in emerging fields including biotechnology and geographic information systems. In March 2011, the ACCJC approved the college's substantive change proposal to offer 24 associate degrees and 21 certificates through electronic delivery. The college lists several pages of awards and achievements in its Self Study Report, including many state and national recognitions of Foothill's individual and institutional achievements.

Curriculum for the college is maintained via an online curriculum management system, with a clear process for curriculum review and oversight, through both a division level and College Curriculum Committee review. All courses must have measurable SLOs and address at least one of the four institutional learning outcomes (ILOs), and each program that awards a degree or certificate has recently started to perform an annual program review. The program review process is directly linked to resource allocation through workgroups representing each of the four core mission areas. The workgroups set goals and measures for student success, which they use to make recommendations for resource needs to the shared governance Resource and Planning Council (PaRC).

Faculty quality is underscored in the four-year tenure process, followed by a three-year cycle of evaluation by peers, students, and administrators. Faculty can choose from more than 50 professional development sessions annually, and the Krause Center for Innovation is noted for helping faculty stay current with instructional technology.

The college offers many programs and courses to support the diverse learning needs and styles of students, including counseling and career life planning courses, Math My Way, Pass

the Torch, Puente, Mfumo, Early Alert, and Adaptive Learning programs. Information on degrees, certificates and transfer is readily available in the college catalog and on the website, as are important policies related to instruction such as student academic honesty.

Findings and Evidence

Foothill College offers high-quality instructional programs focused on the four areas of its core mission: basic skills, transfer, lifelong learning, and career preparation. Curricular integrity and mission-focus is strengthened by alignment of all courses and programs with its four overarching institutional learning outcomes (ILOs). Identified prior to the 2005 Self Study, these ILOs are known as the four core competencies (4-Cs) encompassing overarching expectations for the student learning experience at the college: critical thinking, computation, communication, and community/global consciousness. (II.A)

Policies and procedures are in place for course and program approval including program review, the curriculum approval process including the online course management system, and integration of the ILOs at all levels. Course delivery methods include online, hybrid and onsite instruction at the Foothill main campus and the Middlefield campus. Online instruction is delivered through the Etudes (Easy to Use Distance Education System) platform, originally developed by a Foothill College faculty member. The ACCJC accepted a substantive change proposal for 43 degrees and certificates offered online in spring 2011. (II.A, II.A.1.)

The team found ample evidence of the use of research and analysis to identify student learning needs and assess progress toward achievement. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning provides regular reports regarding student characteristics and success, disaggregated by ethnicity, age and gender. The 2010 Educational and Strategic Master Plan contains findings on current and future student needs used to propose programs and allocate resources. In addition, the college regularly reviews findings from the state Chancellor's Office annual standardized performance report, the Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC) Report. Recent ARCC data indicate Foothill College ranks higher than its peer group cohort and the state average for student progress and achievement. The college notes that its rates of degree/certificate completion and transfer rates have dropped in the last few years, and it has initiated a "completion agenda" aimed at increasing graduation and transfer to address this decline. (II.A.1.a, II.A.1.b)

The team found Foothill College to use an appropriate variety of delivery systems and modes of instruction to meet the needs of its students. Faculty is primarily responsible for selecting the method for course delivery, which is documented in the course outline of record (COR). Online and hybrid courses require a COR addendum form that details the method for regular, effective instructor/student contact, which must be approved by the division curriculum committee to assure appropriateness of the method and compliance with student contact standards. Student ID and passwords as well as regular and substantive instructor/student contact are used to verify student identity.

Site visits to a broad sample of online courses confirmed that faculty use multiple methods for delivering content, including audio files and streamed videos, and maintain regular and effective contact through email and online discussions and postings. Dialogue between faculty members regarding methods of delivery and instruction primarily occurs during professional development opportunities, which are plentiful and often occur on campus at the Krause Center for Innovation, a well-designed training facility to promote creative use of technology in education and business. (II.A.1.b, II.A.2.c)

A comprehensive system for the identification and assessment of SLOs at course, program, and certificate/degree (institutional) levels, and the use of student achievement of SLOs to make improvements in student learning programs and services is becoming a reality at Foothill College. This journey through levels of implementation from awareness to development has taken more than ten years and extraordinary effort, but evidence from the site visit suggests the college is making substantial progress toward achieving the standards for proficiency required by the ACCJC for fall 2012. The outline of SLO progress noted by the visiting team follows:

- 1997-2001: Identification of ILOs (4-Cs)
- By 2005 (last comprehensive accreditation review): SLOs identified for 20 percent of courses; few had completed the SLO cycle including evaluation; some 3-year program reviews were noted to include program-level student learning goals
- 2006-2009:
 - Foothill's Rubric Model for Evaluating SLOs (FRAMES) process developed by teams of multidisciplinary faculty for measuring ILOs
 - all courses identified SLOs and at least one ILO; course SLOs begin to be listed on syllabi
- 2008-2010:
 - new integrated budget and planning model adopted
 - FRAMES rubrics used to identify and assess ILOs that map to course, program, degree, service or administrative outcomes
 - annual course-level assessment of SLOs
 - new learning outcomes calendar and website
- 2010-2011:
 - Academic Senate resolutions endorse use of SLOs and strongly encourage faculty to place SLOs on their syllabi.
 - program-level SLOs (PLOs) and assessment strategies identified
 - 96 percent of courses identify SLOs; 74 percent identify ILOs; 61 percent identify assessment strategies; 33 percent document reflections
 - PaRC begins annual review of SLO cycle data
- Fall 2011: first cycle of annual PLO assessment (using new TracDat system)

The visiting team concludes that SLO progress, particularly in recent years, has been notable. Nevertheless, the team shares concerns about inconsistent evidence found for assessment

results used for instructional program improvement. Although several examples were found (e.g., physics, veterinary technician), interviews revealed limited indications of broader changes resulting from assessment and reflection. It was noted, however, that the requirement in the new integrated budget and planning model adopted in 2009 that all resource requests to PaRC must come from program review will certainly increase attention to the use of assessment results to guide improvements. (II.A.1.c, II.A.1.e)

All Foothill College courses and programs, including basic skills, community education, apprenticeship, and pre-collegiate offsite offerings were found to be subject to the same level of quality review. All curriculum is evaluated using the online curriculum management system in a process that includes review by the initiating faculty member, division dean, College Curriculum Committee representative, and articulation officer, as well as two curriculum committees (division and college level). All course outlines of record are reviewed every three years for currency and relevance. Advisory boards and labor market research are among the methods used to identify new programs, especially in the vocational areas. The college currently does not offer study abroad programs, but has an extensive international student population. (II.A.2, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e)

The team confirmed the central role of faculty in establishing and improving the quality of courses and programs. The college relies on faculty expertise for developing all curriculum, and identifying and measuring competency levels for all course and program-level SLOs. At the institutional level, multidisciplinary faculty teams developed the FRAMES process for defining and measuring outcome related to the 4-Cs and conducted workshops on using FRAMES rubrics to evaluate student artifacts of learning. Competency levels are measured for some classes by licensing or board exams—through SLOs and the grading process for others. Further evaluations of student progress included a student survey regarding the ILOs. (II.A.2.b)

Program review was performed in 3-year cycles prior to 2009-2010; now, they are scheduled to be performed annually, with a focus on outcomes and resources needs. The outcomes will be updated annually on the learning outcomes website. As part of the integrated planning process, program review needs related to SLOs are submitted to PaRC for prioritization and resource allocations. There was plentiful evidence that PaRC completed an initial cycle of the process in 2010-11. (II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b)

High-quality instruction with appropriate breadth, depth, rigor, sequencing, time to completion and synthesis of learning were evident in the sampling of courses that the team visited. Instructional quality is maintained through the college's stringent curriculum approval and program review processes. Faculty who wish to have their courses approved as general education courses must apply to a curriculum subcommittee, which investigates the content and instructional methods before forwarding the course for the entire committee to review. Vocational courses have additional scrutiny from advisory boards and external licensing and/or accrediting agencies. Academic Senate Officers confirmed that institutional dialogue about the quality of programs occurs both in College Curriculum Committee and full senate meetings. (II.A.2.c)

The team found significant emphasis placed on professional development for assisting faculty in learning how to serve diverse student needs and learning styles. Delivery modes and teaching methodologies are included in the CORs, as are various methods for assessing student learning. Effectiveness of delivery modes is one of the prompts for faculty when they perform the annual reflection on their courses. Online and hybrid courses account for almost 20 percent of Foothill's enrollment, and significant resources are devoted to training and support of online instructors and those using the Etudes course management system. As noted, numerous special programs are available to support students with special needs or who are academically underprepared. The team was impressed by the significant resources and high quality programs devoted to promoting the success and learning of the college's diverse learners. (II.A.2.d)

The team found evidence that the college regularly evaluates all courses and programs through its regular course and program review processes previously noted. In addition, the new integrated planning model includes analysis of program quality, relevance, and needs in the context of measurable goals established by each of the four core mission workgroups related to the Educational Master Plan. Tri-chairs of each of the four workgroups are voting members of PaRC, the shared governance council that allocates resources. Thus, the workgroups, which examine all levels of SLOs and SLO assessment as well as course and program achievement of outcomes, resource needs, goals and plans, are critical links in the instructional quality improvement process. The workgroups also are able to distribute funding from special and categorical sources such as Perkins and the Basic Skills Initiative. (II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f)

One concern regarding course-level evaluation the team noted is the lack of evaluative feedback from students taking online courses. Interviews revealed that student evaluation of online courses has been under development for at least four years but has been delayed, at least partially, due to faculty union concerns about the process. In fall 2011, the latest version of the process is being piloted in ten courses. The team urges the institution to move forward in integrating this critical data element into its ongoing, systematic evaluation of online courses. (II.A.2.e)

As noted, the college has a new integrated planning and budget model, in place since 2009, designed to be ongoing and systemic. It is designed to measure and link outcomes and student achievement to resource allocation. This process, outlined in the Integrated Planning and Budgeting Handbook is scheduled to be assessed annually by a task force each summer through the Office of Instruction & Institutional Research. Shared governance participants surveyed in summer 2010 felt that stronger links between SLOs and decision-making were needed. The resulting modification implemented spring 2011 is a division level annual program review, prepared by each dean, who presents a summary of key goals and needs to PaRC each spring. PaRC then has the opportunity to review and examine the outcomes within each division at all levels, particularly those reported from program review. (II.A.2.f)

Each required course outline of record contains the standards for awarding units of credit, which are compliant with all regulations and clearly described in the catalog. All courses required for a degree or certificates are listed on a program curriculum sheet, which states the program-level SLOs. Assessment strategies for program SLOs were developed in spring

2011 and are being implemented for the first time in fall 2011. There are no departmental or program examinations developed at Foothill. (II.A.2.g, II.A.2.h, II.A.2.i)

Foothill College requires all degree programs have a general education (GE) component based on the college's GE philosophy and standards, which are led and implemented by the College Curriculum Committee (CCC). The GE philosophy, objectives, and outcomes are noted in the college catalog, and in the General Education Handbook available through the CCC website. Specific GE course requirements include seven broad areas: English, humanities, natural sciences, social and behavioral sciences, communication and analytical thinking, U.S. cultures and communities, and lifelong learning. The Academic Senate and CCC adopted the four institutional learning outcomes (4-Cs) as the general education SLOs, so assessment of ILOs by student surveys also assesses the GE requirements, to some extent. Lifelong learning competencies are inclusive in the 4-Cs, which also apply to GE; in addition, information competency must be a course component in all GE courses. The ILO for community/global consciousness and responsibility is linked to the required GE course in U.S. Cultures and Communities, thereby promoting respect for diversity. GE courses are approved by both the Curriculum Committee and the Academic Senate. (II.A.3, II.A.3.a, II.A.3.b, II.A.3.c)

All degree programs at the college, including the newer AA-T or AA-S transfer degrees, include both a GE requirement and at least 27 units of study in a focused major. (II.A.4)

All career and technical programs undergo regular program reviews with learning outcomes assessed annually through methods that include student pass rates on licensing exams and demonstration of program competencies via projects and portfolios. (II.A.5)

The team found adequate information sources for students regarding courses, programs, degrees, and transfer policies, both in print and online. The college has an excellent website, redesigned in 2010 to be more informative, with an interactive "Ask Foothill" feature, transfer, and SLO web pages. Since fall 2010, there is an institutional expectation that faculty include course SLOs on their syllabi. Syllabi for all courses randomly sampled by the visiting team included SLOs. The excellent transfer web page, with information on all aspects of articulation and transfer, including GE transfer, was noted to be a useful supplement to information available from counselors and faculty. Plans for additional technology-based tools to provide students and counselors with web-based advising, degree audit, and transfer information are laudable, particularly given the large numbers of students enrolled online and at community and industry sites. (II.A.6, II.A.6.a.)

The college developed a formal program discontinuance board policy in spring of 2011. In the case of program discontinuance, discipline faculty and counselors work together with students to identify options, including course substitutions or waivers. A program was eliminated in 2010, and students were notified more than one year in advance. The Discontinued Degrees Policy is published in the catalog. (II.A.6.b)

The visiting team reviewed print and electronic documents and communications and confirmed that the college represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently. The Marketing & Communications Office was noted to do a high quality job of representing

Foothill College in a positive, yet accurate light. Catalog reviews are conducted annually, with each department responsibility for updates. Institutional policies were found to be up-to-date. (II.A.6.c)

Foothill-De Anza District Board Policy 4190 addresses academic freedom, and both Foothill and De Anza Colleges' academic senates participated in its development and approval. The academic dishonesty policy for students is included in the college catalog. The Academic Honor Code for students is included in the college catalog, website, and Student Handbook. The Faculty Handbook outlines expectations of faculty regarding academic policies and procedures. All board policies are easily available through the district website. (II.A.7, II.A.7.a)

Standards II.A.7.c and II.A.8 are not applicable to Foothill College.

Conclusions

The team found abundant evidence that Foothill College offers high quality programs and courses at all sites and through all delivery modalities. Student outcomes data demonstrate high rates of achievement and transfer to four year institutions. A rigorous curriculum approval process for all areas was found to ensure appropriate methods and rigor of instruction. The curriculum is appropriate for the mission of the college and seems responsive to community needs. The Foothill College curriculum clearly reflects the engagement of a dedicated and talented faculty.

The team noted that implementation of student learning outcomes is nearing proficiency at the course level, but is still in the development phase at the program level on the Commission's Rubric. Programs have identified outcomes and mapped them to ILOs, but are currently in the initial assessment cycle.

Although the SLO initiative is not fully implemented, college and academic leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of the cycle of assessment and improvement. This understanding is further reflected in the college's own planning agendas related to formalizing and institutionalizing its assessment cycle and developing a research agenda to support assessment of ILOs and program review. This research agenda should be extended to include assessment of administrative unit and service area outcomes, as well as to "close the loop" on using assessment findings to guide future decisions and make institutional improvements.

Recommendations

Recommendation 2: Student Learning Outcomes

In order to meet the Commission's 2012 expectation for meeting student learning outcomes Standards that require the identification and assessment of appropriate and sufficient student learning outcomes, and the use of assessment data to plan and implement improvements to educational quality, the team recommends that the college accelerate the assessment of program-level student learning outcomes, service area outcomes, and administrative unit outcomes, and use the results to make improvements. (II.A.1.c, II.A.2.e, II.B.4, II.C.2)

B. Student Support Services

General Observations:

Foothill College offers an array of student services, both onsite and online, including some core student services at the Middlefield campus. Among programs and departments offering student support services within the division of student development are the following: Academic Advising and Counseling, Admissions and Registration, Assessment and Placement, Bookstore, Career Services, Disability Resource Center, Extended Opportunity Program and Services, Financial Aid and Scholarships, Health Services, Help Desk, Library, Rental Housing System, Ride Sharing and Transportation Options, Student Computer Labs, Transfer Center, and tutoring.

As of fall 2010, Foothill College's student population was noted to reflect Santa Clara County's diversity for some, but not all groups. About one-third of both populations were of Asian, Filipino or Pacific Islander descent (29 percent at Foothill; 28 percent for the county). The Hispanic population (23 percent of the county) is underrepresented at Foothill (13 percent). The multiethnic category represented 8 percent of Foothill students but only 2 percent of the county.

Student services departments are progressing in a regular cycle of program review and student learning outcomes assessment, referred to as service area outcomes (SAOs) for all student services areas. These processes are increasingly being used to inform improvements and resource allocation. Since 2009, the college has undergone significant changes in its institutional effectiveness model, which has allowed the process to be more engaging, meaningful, and inclusive. As with student learning outcomes (SLOs) in instruction and administrative unit outcomes (AUOs) in administrative departments, SAOs in student services are aligned with the college's institutional level outcomes, the 4-Cs, all of which are posted on the college website.

Noting 35,000 student services contacts in 2009-10, Foothill College acknowledges its challenges in meeting an increasing demand for student support services in light of changing student demographics and several years of severe state budget cuts.

Findings and Evidence:

In addition to the standard support services listed above, the college provides significant student support services in online modalities (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube). Several of these are particularly noteworthy, including Ask Foothill, a new online information service that provides immediate responses to key questions on key topics like admissions, registration, fees, hours of operations; MyPortal, which allows students to obtain many online services including placement test results, registration, and transcripts; and an interactive academic advising and counseling services forum for distance education students, which provides responses from full-time faculty counselors to forum postings within 48 hours. Exemplary programs were noted for students with disabilities, including the Institute for Community College Mental Health, and for other diverse populations including Puente, Mfumo, Pass the Torch, Brother to Brother, and Sister to Sister, as well as the new Veteran's Center to serve this growing population. (II.B, II.B.1)

The visiting team found that the college engages in sound practices using a comprehensive array of services to assure that students experience quality support services independent of location and delivery method. The college strives to identify needs of students through student surveys, departmental evaluations, and a new program review system. In 2008-2009 it conducted an external customer service study regarding student experiences with student services areas, which led to streamlined intake process for new students, improvements to the college website and better use of staff resources. (II.B.1)

The college catalog provides all the general information, program requirements and major policies affecting students required by the Standards. The catalog is noted for being award-winning, with clear and accurate information. In addition, the college produces a great number of well-designed informational materials for students, both in print and electronic formats. These include the college website, a student web portal, class schedules, the student planner and handbook, and key college and district offices. (II.B.2.a, b, c, d)

The team noted that budget constraints of recent years, including 40 to 60 percent reductions in state funding for programs such as matriculation and EOPS and major cuts to budgets for counseling and tutoring, has taxed the institution's ability to maintain the quality of student support services. Nevertheless, the team found evidence that Foothill is making creative use of its resources to by leveraging grant dollars and providing more online services to maintain services. All sixteen of the key student services listed above has information available online, and thirteen have interactive services available online. (II.B.1, II.B.3)

A number of core support services are offered at the Middlefield campus, including admissions and records, bookstore, computer lab, academic counseling, financial aid outreach, placement testing and legal services. Students enrolled at Middlefield can also access services at the main campus or online. The team found significant evidence of efforts to provide comprehensive support services at Middlefield and was impressed by the campus' creative use of resources and facilities and its well-designed website and online services. To address the needs of the sizeable Hispanic population attending and neighboring Middlefield campus, key student support services documents are produced in Spanish and English. Nevertheless, the team noted the absence of some key support services, including disability support, health services, and tutoring. Additionally, the team observed that although Middlefield conducts its own program review, the evaluation of its student support services needs were not systematically assessed as part of the overall Student Services program review processes. (II.B, II.B.1, II.B.3, II.B.3.a)

The team shared concerns about gaps in student access and achievement that point to needs for improved student support services for historically underserved groups in the Foothill student population and service area. In terms of access, the team noted significant disparity in Hispanic student enrollment (13%) and the population of Hispanics in the service area (23%). In terms of the achievement gap, African Americans and Hispanics are 16 and 9 percentage points behind Asians, Whites, and others/unknown in course success rates and significantly lower in measures of persistence, transfer, and graduation. These disparities are variously noted in the Self Study Report, the Educational Master Plan, Student Equity Plan, and in notes from governance meetings. Despite such awareness, the team found no clear evidence to suggest there are focused efforts to recruit and admit diverse students reflective of the

community it serves or to strategically address the achievement gap by setting clear goals and metrics to measure equity efforts, and evaluating progress on regular basis. (II.B)

Foothill College has a robust student life. In addition to offering a “Certificate of Proficiency in Leadership & Services” as part of the effort to promote student leadership development, student government and clubs host myriad events and activities, in part made possible from proceeds from their student benefits card (the OwlCard), which generates close to half a million dollars annually. A number of student life activities promote intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development as well as understanding and appreciation of diversity. Student activities that promote personal and civic responsibility include participation of student leaders on participatory governance committees, student clubs focused on service to others (e.g., Brother to Brother, Sister to Sister), a volunteer center, and a community service federal work study program that allows students to complete their hours at local nonprofit organizations. (II.B.3.b, II.B.3.d, II.B.3.d)

Counseling services are comprehensive and demonstrate a commitment to serving online students through individualized academic advising and counseling via an online forum. Some counseling services also are offered onsite at the Middlefield campus. There are a variety of one-unit counseling courses taught both in-person and online. This division has established SLOs for its instructional components and SAOs for non-instructional areas, which are aligned with the 4-Cs. Although learning outcomes have been identified for all of the counseling services, attention is needed in the areas of authentic assessment strategies and “reflections,” the latter of which includes widespread dialogue about the results, and use of results for improvements and resource allocation (II.B.3.c, II.B.4)

Currently, placement scores are evaluated through student and faculty surveys, as well as validation from research. The college selects most of its assessment instruments from the list approved by the state chancellor’s office. The institution identifies the need for additional research assistance with cut scores, and is proactively training the new college researcher in this area. (II.B.3.e)

The institution maintains student records securely, both electronically and in hard-copy formats. The college uses a vault for student records that is locked at all times; access to the vault must be approved by either the college registrar or Admissions and Records supervisors. Employees having access to student records receive mandatory FERPA training. (II.B.3.f)

Student services conducted program review of all areas during the past six years in three-year cycles (2003 and 2006). In 2009, they began implementing the new annual program review process and have been evolving in the area of SAO assessment for the past two years. The team observed that the new program review process generated enthusiasm among staff, faculty, and administrators, who felt that the process is more meaningful and inclusive. In 2009-2010, all departments completed program reviews as evidenced by their program review website. However, in 2010-2011, only about half the student services departments completed program reviews. The team found an absence of data in a number of the completed program reviews, particularly sections II (Department and Program Description & Data) and III (Service Evaluation) for both 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. (II.B.4)

Student Services has developed Service Area Outcomes (SAOs) statements for all key programs and services, and the Middlefield campus has developed Administrative Unit Outcomes (AUOs) statements, as noted on the college's website. Additionally, each SAO and AUO is aligned with one or more of the college's four institutional learning outcomes, known as "the 4-C's." A number of Student Services departments have completed a full cycle of assessment, while others are progressing in this direction. (II.B.4)

Conclusions

The college assures equitable access to all of its students at the main Foothill College campus by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services regardless of delivery method. The same cannot be validated for the Middlefield campus, given that some key services, including disability support, health services, and tutoring are not available to students at the satellite campus unless they visit the main campus.

Similarly, disparities in recruitment and admission of students as reflected in the service area persist, particularly regarding the Hispanic population. The team questions the quality or effectiveness of learning support services for historically underrepresented populations, particularly Hispanic and African American students, given the significant gap in achievement between these student populations.

The college has undergone significant changes with their institutional effectiveness model, which has been noted as being meaningful and inclusive. The process is still new, but appears to position the college to make significant progress toward a sustained continuous quality improvement model. Student Services is fully integrated with this new model, and are engaged in a regular cycle of program review with some use of data, and are emerging in the area of learning outcomes assessment (SAOs). To meet proficiency, it will be important for authentic assessment strategies to be developed for all SAOs and AUOs, for there to be widespread dialogue about the results, and for the results to be used for continuous improvements and resource allocation.

The college partially meets the standard.

Recommendations

See Recommendation 2: Student Learning Outcomes

Recommendation 3: Comparable Support Services

To fully meet the Standard, the college must ensure equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable student and learning support services regardless of location or delivery method. (II.B.3, II.B.3.a, II.B.4, II.C.1.c)

C. Library and Learning Support Services

General Observations

The library and learning resources at Foothill College are centered at the Semans Library and adjoining learning resources complex. They include a multimedia resource collection, open computer lab, educational media services, and some of the campus's decentralized tutoring services. There are no formal library and learning resources services at the Middlefield

campus. The library has online services available, including through extensive electronic databases, reference services and materials, and eBooks available online.

Measure C funds have made possible new technology and computers in the computer lab and library. Nevertheless, recent budget reductions related to the state economic downturn have severely limited library and learning support services. Book purchases and database subscriptions as well as library staffing have been cut by nearly half. The Writing Center and Language Arts Lab were closed at the end of 2009-2010 due to budget cuts.

Despite the harsh level of reductions, a well-designed library website offers access to sufficient electronic resources, and librarians continue to collaborate with some teaching faculty on library materials selection and curriculum development. The Media Center and computer lab are well used by students, with demand exceeding workstation availability during peak hours confirmed during the site visit. The Tutorial Center has weekday service for the Foothill campus, but does not offer services at Middlefield campus, online, or for English and ESL. Budget cuts in recent years led to closure of The Writing Center and Language Arts Lab at the end of 2009–2010.

The LRC faculty and staff are in early stages of developing and using service area outcomes; a few have developed assessment methods that will allow them to reflect on and improve their contributions to student learning.

Findings and Evidence:

The Learning Resources Center (LRC) at Foothill College houses the Semans Library, the Tutorial Center and Media Center, which includes an open access Computer Lab, the Technology Center, and distance learning staff. The mission statement of the library ties directly to the college mission. The library collection includes books, periodicals, reserve items, and electronic resources including e-books and databases. There are 24 computer stations in the library, and 55 computers in the Media Center lab, as well as 430 study spaces available in the library, including group study space. (II.C.1.a)

Tutorial services are available in person at Foothill, Monday through Thursday days at Foothill campus. Tutoring is also offered through a variety of decentralized, independent programs. Peer tutoring is offered through several programs, such as Pass the Torch, DSPS, and EOPS. The math and sciences departments hire graduate students as tutors for some classes. EOPS offers individualized tutoring for eligible students in a variety of subjects (e.g., accounting, biology, chemistry, English, ESL, economics, math). At this time, there is no formal tutoring available either online or for Middlefield campus or evening students. (II.C.1, II.C.1.a)

Librarians offer ongoing instruction to develop students' information competency skills through reference services, research strategies for classes that schedule a subject-specific research session, and the one-unit transferable GE course, LIBR 71. Staffing reductions have impacted the ability to offer all the research sessions and classes requested. (II.C.1.b)

Library services are available to all students, regardless of location, through library website resources such as databases, the “Ask a Librarian” service, self-paced online tutorials, and by

phone. Students can access electronic books and databases from any location for research. The Middlefield campus has no onsite library services, but has a large open computer lab at its central student support center, known as the “Hub,” where students can access online library materials and services. Library materials can be requested from Foothill and delivered to Middlefield campus. Tutorial services are only available at the Foothill campus, as previously described. (II.C.1.c)

The LRC/library facility, equipment and materials are protected by a security gate and the campus police. Computers are maintained by district Educational Technology Services (ETS). While maintenance efforts are reported to be adequate and timely, there are many issues with the physical plant including complaints about the condition of the restrooms, water and mold damage from major leaks in the aged roof, lighting and HVAC issues, and lack of electrical outlets for laptop computers and other devices. Currently a task force looking into a major renovation of the LRC areas, but it is unclear how the library would be included, or how such an effort would be funded. (II.C.1.a, II.C.1.d)

The Semans Library contracts with several entities for services, including the Community College Library Consortium (CCLC), which assists with discounted prices on electronic databases; and OCLC, a well-known cataloging and interlibrary loan service. (II.C.1.e)

A number of surveys have been conducted to evaluate perceptions about the adequacy of LRC services, most recently in fall 2009. Faculty indicate higher satisfaction than students, with 57.6% of students using the library and finding it helpful; 96% of faculty and 85% of students were satisfied that the library had sufficient materials to complete class assignments. There is a collection development policy in place to aid in assessing the library materials. (II.C.1.a, II.C.2)

LRC faculty and staff are still in the process of developing service area outcomes (SAOs), and are just beginning to develop assessment methods to determine their contributions to student achievement of SLOs. SLOs for the one-unit library research course have been developed and are being assessed. SAOs have been created for the library, but evaluations of them to demonstrate their contributions to student achievement of SLOs or for improvement of services are in the developmental stage. (II.C.2)

Conclusions

The college partially meets Standard IIC.

Budget cuts have taken a toll on library and learning support services. Although reduced, the team found adequate library resources for Foothill College students, available onsite at the Semans Library and through the extensive online library services for distance education and Middlefield campus students.

Similarly, budgets for tutoring services have been reduced in many areas. Beyond this challenge, is the problem that tutoring is available only for day students at Foothill campus. Across all the various tutoring programs offered (e.g., Tutorial Center, EOPS, DSPS, Pass the Torch), the team found a lack of equitable access to tutoring support for students who attend online or at Middlefield campus or in the evenings.

In contrast, the team found good technology support and access to many online learning resources and services available with relatively extended hours at Foothill and Middlefield campuses.

The team found that the library and various LRC departments have not achieved the needed level of implementation support for student learning outcomes – referred to as service area outcomes (SAOs)—to promote, document, and improve their contributions to supporting student achievement of institutional, program or course learning outcomes.

Recommendations:

See Recommendations 2 (Student Learning Outcomes) and 3 (Comparable Support Services)

STANDARD III

Resources

A. Human Resources

General Observations

Foothill College has policies and practices in place to ensure that personnel are qualified and are treated equitably. Human resources functions at Foothill College are shared between the college and the district. The Hiring Process Manual for the Foothill-De Anza Community College District outlines policies and procedures used to hire faculty, administrators, and staff. The manual also provides guidelines for hiring temporary replacements and independent contractors.

Policies and procedures are in place for regular evaluation of all employees. Human resource needs are determined and prioritized as part of the college's integrated planning model.

Severe state budget cuts in recent years have led to significant personnel reductions across the district. Between 2009 and 2010, the district eliminated 117 full- and part-time positions. This translated to loss of 43 positions at Foothill College (14 percent administrators, 9 percent classified, 6 percent faculty). Many of these positions were reduced by attrition and freezing open positions, but a number of layoffs and reorganizations have occurred at the college and district since the last accreditation visit. Nevertheless, employees at all levels appear to be pleased to be part of the college and take pride in the educational opportunities the college provides to its students.

Findings and Evidence

Programmatic staffing needs are identified at the department or unit level through program review and prioritized through the college's planning process. The District's Human Resources Office oversees all hiring at the college following policies and procedures outlined in the Hiring Process Manual. Hiring criteria, qualifications, and procedures are publically available on the district's human resources website. Applicants holding degrees from non-U.S. institutions submit verification from an approved credential evaluation service. (III, III.1.a)

Minimum hiring qualifications for faculty are based on discipline-specific minimum qualifications established by the statewide Academic Senate for Community Colleges and supplemented by district policies incorporating sensitivity to diversity and commitment to participation in department or program activities and shared governance. Faculty interview procedures include a required demonstration of teaching, counseling, or librarianship skills. (III.A.1.a)

Hiring qualifications for administrators are based on California Education Code requirements and are supplemented by district policies addressing sensitivity to diversity and commitment to shared governance. Hiring qualifications for staff are based on a combination of education, experience, and skills as identified in descriptions developed and reviewed by the

district in conjunction with the various bargaining units. Job descriptions and screening criteria are developed by college personnel in conjunction with the District Human Resources Office and are reviewed by an Equal Opportunity Representative. The district board policy on equivalency addresses degrees, experience, and skills. Composition of search and selection committees is specified in the Hiring Process Manual. The hiring process includes initial screening of written applications, personal interviews, reference checking, and final interviews. (III.A.1, III.A.1.a)

Policies developed in consultation with the District's Human Resources Office and bargaining units are in place for the evaluation of all college personnel. The procedure and forms used for evaluating full- and part-time faculty are specified in the faculty collective bargaining agreement and includes performance "not only in the classroom, but in all of his or her contractual obligations." Student input is included as an element of faculty evaluation. Although a Student Evaluation Form for online instruction has been developed and is part of the collective bargaining agreement, technical issues at the district level and faculty union concerns have thus far prevented its use. The procedures and form for evaluating administrators are specified in the Administrators Handbook. The schedule and nature of classified staff evaluations is specified in agreements with bargaining units, and the evaluation form is available on the district human resources website. The visiting team found evidence that the institution adheres to evaluation policies and uses evaluations for improvement. However, it heard a few concerns that classified staff evaluations do not always follow the specified annual schedule and some staff evaluations do not culminate in the goals or action steps that would lead to needed improvements. (III.A.1.b)

Members of the faculty are involved in the development and assessment of SLOs and assessment of results to improve instruction. In spring of 2011, the Academic Senate addressed faculty support of SLOs in several resolutions. Resolution 1 expresses Senate support for faculty primacy in the development, assessment, and use of SLOs to foster student success. Resolution 3 affirms the Senate's resistance to including the attainment of student learning outcomes as an aspect of individual evaluations. Currently, the faculty evaluation process does not include the faculty role in student learning outcomes. (III.A.1.c)

Written standards for ethical behavior are in place for administrators and faculty. Administrators adhere to the ethics policy of the Association of Community College Administrators, which is incorporated into the Administrators Handbook. The Tenure Review Handbook's Statement on Professional Ethics guides faculty. All college personnel are guided by several district Board policies that address ethical behavior: Cultural Diversity/Equal Opportunity, Anti-Discrimination, Mutual Respect, Nepotism, Harassment and Discrimination. In its Self Study, the college notes the lack of a unified ethics policy and has established as a planning agenda the adoption of a specific ethics policy for all college and district employees. (III.A.1.d)

As noted, multiple years of state funding reductions have taken a toll on the college's human resources. Foothill College has lost more than 40 positions, many reduced by not refilling vacancies, but some by direct layoffs of personnel. A number of staffing changes have been made through reorganizations to facilitate more efficient and effective use of personnel. The college acted to hire 11 faculty positions in 2010-2011 to meet critical teaching needs and

comply with state mandates for full-time faculty staffing standards but had to cancel seven of the searches due to additional anticipated budget cuts. Finally, the institution has experienced significant turnover at the college and district level in top administrative positions since the last comprehensive visit: Foothill has had three permanent or interim presidents, 14 individuals in the four vice president positions, and replacements in nine of the 12 dean positions; the district has had three permanent or interim chancellors and four new vice chancellors.

Despite significant personnel fluctuations, the evaluation team found the college returning to a sense of stability. The overall climate among the cross-section of employees with whom the team met was noted to be remarkably positive. Interviews with college personnel indicate most believe the college currently has sufficient faculty, administrators, and staff to support its mission. Still, employees throughout the college noted the stress associated with the staffing reductions and changes and expressed concerns about continuing cuts. In some areas, such as the library and several student services departments hit particularly hard by cuts in state categorical funding, employees expressed considerable frustration about the loss of full- and part-time faculty and staff and their inability to deliver services as they were formerly accustomed to doing. (III.A.2)

The team confirmed that the college and district have policies and procedures in place to ensure fairness in employment, security and confidentiality of personnel records, and employee self-access to records in accordance with law. Policies and procedures are available in the Hiring Manual, the Board Policy Manual, and agreements with employee bargaining units, as well as on the Human Resources website. (III.A.3, III.A.3.a, III.A.3.b)

The team noted that, through board policy, the hiring process, employee training, college activities, and staff and student associations, Foothill College demonstrates an understanding of and appreciation for diversity. Many programs and services are in place to provide support for personnel. The college gathers appropriate data on employment equity and diversity. Policies are in place at the board and college level to ensure that employees and students are treated fairly and ethically. Interviews during the site visit were consistent with a climate of respect and integrity. (III.A.4, III.A.4.a, III.A.4.b, III.A.4.c)

The Professional Development Committee coordinates a wide range of professional development activities for faculty, classified staff and administrators. The committee organizes and offers courses and workshops and maintains a robust and easy-to-use professional development website as a clearinghouse for information about campus activities, conferences, and numerous online training opportunities. Training in the educational use of technology is also available through the Krause Center for Innovation. The college makes professional development a high priority and has maintained funding for training, limited professional development leave and conference participation even during years of budget challenges. Continued professional development is recognized and rewarded via career-long salary supplements through the Professional Growth Activities award for faculty and the Professional Growth Award for staff. Professional development needs are determined through program review and through surveys of faculty, staff, and administrators. Interviews indicate that although many eligible faculty participate in the ongoing professional growth program, far fewer classified staff pursue the award. (III.A.5, III.A.5.a, III.A.5.b)

The team verified that new integrated planning and budget process incorporates human resource planning into the overall institutional planning effort. However, results of the Accreditation Survey indicate that the college as a whole may not yet be aware of the process. When asked whether human resources planning is integrated with institutional planning, 45% of respondents selected “Do Not Know/Does Not Apply.” (III.A.6)

Conclusions:

Foothill College satisfies nearly every aspect of this Standard. College and district policies related to human resources are clear, comprehensive, and publically available. The college and District Human Resources Office work well together to develop, follow, and evaluate policies and practices. Employees seem to be satisfied with college and district policies and practices related to human resources.

The college’s planning agenda includes the development of a written ethics policy for all college and district personnel; this will increase the college’s effectiveness in meeting Standard III.A.1.d.

The team determined that human resource planning is integrated structurally and in practice with its new integrated planning and budget model, thus complying with Standard III.A.6, but it strongly suggests that the college amplify and extend its communication efforts to ensure all members of the college community understand the process and how they can interact with it.

Although the college supports the use of SLOs in improving student success, the faculty evaluation process does not specifically address student learning outcomes. As such, the college does not meet Standard III.A.1.c.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 4: SLOs and Faculty Evaluation

In order to meet the Commission’s 2012 expectation for meeting student learning outcomes Standards, the team recommends that the college and the faculty association work together to incorporate student learning outcomes into the faculty evaluation process. (III.A.1.c)

III.B Physical Resources

General Observations:

Foothill College has a welcoming, well-maintained campus where up-to-date classrooms, laboratories and study spaces are complemented by outdoor gathering and recreational sites that serve a wide range of student needs. The construction of the new Physical Sciences and Engineering Complex (to be completed in 2012), which incorporates design elements proposed by discipline faculty, was made possible by voter-approved Measure C and exemplifies collaboration between campus and community for the benefit of the students. The fact that this complex is being built to meet LEED standards also speaks to the college’s institutional commitment to the value of sustainability.

Findings and Evidence:

The college annually evaluates how effectively it uses its facilities to meet the needs of programs and services through its Five-Year Facility Plan. The 2012-2016 plan indicates a need for additional library and audio-visual technical service space, and some upgrades to the library are now planned using Measure C funds. In addition to addressing student safety by reviewing incidents, providing ongoing training for staff and students, and annually updating its Hazardous Materials Management Plan, the college has also created two Emergency Operations Centers to coordinate campus response to critical incidents. Surveys indicate large majorities of both students and employees believe the campus is safe and well maintained. (III.B.1)

The college uses a coordinated planning process to ensure that new construction as well as the assignment of existing building space to instruction is driven by student needs, and that existing facilities are maintained and utilized efficiently. The District's Plant Services Department manages maintenance and operation of physical resources in consultation with the college's Director of Facilities and Special Projects. Educational Technology Services evaluates and maintains audiovisual equipment on a regular schedule. The college's Operations and Planning Committee evaluates needs for facilities and equipment identified by the program review process and forwards its prioritized recommendations to the budget process. The college employs a full-time scheduler to manage room assignments and ensure efficient use of instructional spaces. Surveys indicate that large majorities of students and faculty believe that the campus provides an appropriate physical environment, including study spaces and laboratory facilities. (III.B.1a; III.B.2; III.B.2b)

Assurance that the college's physical resources provide access, safety, security and a healthy learning and work environment is based on board policies that address facilities philosophy and priorities as well as environmental sustainability. The college evaluates and reports the current status of facilities and equipment on a regular basis through its Accessibility Studies and Facilities Conditions Assessment Report. Bond funds from Measures C and E support a campus renovation program that ensures compliance with ADA standards. Off-campus sites comply with building regulations issued by the Division of the State Architect, and safety and security for these sites is coordinated between their managing administrators and local authorities. (III.B.1b)

The Facilities Master Plan published in 2007 identified growth in specific programs and services and estimated corresponding assignable square footage for lecture, lab, conference and office spaces consistent with the college's Educational Master Plan. Total cost of ownership analysis is used to support decisions for managing facilities and equipment. (III.B.2.a, III.B.2.b)

As further evidence of use of planning and data for facilities planning, the institution analyzed population trends and community education needs to verify the need for additional space for a new educational center. In August 2011, the district board of trustees identified 9.2 acres of the former Onizuka Air Force Station in Sunnyvale as the site for a new educational center to be built with Measure C funding. The land is to be deeded to the district via a public-benefit conveyance from the U.S. Department of Education at no cost. Plans include a new 50,000-square-foot facility to house programs currently offered at the

Middlefield campus, with room for expansion. The proposed relocation will save lease costs, and allow for better and larger facilities to improve service to the community. (III.B.2.b)

Conclusions:

The college meets this standard. Physical resources are sufficient to support the college's student learning programs and services, are well maintained, and are utilized efficiently. In addition, physical resource planning is integrated with institutional planning via a comprehensive process that is based on student needs identified in program reviews and complemented by a long-range vision of future changes in the population the college will serve.

Recommendations:

None.

III.C Technology Resources

General Observations

The college uses a wide range of technological resources to support student learning and services. In addition to state-of-the-art computer labs and widespread use of the Etudes learning management system (LMS), programs are underway to provide robust wireless access across the campus to support students' growing use of personal wireless devices.

Budget allocations for technology in Measure C ensure that both the college and the district will have stable technology budget through 2014. The college updated its website in 2010 to improve student and community access to online content and is currently evaluating effectiveness of this change. The college and district have used Measure C funding to replace their legacy Enterprise Resource Planning system with Banner, and are working to implement the DegreeWorks module during the coming year. Finally, technology is integrated into the college's planning and budgeting process through the work of the Technology Task Force (TTF).

Findings and Evidence

The college defines how it uses technology to support goals developed from in its mission through its Technology Master Plan, which is authored by TTF and was updated in 2010. This plan specifies how the college integrates technology into institutional planning, supports technology and distance education, provides technology training, and anticipates the future technology needs of staff, faculty and students. TTF makes recommendations to the college's Planning and Resource Council and it has representation on the District's Educational Technology Advisory Committee to provide input for district wide technology planning and decision making. The college evaluates the effectiveness of its technology services through (a) program reviews that are tied to the planning and budget process; (b) the work of the Technology Task Force; and (c) periodic surveys of students and staff. (III.C.1; III.C.1a; III.C.2)

The college uses surveys and the program review process to assess whether needs for technology training of faculty, staff and students are identified and met. The 2010 Accreditation Survey revealed that 28 percent of respondents believed that the college did not provide “quality training in the effective application of its information technology to students and personnel.” Interviews revealed that this was largely due to dissatisfaction with training for the newly installed Banner system. This issue has been addressed with the hiring of a training specialist to develop a training plan and deliver training to employees and student employees. Technology training for students is available online and on a drop-in basis at the Student Success Center. The Foothill Global Access program provides a variety of training opportunities for faculty who use the college-designated LMS (Etudes) as well as support for the use of related educational technology tools. The Foothill College Computer Access Center provides support in the use of adaptive computer technology for students with disabilities; the Adaptive Learning Division has several full-time staff members to serve distance education students with disabilities. (III.C.1b)

Funds from the Measure C bond have enabled the district to provide consistent reliable computing equipment to employees and students, upgrade 80 percent of classrooms to a standard multimedia technology configuration, strengthen its network and technology infrastructure, as well as to purchase and implement the Banner ERP system. The college maintains a coordinated plan for updating faculty, staff and administrator computers on a five-year refresh cycle and works with district Educational Technology Services to develop timelines for classroom renovations and multimedia upgrades. (III.C.1c, III.C.1d.)

Conclusions

The college meets this standard. It makes effective use of technology resources to support student learning programs and services, provides adequate technology training for faculty, staff and students, and has integrated technology planning into the larger planning and budget process through the work of the Technology Task Force and Educational Technology Advisory Committee. The college also supports use of the Etudes LMS for online instruction through Foothill Global Access and has been able to provide consistent reliable computing equipment and multimedia technology as well as to purchase and implement the Banner ERP system with funds from Measure C.

Recommendations:

None.

III D. Financial Resources

General Observations

The last few years have been onerously complicated for all of California’s community colleges, and Foothill College is no exception. The strained dynamic between meeting increased student needs in the face of diminishing state support is one that Foothill College is facing actively and effectively. The team found the climate and inner relationships within the

FHDA district regarding distribution of financial resources to be positive, professional, and collaborative.

The team found that Foothill employees are energetic about the conversion to the Banner financial management system. The Banner system offers more sophisticated control and reporting capabilities that will help strengthen linkages between planning and budgeting.

The FHDA district enjoys a high level of support in the community as evidenced by the passing of two local bond measures that have provided over \$738 million (\$298.4 earmarked for Foothill College). Although a recent parcel tax did not pass at the required two-third majority vote, the team found evidence of support in the community for this effort that would have provided program dollars for each of the colleges. Overall, the district and the colleges are providing budget and resources that are adequate to meet student needs in this environment of fiscal scarcity.

Findings and Evidence:

Foothill College adequately demonstrates that institutional planning is integrated with and supported by financial planning. Administratively, the college budget and strategic planning is a responsibility of the president. Supported in this work, the president has a vice president of educational resources and instruction who serves as the college's business officer. This vice president meets weekly with the vice chancellor of business services and De Anza College's vice president of business services to coordinate and plan the business and budget operations of the colleges and the district. (III.D)

The inclusion of "instruction" in the titles Foothill College gives to each of its vice presidents is noteworthy. This nomenclature underscores each area's responsibilities in supporting instruction. Importantly, the college has recently rolled out a new integrated planning process that clearly connects institutional planning with financial planning, in addition to incorporating program review and student learning outcomes as integral parts of the planning continuum. (III.D.1.a)

Foothill College carefully and frequently monitors the balance between revenue and expenditures and adjusts its plans and activities accordingly. Despite major budget cuts and the high proportion of the budget devoted to salary and compensation (85 percent), employee layoffs have been limited. Much of the budget balancing has occurred by not refilling positions vacated by retirements and other separations of service and changes of assignment. While staffing levels and course offerings have been reduced, the campus hums with the construction activity that the local bonds bring. (III.D.1.b, III.D.2.g)

The Self Study was noticeably silent about the college not meeting its state funded enrollment targets in 2010-2011, resulting in the district being on "stability funding" for 2011-2012. De Anza College also came in "under cap," leaving the district short by approximately 1,500 full-time equivalent students (FTES), the basis on which most state funding is apportioned to the district. This situation warrants careful monitoring and enrollment management to avoid a permanent reduction in the institution's funding base of more than \$6 million. College leaders suggest this was an anomaly related to a variety of

one-time factors, including public reactions to bond campaign advertising and major changes in course offerings due to budget reductions. The district vice chancellor of business included warnings about this challenge in the 2011-2012 Adoption Budget Workshop. The college expresses confidence that FTES production will meet or exceed the funded cap this year. (III.D.1.c)

The district maintains an unrestricted five percent contingency reserve each year to protect the institution against financial emergencies, as indicated in the adopted budget. Given the seriously uncertain state funding forecast, the district has designated approximately \$20 million in one-time funds to Escrow II, Deferment I, and Stability Funds accounts to cushion the district budget from mid-year apportionment cuts and delay layoffs compelled by declining state revenues. This year, the college plans to use approximately \$8 million of these funds to balance the general fund budget and another \$3 million to negate the effect of the mid-year budget cuts on the academic program. The remaining funds will be allocated in the 2012-2013 fiscal year, which leaves no cushion going forward, should the state budget situation worsen. Nevertheless, the district remains financially healthy with adequate cash flow, with no need for short-term borrowing in the recent past. (III.D.1.c, III.D.2, III.D.2.c)

As noted in the follow-up and Self Study responses to the Commission's Recommendation regarding Standard III.D.2.c, the district has taken steps to address its long-range liabilities related to post-retirement employee benefits. The college and district are in compliance with Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement 45 standards and have established an irrevocable trust to create a sinking fund as well as implementing a pay-as-you-go budgeting practice for the payment of these benefits. (III.D.2.c)

The team found satisfaction among college constituents with the financial planning and budgeting practices, despite obvious strain from the state budget situation. The new governance structure seems to help promote understanding of budget processes and engage broad input in budget processes. Connections between budget planning processes and the mission of serving students are strong and readily apparent. (III.D.1.d, III.D.2.b, III.D.2.e)

The independent external annual audit verifies this connection of budget to mission, as well as the overall integrity and accuracy of college and district financial reporting. The college and district have had excellent annual audit reports since the last accreditation visit. The external audits, as is customary and required, cover all funds of the district, including general, special, financial aid, bond, auxiliary, categorical and foundation funds. Over the past five years, the independent auditor's opinion regarding the institution's financial condition, position, and operations was unqualified (the best report possible), and any recommendations have been minor in scope. The financial statements were found to be in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (III.D.2.d, III.D.2.e)

A unique aspect of the district's fiscal oversight is the Audit and Finance Committee, composed of two trustees and four members of the community, which meets quarterly to provide an extra level of scrutiny of the budget and the financial processes of the district. This committee reports regularly about its findings to the board of trustees and monitors follow-up activities on behalf of the board. (III.D.2.a, III.D.2.g)

All budget, finance and audit information is readily available to both internal and external constituencies online via the college's web page. In addition, district and college leaders conduct numerous budget and financial presentations and workshops throughout the year to various constituency groups, including PaRC, academic and classified senates, Chancellor's Advisory Council, and the board of trustees. Periodic budget town hall meetings are held, as well, and notes or presentation materials from many of these meetings are posted on the college and district websites. (III.D.2.b)

The team found the contract initiation, processing, and approval procedures to be well defined and communicated. Board policy and procedures define contract guidelines and practices for the district and colleges. A clear delineation is made between contracts the college is authorized to make and those that the district may undertake. The external audit confirms the accuracy of these policies and procedures and the college's adherence to them. (III.D.2.f)

Worthy of note is the major effort that the district and the college have undertaken recently to improve its financial management system and integrate it with other information systems (human resources, student information system) using the new SunGard Banner software system. The Banner finance module was implemented January 2010, and integration of foundation accounts into the Banner system is nearing completion. Despite the extensive work and stress related to making such a critical conversion, most users agree that processes and outcomes are improving with the new integrated system. More training and experience with Banner is needed, but this is underway. (III.D.2.g, III.D.3)

Conclusions:

The team validated that Foothill College and the Foothill-De Anza Community College District demonstrate strong financial management and meet this Standard. The board and administration have done a laudable job of managing declining financial resources with care for both employee and student needs, while maintaining the overall health of the institution. The college and district have made tough budget decisions in recent years, but they did so using a number of good practices: informed participation, use of data, open and consistent criteria, and focus on strategic initiatives that support the mission of the institution.

Full implementation of its new integrated planning and resource allocation model and the Banner financial management system will allow the college to do an even better job in support of Standards regarding financial resources.

Recommendations:

None.

STANDARD IV

Leadership and Governance

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

General Observations:

By its own acknowledgment, Foothill College has recently undertaken major changes in its planning and governance structures. After an initial trial of its new governance and planning structure, the college evaluated it and found that while parts of the governance and planning process were working well, some participants were unsure of their roles within the new structure. The governance and planning process was revised to give more clarity to and to streamline the process and roles of faculty, staff, and students on certain committees and workgroups. The new process has yet to be evaluated; however, preliminary feedback suggests a more clearly defined process and general acceptance.

These changes have led to an increase in staff, faculty, and, especially, student participation in decision-making and planning. New administrative and faculty leaders emphasized the need for a more transparent and open environment that encourages collegial involvement, which further promotes evaluation and reflection. New policies and procedures have codified the new organizational structures. It is commendable that the college has evaluated and revised its planning process after it found that certain committees were uncertain of their roles and responsibilities. The college is committed to regular and systematic evaluation of the planning process.

Nevertheless, employees at all levels identified gaps in communication and lack of understanding of the system and its results. Some faculty and staff leaders acknowledged that the process is becoming more transparent, but expressed concerns about their roles in the new governance model. Turnover in top-level leadership and stresses from the budget cuts were reported to have added to the challenges in instituting the new decision making system.

Overall, the team found institutional leaders to be highly committed to fostering empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence.

Findings and Evidence

The evaluation team found that district administrative policies outline the roles of each group in governance, including planning and budget development. Meeting minutes and documents (e.g., handbooks and presentations of IP&B Task Force and PaRC) illustrate a concentrated effort to define a thoughtful participatory decision-making and planning process. The planning handbook and organizational charts suggest faculty and administrators-as well as staff have substantive and clearly defined roles in institutional governance. (IV.A.1, IV.A.2.a, IV.A.3)

The team found that the college's values, goals, and processes facilitate discussion of ideas and create fairly effective communication among the institution's constituencies. For instance, its strategic planning website asserts a commitment to "bring voices together from

around the campus; and establish a foundation for future discussions.” Campus leadership was found to encourage staff, faculty, administrators, and students at all levels to take initiative in improving the practices and programs through established participative processes. Reviews of curriculum documents confirmed that faculty have formulated course SLOs, course objectives, and course content in a manner that suggests the institution relies on faculty and its senate for recommendations about student learning programs and services on annual basis. (IV.A, IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.2.b)

The college governance structure chart indicates a clear structure for planning that involves Core Mission Workgroups comprising students, staff, faculty, and administrators. Interviews with students, staff, and faculty confirm an enthusiasm for being involved in planning and decision-making and collaborating on issues affecting Foothill College. The team found evidence of active participation by all groups involved, as well as use of data from learning outcomes and program review to integrate with budget and master planning updates for decision-making purposes. (IV.A.2.a, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.3)

The team found ample evidence of a value-based, mission centered, collective decision-making processes in place, including the president’s own priorities, which stress a commitment to working together for the good of the institution. In one example, the president’s web page stated, “the campus will engage in collaborative processes to identify contingency plans for reductions in the general fund as of July 1, 2009.” (IV.A, IV.A.3)

Surveys conducted by the IP&B task force indicated a willingness and commitment to evaluate planning process on a regular basis to assure integrity and effectiveness. Still, the team found struggles with achieving clarity and with full participation in governance, planning, and decision-making, as the new process begins to take hold. The Self Study acknowledged these challenges, and the team found further concerns about transparency of decision-making for improvement on campus. Some problems with communication seem to result from task force representatives not carrying information back to their constituencies in a timely manner. The team found efforts to enhance communication by additional means. (IV.A.3)

Further, the team found that despite seemingly clear pathways for participation in the new governance structure, some classified staff and faculty find it difficult to participate in committee meetings and forums due to budget related workload issues as well as restructuring and turnover in administration. The team also identified a need for more timely posting of minutes and notes from meetings; delayed posting of minutes are found to aggravate the challenge in getting information about decisions to the campus as a whole. For a campus that declares and demonstrates its reliance on electronic communication, this lag may be adding to confusion and a sense of a lack of transparency in decision-making. Nevertheless, the college demonstrates awareness of its challenges with institutional dialogue and has made focused attempts to address these issues, including revising the integrated planning process in Spring 2010 and enhanced publication of the new system in recent newsletters, such as the Curriculum Communiqué. (IV.A.3, IV.A.5)

Conclusions:

The college has recently developed a creative and comprehensive integrated planning and budgeting process to include all constituencies in decision-making, with a clear focus on institutional values and priorities. The team found strong demonstration of the college's commitment to fully implementing this new decision-making system and to evaluating its clarity, inclusiveness, and effectiveness.

Nevertheless, challenges associated with major changes in leadership and processes have delayed the full implementation and institutionalization of the new system. Communication remains a particular area of concern, despite directed efforts in this area. Overall, the model shows great promise, but has not had adequate use to verify its integrity and effectiveness for decision making and improvement. The team has high expectations for the college's success with the new system and feels that, with time, it could prove to be an exemplar for other community colleges across the country.

Recommendation:

See Recommendation 1: Integrated Planning

B. Board and Administrative Organization**General Observations:**

Foothill College is well served by a stable and effective board of seven district trustees: five elected members and two student trustees (one from each Foothill and De Anza Colleges). The team confirmed that the board operates independently and with ultimate responsibility in matters related to educational quality, legal issues, financial integrity and accountability. The board was found to adhere to its primary roles of establishing operating policies for the district and hiring and evaluating its chief executive officer, the chancellor. Board policies comply with its mission, and all of its policies, procedures, agendas, and meeting minutes are published online and available to employees and the general public.

The board has appropriate bylaws and policies to guide its structure and processes, and its actions are consistent with its policies. In keeping with good practice, the board has an orientation process for new board members, as well as an annual self-evaluation designed to improve its performance.

Members of the governing board demonstrated their understanding of accreditation standards and expectations, and every trustee, including the two student trustees, met with visiting team members to respond to evaluation questions and share their commitment to the district.

The board, district, and college have implemented appropriate policies and procedures to promote institutional effectiveness and ensure that FHDA meets the appropriate Standards. District and college leaders seem knowledgeable, competent, and genuinely proud to serve the institution and its students.

Findings and Evidence:

The visiting team confirmed that the Foothill-De Anza Board of Trustees acts as a whole and deals with all matters involving educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity. Board Policy 9210, the board's mission statement and Board Policy 1000, the district's mission statement, align with the Foothill College mission statement. Board Policies 3000-3310 specify the role of the board in all financial matters affecting the district involving accounting, budgeting, investments, fund management, fees, insurance and risk management. (IV.B.1.a, b, c,)

The board has bylaws and policies governing its size, structure, duties, responsibilities, and operations, as well as policies governing its roles in hiring the chancellor (BP 2210-2212). Board Policy 9210 is a comprehensive code of ethics for the board. Board Policy 9300 speaks to the board's annual self-evaluation process. Routine updates, responses to institutional requests for changes, and board policy reviews lead to policy revisions to maintain currency and compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. The team found evidence that board actions are consistent with its policies and procedures (IV.B.1, IV.B.1.d, e)

In interviews with team members, board members and the chancellor expressed familiarity and satisfaction with the self-evaluation process that examines board performance and allows for the establishment of short and long-term goals. The assessment of progress toward goal attainment occurs at the annual retreat in July, throughout the year in regular meetings, and through the bi-annual evaluation process for the chancellor. (IV.B.1.g, h)

The team validated that board members were appropriately involved in the current Self Study and accreditation process. Board members served as liaisons on Standard IV teams, received regular reports from college representatives on accreditation preparations and the Self Study process, and approved the Foothill Self Study Report before its final submission to ACCJC. (IV.B.1.i)

Board policies delegate the authority of district management to the chancellor, who in turn is authorized to grant authority to the Foothill College president. Interviews with the board, the chancellor, and college leaders indicate the chancellor and the president are able to act within their respective leadership authority and the relationship between the two is collegial and supportive. Appropriate accountability is exercised in monitoring the performance of both chancellor and president through regular performance reviews, as well as observations and reports of district and college activities (IV.B.1.j, IV.B.2, and IV.B.3.e)

Board policies, coupled with administrative actions, demonstrate that the president has primary responsibility for total operations of the college, including all student learning, employees, educational programs, facilities, institutional finances, and community outreach, as well as planning for future contingencies that might affect college operations. The president assures that policies and regulations are consistent with district and college mission and appropriately delegates responsibilities to a competent team of vice presidents, deans, and other administrators, who regularly advise her. (IV.B.2.a, c, d, e)

Through a newly created (2009) campus organization, the Planning and Resource Council (PaRC), the president guides an organized, goal-driven system for campus decision-making and planning for institutional improvement that is open, inclusive and data-informed. Further, this new system links resource allocations to planning aimed at improving institutional processes and student learning. It provides opportunities for faculty, staff, administrators, and students to make proposals for consideration and approval by the council and president. These approved initiatives become part of the college's overall Educational and Strategic Master Plan, and all college departments take responsibility for ongoing implementation and evaluation. (IV.B.2.b, e)

The team verified evidence of the appropriate role of the district in managing the multi-college FHDA district, providing primary leadership in overseeing and promoting effective operations and quality of Foothill and De Anza Colleges. Clearly defined roles of authority and responsibility are found in the District Function Mapping Document, and the Map of Functional Responsibilities in the Self Study Report. The centralized role of the district (Central Services) in managing major functions such as human resources, facilities and operations, labor relations, legal services, construction management, technology and information systems, accounting, budget development, finance, payroll, risk management, hazardous materials, fundraising, public safety, and bookstores is clear and appreciated. Information about college needs and effectiveness of district services is facilitated through a variety of district advisory committees, as well as the primary participatory governance body, the Chancellor's Advisory Council. (IV.B.3, IV.B.3.a, b)

Districtwide resource allocations follow an FTES-based formula for allocation of resources between the colleges. The District Budget Advisory Committee, comprising administrators, faculty, staff, and students from each college, as well as union representatives, regularly reviews resource allocation practices and advises the chancellor. Each college prepares an annual budget, which is reviewed by its cabinet as well as the chancellor's cabinet. As noted in Standard III D, the district and college demonstrate the principles of sound fiscal management and stewardship of resources. The team found evidence that in recent years of state funding reductions, allocation reductions have been based on mission priorities and have been implemented equitably (IV.B.3.c, d).

The team confirmed that the chancellor is the primary liaison between the colleges and the board of trustees. Communication between the district and colleges occurs through direct exchange at district participatory governance committees (e.g., District Budget Advisory Committee, Legislative Committee, Human Resources Advisory Committee, Educational Technology Advisory Committee, Chancellor's Advisory Council) and joint district convocation each fall, as well as through regular chancellor and executive staff email messages and updates. The chancellor meets weekly with the president and is readily available for informal meetings and phone calls. Highlights of board meetings are shared via a timely email communiqué, *Board Highlights*, which is posted on the college website. (IV.B.3.f)

The team found evidence of the evaluation of district governance structures and processes in the context of the accreditation Self Study process. Ongoing feedback regarding district effectiveness in supporting college goal achievement occurs via numerous participatory

governance pathways. College faculty, staff, and administrators are forthright in sharing their views with about what is working well and what needs improving, and the chancellor, senior managers, and trustees demonstrated willingness to listen and respond appropriately to make needed improvements. The team found the overall district and college to be keenly interested in cooperating to maintain FHDA's reputation for quality and innovation. (IV.B.3.g)

Conclusions:

The Foothill-De Anza board of trustees is duly constituted and maintains ultimate authority for the operation of the district. The district and college operate in concert with aligned mission statements, board policies, and administrative policies that guide the appropriate actions of both entities. The board, chancellor, and president have clearly-defined delegated authority and maintain a focused, collegial approach to providing and maintaining strong educational quality and financial integrity.

Recommendation:

None.