

## **PEER REVIEW TEAM REPORT**

College of the Canyons  
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road  
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

This report represents the findings of the Peer Review Team that conducted a virtual visit to College of the Canyons from March 7 to March 10, 2022. The Commission acted on the accredited status of the institution during its June 2022 meeting and this team report must be reviewed in conjunction with the Commission's Action letter.

Matthew E. Wetstein, Ph.D.  
Team Chair

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**College of the Canyons  
Comprehensive Peer Review Visit  
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## Summary of Peer Review Process

INSTITUTION: College of the Canyons

DATES OF VISIT: March 7 to March 10, 2022

TEAM CHAIR: Dr. Matt Wetstein, Cabrillo College

A ten member accreditation team conducted a virtual visit to College of the Canyons from March 7 - 10, 2022 for the purpose of determining whether the College continues to meet Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and U.S. Department of Education regulations.

ACCJC's decision to conduct virtual visits for the Spring 2022 comprehensive reviews was based upon state mandated health guidelines, and the Commission's authority to implement flexible approaches to accreditation processes and practices afforded by the federal government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the U.S. Department of Education's March 17, 2020 guidance, as well as all updates, permitted accreditors to perform virtual site visits for institutions as long as the accreditor follows up with an onsite visit in a reasonable amount of time to meet the statutory and regulatory requirements (though not necessarily a full peer-review site visit).

Consistent with on-site visits, and in accordance with the *Guide for Conducting Virtual Visits: An Addendum for Peer Review Team Chairs, Team Members, and Colleges*, which ACCJC provided to team chairs, peer reviewers, and colleges being reviewed, the virtual peer review team visit to College of the Canyons relied on an engaged and interactive format. The team conducted multiple interviews with college representatives, participated in team meetings to discuss findings, and conducted the required campus forums. The team evaluated how well the College is achieving its stated purposes, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement.

In preparation for the visit, the team chair attended via Zoom a team chair training workshop on December 1, 2021 and held a pre-visit meeting with the college CEO and accreditation liaison officer on February 15, 2022. The entire peer review team received team training provided by staff from ACCJC via Zoom on February 1, 2022 and participated in appropriate pre-visit meetings on March 2 and March 6, 2022.

The peer review team received the college's self-evaluation document (ISER) and related evidence several weeks prior to the team's virtual college visit. Team members found the ISER to be a comprehensive, well-written document detailing the processes used by the College to address Eligibility Requirements, Commission Standards, and Commission Policies. The team confirmed that the ISER was developed through broad participation by the entire College community including faculty, staff, students, and administration. The team found that the College provided a thoughtful ISER containing several self-identified action plans for institutional improvement. The College also prepared a Quality Focus Essay.

Prior to the virtual visit, team members completed their team assignments, identified areas for further investigation, and provided a list of interview requests. Just prior to the visit, on March 6, 2022 team members spent the evening discussing their initial observations and their preliminary review of the written materials and evidence provided by the College. The college kicked off the virtual visit by hosting a virtual meeting the morning of March 7, 2022 with more than 140 people in attendance. During the visit, team members met with approximately 150 faculty, administrators, classified staff and students in formal meetings, group interviews and individual interviews. Team members met with four governing board members from the College and observed portions of a board meeting the evening of March 9, 2022. The team held two open forums, which were attended by more than 160 community members, and provided the College community and others an opportunity to share their thoughts with members of the evaluation team. The team thanks the College staff for coordinating and hosting the virtual visit meetings and interviews, and ensuring a smooth process, which held high standards for the integrity of the peer review process.

# **Major Findings and Recommendations of the Peer Review Team Report**

## **Team Commendations**

Commendation 1: The team commends the College for fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, professional development, and entrepreneurship that is infused throughout the institution, resulting in unique opportunities that enhance student engagement and success. (III.A.14, IV.A.1)

## **Team Recommendations**

### **Recommendations to Meet Standards:**

None.

### **Recommendations to Improve Quality:**

Recommendation 1: In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the Governing Board and College expedite its assessment and review of Board Policies and Administrative Procedures and continue to ensure that timely actions are taken on policies and procedures. (IV.A.5, IV.C.7)

## Introduction

College of the Canyons was founded in 1967 after local voters approved a ballot measure to establish the college. Governing board members were first elected in 1968 and the College opened its doors to students in 1969 using after-school classrooms at Hart High School in Newhall. In 1970 the District acquired 153 acres of property adjacent to the east side of Interstate 5 and opened the Valencia campus using modular buildings. Since that modest beginning, the College has grown significantly, moving from an institution serving just a few hundred students to one that features multiple campuses serving 33,000 students annually. The Valencia Campus today features a number of distinctive buildings and programs, including a 926-seat Performing Arts Center, a University Center that houses bachelor's degree programs on site for expanded higher education opportunities in the Santa Clarita Valley, and a separate wing that features the Academy of the Canyons, a middle college high school program that promotes accelerated accumulation of college credits for high school students. The Valencia campus also features a state of the art Culinary Arts Center and a large Library and Learning Center, along with classrooms that support a wide array of general education and career course offerings.

The College opened a second center, the Canyon Country Campus (CCC), in 2007 with 3,401 students initially enrolled there. The College's Applied Technology Education Center was built with bond dollars at this site and opened in 2011. Recently, the College completed construction of a new, 55,000 square foot Science Center at the CCC campus, expanding critical offerings in anatomy and physiology, biology, microbiology and chemistry at the center. The College is now building a four-story student services and learning center complex adjacent to the science building that will open in the summer of 2022.

The District's geographic area encompasses a 367-square mile service area that is located in the Santa Clarita Valley in the northwestern quadrant of Los Angeles County. The population of the district is approximately 300,000 people, with one-third of the residents being Hispanic, 45% white, 13% Asian, and 5% African American. The College has relatively strong adult participation rates, with 31 out of every 1,000 residents attending the College in 2020.

The College has a strong legacy of ties to the local community that runs through its history. These ties have brought significant voter support for three bond measures in a fifteen year period, with the most recent coming in 2016 (\$230 million). The close ties to the community have fostered a number of innovative collaborations, including the development of the middle college high school, a partnership with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Academy for regular training academies, employment training relationships with local industry partners, and offering of courses for Rising Scholars in local Los Angeles County detention centers. Signature accomplishments include the development of a successful Employment Training Institute that has received \$6.8 million in state Employment Training Panel funding and the development of a successful Small Business Development Center that is housed at the College. The SBDC has excelled at its work, generating \$19 million in capital investments in 2019 and it received the Excellence in Service Award from the Small Business Administration the same year.

The College's response to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a decision on March 13, 2020 to suspend operations for a week, allowing the college to reconfigure classrooms and spaces to allow greater distancing between students and patrons that might return to campus, and to provide a brief period for shifting face-to-face instruction to online offerings. The College has

used an emergency operations team to guide decision making during the pandemic, with regular reports to the college community. Additionally, the college's institutional research office has conducted numerous surveys of students to assess changes in course taking patterns, preferences for online learning during the pandemic, and to track why students are withdrawing from the institution.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, enrollments and course taking patterns have shifted dramatically over the last two years. In Fall of 2018, just under 20 percent of the College's enrollments were found in fully online course sections. In the Fall of 2020, 45 percent of the College's instruction was fully online (note: the remaining 55 percent includes hybrid instruction). That shift was accomplished with rapid training for faculty in distance education approaches. Team members who reviewed courses in the Fall of 2021 were impressed with the overall quality of regular and substantive interactions that take place between students and professors in online courses. The College's reported enrollment dropped considerably because of the pandemic. Heading into the pandemic, the College had reported 16,736.53 FTES in 2019-20, the year that the pandemic hit in spring of 2020. In 2021-22, the College's first apportionment report indicated that enrollment had dropped to 14,075.51, a loss of almost 2,700 FTES. Despite this drop in enrollment, the College's funding was locked in at pre-pandemic levels because of an emergency conditions allowance that the state system was providing to all community colleges because of the pandemic.

Operations at the College have also shifted because of the pandemic. The College has developed a series of memoranda of understanding (MOU's) with its collective bargaining groups to address safety of staff, faculty, and students as the College worked to return more and more people to on-campus courses and services. The MOU's define working conditions for staff as they operate from home, and address return to work features like vaccination requirements and mask wearing. Throughout the pandemic, students in need of technology were provided assistance through drive-through pick-up systems. Emergency grants of financial assistance were also provided to students using a historic infusion of federal relief dollars. Technology training and support was provided to faculty, staff and managers to ease the transition to online work from home. The College deployed software solutions to help in this effort, including widespread use of Zoom, Canvas, Adobe Cloud, and Proctorio (to name a few). At the time of the visit, large numbers of staff, students, and faculty had returned to on-campus instruction and support services, although a substantial percentage of instruction was still online.

The visiting team was impressed with the College's innovative and entrepreneurial spirit and the way it is braided across sectors of the College. The breadth of innovations was documented in the College's ISER and through the conversations and interviews conducted during the visit. Among a host of notable practices, the team wants to call out several for specific accolades:

- The data visualizations and institutional research support that is provided for planning and institutional improvement (I.B.5)
- The College's distinctive Leadership Education in Action Program (LEAP) professional development program that has instilled a culture of innovation and improvement throughout the institution (III.A.14)
- The NASA High Altitude Student Project (HASP) program partnership that embeds student experiments in space flight missions (IV.A.1)

- The district's commitment to a biodiversity initiative that includes using the campus grounds to establish living learning spaces for student and community education (III.B.2)
- The District's commitment to an award-winning Civic Engagement Initiative that among other things, provides workshops and seminars to improve democratic engagement and has boosted voter participation rates among students (IV.A.1)
- The Board practice of holding joint meetings with the Associated Student Government, ensuring direct dialogue between student leaders and elected trustees (IV.A.1)
- The implementation of a Technology Innovation Funding Program and an Innovative Ideas Fund that has been used to purchase innovative technology and equipment for District programs (III.C.2)
- Expansion of non-credit and credit offerings for students, employees, and community members (II.A.2)
- Classified leaders use of podcasts to expand the profile of, and engage the classified staff in College work and governance (IV.A.5)

# Eligibility Requirements

## 1. Authority

The College derives its authority to operate as a community college from two main sources. First it is an entity that exists based on statutory authority in the State of California, with an elected Board of Trustees that serve under the mandate of the California Government Code and Education Code. Second, the College derives its authority to operate and offer federal aid support programs as an accredited institution of the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges. The team confirmed that the College has been continuously accredited by the ACCJC since its founding.

The College meets the ER.

## 2. Operational Status

The team confirmed that the College is providing educational services leading to associates degrees and certificates for 18,328 students in the fall term of 2021 year. A substantial percentage of students are pursuing the goal of degree completion or transfer to a four-year college or university. In the prior academic year (2019-20), the College awarded 5,897 degrees and certificates.

The College meets the ER.

## 3. Degrees

The College offers 65 associate of arts and associate of science degrees; 31 associate degrees for transfer (ADT), 146 certificates of achievement, of which 104 are state approved and 42 are locally approved certificates. The team confirmed that all associate degrees require a minimum of 60 units, including an appropriate general education component and a concentration within an area of emphasis.

The College meets the ER.

## 4. Chief Executive Officer

The team confirmed that the College has a CEO who does not serve as the chair of the governing board. Board policies ensure that the CEO has appropriate powers of authority delegated to her. At the time of the visit, the CEO was completing her 34th year as Chancellor.

The College meets the ER.

## **5. Financial Accountability**

The team confirmed that the College uses a qualified external auditor to conduct audits of all financial records. All audits are certified and explanations of findings are documented appropriately. Audit reports are made available to the public via board meetings and the College website. The College has a strong record of audits with no fiscal findings.

The College meets the ER.

## **Checklist for Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Related Commission Policies**

The evaluation items detailed in this Checklist are those which fall specifically under federal regulations and related Commission policies, beyond what is articulated in the Accreditation Standards; other evaluation items under ACCJC standards may address the same or similar subject matter. The peer review team evaluated the institution's compliance with Standards as well as the specific Checklist elements from federal regulations and related Commission policies noted here.

### **Public Notification of a Peer Review Team Visit and Third Party Comment**

**Evaluation Items:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comment in advance of a comprehensive review visit.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution cooperates with the review team in any necessary follow-up related to the third party comment.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission <i>Policy on Rights, Responsibilities, and Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions</i> as to third party comment.

[Regulation citation: 602.23(b).]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative:**

The college made appropriate efforts to solicit third party comments regarding its accreditation status. The peer review team visit was advertised to the community and open public forums were well attended. The commission staff did not receive any applicable third party comments about the college in advance of the visit. The team confirmed that College is in compliance with the Commission *Policy on Rights, Responsibilities, and Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions*.

### **Standards and Performance with Respect to Student Achievement**

**Evaluation Items:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance across the institution, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. Course completion is included as one of these elements of student achievement. Other elements of student achievement performance for measurement have been determined as appropriate to the institution's mission. (Standard I.B.3 and Section B. Presentation of Student Achievement Data and Institution-set Standards)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance within each instructional program, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. The defined elements include, but are not limited to, job placement rates for program completers, and for programs in fields where licensure is required, the licensure examination passage rates for program completers. (Standard I.B.3 and Section B. Presentation of Student Achievement Data and Institution-set Standards)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution-set standards for programs and across the institution are relevant to guide self-evaluation and institutional improvement; the defined elements and expected performance levels are appropriate within higher education; the results are reported regularly across the campus; and the definition of elements and results are used in program-level and institution-wide planning to evaluate how well the institution fulfills its mission, to determine needed changes, to allocating resources, and to make improvements. (Standard I.B.3, Standard I.B.9)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution analyzes its performance as to the institution-set standards and as to student achievement, and takes appropriate measures in areas where its performance is not at the expected level. (Standard I.B.4)

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(i); 602.17(f); 602.19 (a-e).]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative:**

The report on Standard I.B.3 and Section B of the institution's Self Evaluation Report provides detailed information on standards of student learning and achievement. The team's report in Section I.B.3, I.B.4, and I.B.9 (pages 26 and 27) provides detailed comments to document the college's compliance with Commission Standards relating to the establishment of institution set standards and performance with respect to student achievement and learning.

**Credits, Program Length, and Tuition**

**Evaluation Items:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Credit hour assignments and degree program lengths are within the range of good practice in higher education (in policy and procedure). (Standard II.A.9)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The assignment of credit hours and degree program lengths is verified by the institution, and is reliable and accurate across classroom based courses, laboratory classes, distance education classes, and for courses that involve clinical practice (if applicable to the institution). (Standard II.A.9)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tuition is consistent across degree programs (or there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition). (Standard I.C.2)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Any clock hour conversions to credit hours adhere to the Department of Education's conversion formula, both in policy and procedure, and in practice. (Standard II.A.9)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission <i>Policy on Credit Hour, Clock Hour, and Academic Year</i> .

[Regulation citations: 600.2 (definition of credit hour); 602.16(a)(1)(viii); 602.24(e), (f); 668.2; 668.9.]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative:**

Team members reviewed the ISER, College policies, the College catalog, and interviewed College stakeholders to document that credit hour assignments and degree program lengths at the institution are within the range of good practice in higher education. The assignment of credit hours and degree program lengths is verified by the institution through its curriculum process (at the program and course approval stage) and through attendance records (at the implementation stage). Assignment of credit is reliable and accurate across classroom based courses, laboratory classes, distance education classes, and for courses that involve clinical practice. Curriculum committee members receive adequate training to ensure this consistency and reliability. Tuition for all course sections is set by the State Legislature (\$46 per unit) and is commonly applied on a unit basis by the college. Team members reviewed and confirmed that the College complies with the Commission *Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits*.

**Transfer Policies**

**Evaluation Items:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Transfer policies are appropriately disclosed to students and to the public. (Standard II.A.10)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to accept credits for transfer. (Standard II.A.10)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution complies with the Commission <i>Policy on Transfer of Credit</i> .

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(viii); 602.17(a)(3); 602.24(e); 668.43(a)(ii).]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative:**

Transfer policies for the college are appropriately disclosed in the college's publications and website. The policies relating to the transfer of credit contain information about the institution's acceptance of credit from other colleges and credit for prior learning. The campus has established articulation agreements with transfer institutions. Team members reviewed the Commission Policy on Transfer of Credit and documented the institution's compliance with the policy.

## Distance Education and Correspondence Education

### Evaluation Items:

<b>For Distance Education:</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution demonstrates regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution demonstrates comparable learning support services and student support services for distance education students. (Standards II.B.1, II.C.1)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution verifies that the student who registers in a distance education program is the same person who participates every time and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit.
<b>For Correspondence Education:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The institution demonstrates comparable learning support services and student support services for correspondence education students. (Standards II.B.1, II.C.1)
<input type="checkbox"/>	The institution verifies that the student who registers in a correspondence education program is the same person who participates every time and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit.
<b>Overall:</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The technology infrastructure is sufficient to maintain and sustain the distance education and correspondence education offerings. (Standard III.C.1)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission <i>Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education</i> .

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(iv), (vi); 602.17(g); 668.38.]

### Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the Institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The college does not offer Distance Education or Correspondence Education.

### Narrative:

In order to demonstrate compliance with Commission *Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education*, the team was provided access to a random sample of 50 online sections from the Fall 2021 semester. Team members reviewed the courses for evidence of regular and substantive interactions between students and professors and were very satisfied with the quality and volume of those interactions. Team members found evidence of faculty engaged

in appropriate modes of interaction that align with college policies on distance education and guidance from internal professional development workshops on distance education teaching and learning. Team interviews confirmed that services provided in face-to-face and online modalities are comparable for students. Team interviews also confirmed that the College has in place log-in procedures that allow it to authenticate the identity of the student when they access course content from the online learning platform.

During the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, a small number of course sections conducted by the college for prison inmates were shifted to correspondence education under the commission’s flexibility guidelines. This was done because inmate populations were so vulnerable to COVID-19 transmission in congregate settings. The team confirmed that the college does not offer more than 50% of a program or certificate in this setting.

**Institutional Disclosure and Advertising and Recruitment Materials**

**Evaluation Items:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution provides accurate, timely (current), and appropriately detailed information to students and the public about its programs, locations, and policies. (Standard I.C.2)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution complies with the Commission <i>Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Policy on Representation of Accredited Status</i> .
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution provides required information concerning its accredited status.(Standard I.C.12)

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1))(vii); 668.6.]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative:**

The team confirmed that the college provides accurate, timely, current, and detailed information to students and the public about its programs, locations, and policies. Confirmation came from the team’s independent review of websites and college publications. The college’s accredited status is listed in its College Catalog and Schedule of Classes (via a click-through link), and is one click away from the main website of the College. In similar fashion, the college maintains an accreditation website that features information about its recently completed Institutional Self Evaluation Report, and its last accreditation.

**Title IV Compliance**

**Evaluation Items:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program, including findings from any audits and program or other review activities by the U.S. Department of Education (ED). (Standard III.D.15)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If applicable, the institution has addressed any issues raised by ED as to financial responsibility requirements, program record-keeping, etc. If issues were not timely addressed, the institution demonstrates it has the fiscal and administrative capacity to timely address issues in the future and to retain compliance with Title IV program requirements. (Standard III.D.15)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If applicable, the institution’s student loan default rates are within the acceptable range defined by ED. Remedial efforts have been undertaken when default rates near or meet a level outside the acceptable range. (Standard III.D.15)
<input type="checkbox"/>	If applicable, contractual relationships of the institution to offer or receive educational, library, and support services meet the Accreditation Standards and have been approved by the Commission through substantive change if required. (Standard III.D.16)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission <i>Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Accredited Organizations</i> and the <i>Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV</i> .

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(v); 602.16(a)(1)(x); 602.19(b); 668.5; 668.15; 668.16; 668.71 et seq.]

**Conclusion Check-Off:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative:**

The institution has a strong record of financial audits with no fiscal findings. During the current accreditation cycle, the College had one compliance audit finding relating to the issue of reporting of Return to Title IV payments within an established number of days from when a student ceases to be enrolled (100% withdrawal). That finding was addressed within the following year’s audit report. Additionally, recent student loan default rates are low and very favorable in comparison to the 30 percent benchmark set by the federal government (8.4 percent in the most recent cohort). The Commission staff have noted no communication from the U.S.

Department of Education about Title IV financial aid concerns at the College. The team confirmed that the college is in compliance with the *Commission's Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV*.

# Standard I

## Mission, Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness

### 1.A. Mission

#### General Observations:

The College of the Canyons mission describes the institution's "fundamental goals and purposes." The mission statement is publicly displayed in multiple locations and is reviewed on a regular basis. Evidence demonstrates that the College's programs, services, and planning are aligned with its mission and that data is used to determine how well it meets its mission. The College mission statement describes the institution's broad educational purposes including the student population it serves and the types of degrees and certificates it offers. The mission guides processes, planning, and the resource allocation process at the institution. The mission is approved by the Board of Trustees, most recently in 2021.

#### Findings and Evidence:

The College mission statement describes the institution's broad purpose of offering "an accessible, holistic, education for students" while championing "diversity, equity, inclusion, and global responsibility." The mission supports students in their pursuit of associate degrees, certificates, credentials, transfer, or workforce skills. The mission statement is published widely and reviewed on a regular basis by constituency groups. The College is committed to student learning and achievement by "providing clear pathways" for success. (I.A.1)

The College of the Canyons uses a variety of data points including enrollment, success, retention, access, and completion to determine if it is effectively accomplishing its mission. Meeting minutes, website materials, presentations, and agendas demonstrate evidence of significant dialog of the data relating to the mission of the College. The planning processes and priorities at the College are directed by the mission. (I.A.2)

College of the Canyons aligns its programs and services with the mission through its comprehensive program review cycle and planning processes. The President's Advisory Council on Budget (PAC-B) works to ensure that the budget allocation process is also driven by the mission, strategic goals, and college-wide planning. The Budget Parameters, outlined in BP 6200 and the Budget Parameters document, provides guidelines for the process of developing the annual budget in support of the mission, strategic goals, planning documents and academic and administrative program reviews. The document is reviewed annually by PAC-B but can be revised as needed based on the final state budget. The document outlines program review and planning budget request processes, communication to and from constituency groups, budget criteria, regulations that affect the budget, and descriptions of revenue and expenditures. The Budget Parameters document indicates that "department objectives must link Strategic Goals to Budget Requests in Program Review." (I.A.3)

The College mission statement is displayed on the College's website, in the catalog, in college-wide planning documents and publications, and on posters throughout the physical campuses. The College reviews and updates the mission statement regularly and publishes it widely to the college community. The mission review process includes review from the College Planning

Team (CPT) and college-wide constituents, such as the Academic Senate, Classified Senate, and the Associated Student Government. (I.A.4)

### Conclusion

The College meets Standard I.A.

## **I.B. Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness**

### General Observations:

Based on the evidence, the College of the Canyons incorporates analysis of quantitative and qualitative data in an ongoing system of evaluation and planning to improve the quality of its educational programs and services. Data are disaggregated and discussed to provide analysis to improve student learning and achievement. Data and assessment results inform program design and planning through the annual program review process, which is integrated with resource requests and allocations. The College uses its mission to guide short and long term planning based on data. Opportunities for College-wide engagement are provided to help guide the development and evaluation of College goals. Resource allocation, both annual and long-term, is guided by college goals and informed by the discussion of relevant trends. Overall planning and assessment are driven by data, including disaggregation of student groups, learning modalities, and other strategies to identify gaps and target improvements according to the principles of equity and student success.

### Findings and Evidence:

The College incorporates substantive dialog for improvement of student learning and achievement through planning related discussions across multiple committees. For example, the Institutional Effectiveness and Inclusive Excellence (IE)<sup>2</sup> committee regularly researches and discusses effective student support strategies designed to improve the student experience and outcomes. Team members attended a meeting of the committee during the visit and minutes reflect robust dialog. (I.B.1)

The College has an ongoing process for assessment of outcomes for instructional and learning support services. Learning outcomes statements are included as part of the course outline and are included in the curriculum committee approval process. Program outcomes are included for all certificates and degree programs. In addition to the program review process, the College has been working on a program portfolio process that will allow students to learn from their own assessments over time, reinforcing the importance of program outcomes and allowing the student to demonstrate to employers the growth in their skills after graduation. Administrative unit outcomes are evaluated and used to inform and track progress on departmental objectives. (I.B.2)

The College has articulated institutional set standards appropriate to its mission in its strategic plan. Obtainment of these set standards is reviewed on a regular basis by college planning committees and is used to guide improvement activities across the college. The standards are published on the research website. (I.B.3)

Assessment to support student learning and achievement is conducted at the institutional as well as program levels. Based on interviews and the evidence provided, the team found that student learning outcomes assessment results are used to inform plans aimed at improving student learning and achievement. (I.B.4)

The College has robust processes for reviewing program outcomes that include disaggregated data by program type and mode of delivery that are linked to college goals. The college uses an appreciative inquiry approach for program review prompts. The questions provide departments the opportunity to tell positive stories about how the improvements they have implemented have impacted students. The College deserves praise for nurturing a culture of inquiry using an innovative tool such as Tableau data visualizations. Data visualization is a graphical representation of reported information and data that provides an accessible way to view and understand trends and patterns in data. Having a clear vision of these data has been instrumental to institutional dialogue and decision-making aimed at improving student success. The research office has made public data on staffing, labor market information, student demographics (including faculty compared to student demographics) and student achievement data (success/retention) that highlights disproportionately impacted areas in a clear manner. The transparency, training (including how to videos) and support for the use of data foster open discussion focused on improvement. This innovative approach makes data more accessible to faculty and staff as they examine their own programs and develop plans to support students most in need. (I.B.5)

The College applies robust and diverse approaches to the disaggregation, analysis, and dissemination of student achievement and success data for student subpopulations to inform strategies to close gaps based on its strategic goals. Academic departments have access to disaggregated achievement data in the Program Review Retention/Success Tableau data visualizations mentioned earlier, and are asked to analyze and reflect on that data, developing action steps within program review. Departments can review disproportionate impact for courses and are supported as they develop an understanding of the data and craft improvement strategies to address areas of concern. Resource requests to support improvements identified in program reviews are summarized by the college administration and brought to a college committee for review and feedback. (I.B.6)

The College regularly evaluates and enhances its policies and practices to support the accomplishment of its mission. An example noted by the team is the ongoing review of the assessment questions at the end of the program review which ask participants to reflect on the process and suggest changes for improvement. (I.B.7)

The College regularly communicates evaluation reports and analyses to the campus community. The team found that communication and analysis of institution-set standards is embedded throughout the College's website, research reports, Fact Book, and planning documents such as the Strategic Plan and associated annual updates, among other sources. (I.B.8)

The College engages in systematic evaluation and planning that examines both short and long term needs to reach its goals. The College utilizes a comprehensive approach to ensure that planning, including for programs, services, and resources, is aligned with and leads to improvement of effectiveness and quality, and to accomplishment of the College's mission. (I.B.9)

### Conclusions:

The College meets Standard I.B.

## **I.C. Institutional Integrity**

### General Observations:

Evidence demonstrates that College of the Canyons provides accurate information on its mission, learning outcomes, support services, and educational programs to the community through multiple venues including websites and the college catalog. Data visualization tools provide publicly accessible student achievement data including enrollment, student retention and success and program awards. Degree and certificate programs are described through the eLumen website, academic program maps, and the program mapper tool. Board policies and administrative procedures on academic freedom support the freedom of the faculty and students. Other Board policies and administrative procedures outline standards of conduct, disciplinary processes, and compliance with accreditation standards and eligibility requirements. The team noted that the College is catching up on its process of reviewing and revising Board Policies and Administrative Procedures (see Standard IV). The total cost of attending College of the Canyons is available to students on the Colleges website and in the catalog. Evidence of its policy and procedure review processes as well as its planning and decision making practices demonstrate that the College of the Canyons maintains institutional integrity.

### Findings and Evidence:

The College provides clear and accurate information on its mission, accreditation standing, programs, student support services, and student achievement data to students, staff, and the community utilizing multiple channels, such as websites and the catalog. The accuracy of the catalog is verified by staff and administrators and is updated annually. Websites for instruction, counseling and academic schools provide details of academic programs and pathways. Learning outcomes are posted in the college catalog, program mapper, academic program maps, course outline of record, and eLumen. The Curriculum Committee Handbook outlines the curriculum review process. (I.C.1)

College of the Canyons produces a catalog each year that is available on the college's website in a PDF document and Flipbook mode. Past catalogs and catalog addendums are also posted online with links to PDF versions. The catalog includes current information on all facts, requirements, policies and procedures listed as catalog requirements. (I.C.2)

College of the Canyons communicates academic quality to students and the community through many avenues including the college website, college catalog, and planning documents. Success, retention, awards, grades, and program information are available to students and the community through the data visualization dashboards. These dashboards disaggregate data by ethnicity, gender, and age but also indicate disproportionately impacted students. The published ACCJC Annual Report gives information on job placement for degree and certificate completers as well as licensure pass rates. Transfer data can be found in the Fact Book and the Strategic Plan. (I.C.3)

Official curriculum information for courses and programs at College of the Canyons is available to students, prospective students, and the community through the eLumen website. Course and Program outlines of record are available in eLumen and contain information such as purpose,

requirements, objectives, learning outcomes, transferability, and credits. The college catalog also includes program and course details such as units, pre-requisites, and admission requirements if different or in addition to the College's. Program Mapper, available on the college's website, demonstrates salary, career, and growth details as well as pathways to completion. (I.C.4)

The College Policy Committee (CPC) oversees the planned calendar of board policy and administrative procedures (BP and AP) review. At the time of the visit, CPC was working to catch up on its regular cycle of BP and AP review. The college catalog and schedule of classes are updated regularly and reviewed by the office of instruction for accuracy and posted on the college's website. Other publications are reviewed by the appropriate area depending on the publication, as well as the Public Information Office for accessibility and to ensure it has the College of the Canyons format. Websites are reviewed and updated to provide accurate information to students and the community. (I.C.5)

The College of the Canyons publishes resident and non-resident enrollment fees as well as student fees, transcript fees, and parking fees on their website and in their college catalog. Additionally, the Financial Aid Office website offers a Net Price Calculator to estimate the cost of attendance including costs of books and supplies, room and board, and other expenses. The College makes other resources available to reduce fees including the Canyons Promise program which gives first-time, full-time students the opportunity to enroll tuition free for two years. (I.C.6)

The College of the Canyons BP 4030 defines Academic Freedom and outlines the district's support of the principles of Academic Freedom for all constituencies. The BP includes a statement of support for faculty to "inquire, to teach controversial content, to model and encourage critical thinking, and to present multiple viewpoints." AP 4030 outlines the membership of the Academic Freedom Committee as well as the work and procedures of the committee. Academic Freedom policies are publically available in an online platform called BoardDocs as well as in the College catalog. (I.C.7)

The College's catalog declares that the College has a philosophy of respect for all people which includes an expectation of "honesty, integrity, and ethical behavior." Several Board policies (BP 5529, Student Conduct; BP 5530, Disciplinary Action; and BP 5531, Due Process - Student Disciplinary Action) identify reasons for student disciplinary action, disciplinary methods, and due process procedures for alleged misconduct. BP 5531 includes a description of the appeals process. BP/AP 3050 (Statement of Professional Ethics) charges each employee with the personal responsibility to demonstrate commitment to excellence in education without compromise to the principles of ethical behavior. BP/AP's 7360 (Discipline and Dismissal, Academic Employees) and 7365 (Discipline and Dismissal, Classified Employees) describes the discipline and dismissal processes for behavior such as dishonesty, unprofessional conduct, and persistent violations of school policies for academic and classified employees, respectively. These procedures include the appeals process. BP 2715 outlines the Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice for Board members. This policy states that the Board is responsible to "hold the educational welfare of the students of the District as his/her primary concern in all decisions." (I.C.8)

BP/AP 4030 defines Academic Freedom for faculty based on the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure. The BP supports academic freedom and encourages critical thinking and personal growth without compromising "the respect to which all persons are

entitled.” AP 4030 establishes an Academic Freedom Committee and details committee membership responsibilities and procedures. BP 3050 on professional ethics states that each employee has a personal responsibility to commit to the principles of ethical behavior without compromise and to uphold the Districts Statement of Professional Ethics. Student evaluations provide opportunity for feedback in areas of instructor demonstrated respect for students and fair grading systems. (I.C.9).

College of the Canyons has board policies and administrative procedures on student conduct and professional ethics. The College does not seek to instill specific religious, philosophical, or other beliefs or worldviews in its staff, faculty, administrators, or students. (I.C.10)

The College of the Canyons does not operate in foreign locations. (I.C.11)

The College of the Canyons complies with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, guidelines, and requirements for public disclosure. The College’s accreditation website is one click from the home page and provides links to current and former ISER’s, team reports, midterm reports, commission letters, substantive change proposals, and commission reports. BP and AP 3200 (Accreditation) ensures the District complies with accreditation processes and standards of ACCJC. (I.C.12)

College of the Canyons accreditation website demonstrates the College’s relationship with external organizations such as the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation, National Association for Education of Young Children, and the American Bar Association. The accreditation website indicates the College is in good standing with its accrediting agency. Required reports and documents are posted publicly on the website and demonstrate that the College meets reporting deadlines. (I.C.13)

College of the Canyons Strategic Plan demonstrates the College’s commitment to students. The strategic planning goals of Access, Engagement, and Success highlights the importance the College puts into high quality education and successful student achievement and learning. The Budget Parameters support the Strategic goals of the College. (I.C.14)

#### Conclusions:

The College meets Standard I.C.

## **Standard II**

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

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

##### General Observations:

The College demonstrates a commitment to quality educational programs that meet the needs of the students and the community in a variety of modalities and scheduling options. Course, Program and Institutional outcomes have been identified and are published in several locations. Outcomes assessment was paused pending transition to a new management system which led to data collection in multiple locations. The College is working to bring all assessment data into a single location in order to better manage data analysis in disaggregated form. Policies and procedures are in place to support data-driven analysis of its instructional programs. The College has identified a need to enhance its strategies for providing clear information regarding credit for prior learning and its strategies for monitoring outcomes achievement.

The College has experienced significant growth in both dual/concurrent enrollment and non-credit offerings. Its curriculum is guided by faculty experts and advisory boards where appropriate. The College participates in a vigorous cycle of program review. The team confirmed in an interview that areas of improvement are addressed in subsequent annual program review cycles.

##### Findings and Evidence:

The College has 13 unique schools which support its mission and lead to attainment of stated student learning outcomes and associated degrees and certificates. The College's SLO Handbook provides protocols for developing, assessing, and analyzing results of course, program and institutional SLOs to ensure ongoing alignment with the college mission. The Curriculum Committee Handbook provides criteria for approving curriculum. These criteria include appropriateness to the mission. The Educational Master Plan and the Strategic Plan outline efforts to ensure that curriculum is current and aligned with student and community needs. The College's development of a Civic and Community Engagement Initiative provides evidence of its efforts to create educational programming aligned with its strategic plan, tied to its mission. The College has expanded its online offerings, to include OnlineLive (remote synchronous instruction) and correspondence education for justice-impacted students adding provisional DE addenda to support learners during the pandemic. Additionally, substantial growth in non-credit courses and certificates support the College's mission to offer "accessible, holistic education while championing diversity, equity, inclusion and global responsibility." (II.A.1)

The College curriculum development and review processes are thoroughly described in the Curriculum Committee handbook. Curriculum development and review begins at the department level with input from full-time and part-time faculty. Throughout the 5-step curriculum process, faculty review new curriculum which is ultimately approved by the Academic Senate and the

Board. Advisory committees contribute to the development and review of CTE programs and courses. Courses are reviewed on a regular 5-year cycle (2-year cycle for CTE courses). The Program Review process requires faculty to evaluate the success of their courses and to determine areas for improvement of student completions and disproportionate impact based on a variety of data presented. The team confirmed in interviews that annual program review updates provide opportunity to reflect on progress made toward previous goals. The College offers faculty opportunities for salary advancement through their Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Interviews provided further information regarding broad-based implementation of training through a variety of committees and department-level data coaching. The College has identified, as part of “Data-Coaching 2.0,” strategies for monitoring the impact of training on success and retention. The curriculum process requires the committee to utilize a “Cultural Competency Review Checklist” to evaluate whether curriculum and individual syllabi are responsive to students’ diverse needs. Course revisions were made in Math and English in response to state mandate through the work of Faculty Inquiry Groups. The College received a Bellwether Award for its work in course redesign to reduce equity gaps. The College has created a large number of non-credit courses and certificates contributing to substantial growth of the college. The College has made innovative use of the non-credit curriculum to include stackable certificates that also support credit pathways, programs for continuing growth for faculty and staff, and community educational opportunities. (II.A.2)

The College has an identified 3-year assessment cycle for SLOs, though assessment was temporarily on hold during a software transition. Program Review documents indicate that departmental discussion and planning is occurring based on assessment of SLOs. The College provided information, in an interview, that while assessment has been occurring, data has been captured in a variety of locations, making large scale analysis and disaggregation difficult. The college is working on integrating existing data into the eLumen platform. The Committee for Assessing Student Learning (CASL) has forwarded a recommendation to the Academic Senate to formalize assessment processes and timelines at the course, program and institutional level. The team encourages the College to continue working with the Academic Senate to formalize their process of consistently assessing and analyzing CSLOs, PSLOs and ISLOs. CSLOs, PSLOs, and ISLOs are addressed in annual program review in partnership with the CASL. An annual report of progress is submitted to the Office of Instruction. Course level SLOs appear on the course outline of record, program and institutional SLOs are found in the college catalog, the eLumen curriculum package, the school websites and guided pathway mappers. Syllabi are reviewed by academic deans, department chairs, and the curricular and assessment coordinators to ensure all syllabi contain course SLOs as stated in the Course Outline of Record. Disproportionate impact is reported and widely discussed in a variety of arenas (committee, department, school). Training through CETL is made available. (II.A.3)

The College offers pre-collegiate courses in math, English and English as a Second Language. They also offer non-credit courses in these areas as well as Vocational ESL, Basic Skills, College Success and GED preparation. The course catalog, outlines of record, and schedule distinguish this curriculum from college level coursework. The College evaluates data which has been utilized to redesign curriculum in its efforts to shorten pathways and better ensure student success. Data shared with the team in interviews reflects slight improvements in success and retention as a result of curricular changes in these areas. Further curriculum and scheduling

revisions continue as the departments work to meet state mandates and reduce equity gaps. (II.A.4)

Curriculum is developed and reviewed by faculty at a variety of levels to ensure it meets the standards adopted by the College through Board policies and administrative procedures. Length, breadth, depth, rigor, sequence, completion time and synthesis of learning are all monitored by the curriculum committee as outlined in the curriculum handbook. (II.A.5)

The College provides a variety of scheduling options and term lengths to meet the needs of students and to improve student success rates. Additionally, courses are offered in a variety of modalities (traditional, online, HyFlex, Hybrid, OnlineLive). The College has utilized a Guided Pathways approach to scheduling to ensure that students can complete in a reasonable timeframe. It utilizes the “Section Development and Management Principles Document” in its decision-making regarding section development, additions, and cancellations. The team confirmed, during observation of a deans’ council meeting, that this document is updated to reflect current trends and institutional goals in a collaborative process which allows for flexibility to support student success. The College has seen substantial growth in the dual enrollment programs at area high schools, in an effort to improve college readiness in the communities it serves. Additionally, it has expanded its non-credit offerings, providing tuition-free certificates to support industry needs in the community. The team applauds the College’s innovative efforts in this regard. (II.A.6)

The College utilizes a variety of modalities providing flexibility in course-taking patterns. Faculty are required to participate in training to be eligible to teach in online formats. Departments file Distance Education (DE) addenda for courses offered in alternative formats. Emergency DE addenda were developed for courses that could be taught via DE methodologies in an emergency, and a Correspondence Education addendum was created for courses offered to justice-impacted students when faculty could no longer go to the detention centers during the pandemic. Faculty were trained in an abbreviated format for both DE and Correspondence Education which resulted in provisional certification with minimum competency level demonstration including course management system knowledge and accessibility. The team confirmed in interviews that provisional certification ceased to be accepted in December of 2020 when the campus returned to its required training. The College also added training for the OnlineLive modality as a requirement to teach in this format. Faculty are re-certified in all modalities on a 3-year cycle. Faculty are provided data to evaluate success rates disaggregated by modality. These data are used for schedule decision making and in program review. The College has implemented a variety of programs to address equity gaps in achievement. These include mentoring programs, establishment of a multi-cultural center, and establishment of an early-alert system (Canyons Connects). Additionally, new curriculum has been developed focusing on African-American Studies and establishing faculty inquiry groups to address the needs of marginalized populations. (II.A.7)

The College has implemented BP and AP 4235 in response to changes in Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) Policy from the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office. No departmental assessments are utilized for this purpose. The team encourages the college to

implement its improvement plan to develop a more robust CPL website interface in order to clarify processes for students. (II.A.8)

The College curriculum process requires that SLOs and Objectives appear on all course outlines, and are published in syllabi. Team members reviewed course information sheets and confirmed adherence to this process. Data coaches provide assistance to faculty as they develop and analyze available data regarding student success. Grades are determined and credit is awarded based on commonly accepted standards as evidenced by reviewed syllabi, course outlines, and board policy. (II.A.9)

The College participates in a variety of articulation agreements making transfer easier for students from College of the Canyons. Additionally, transfer from external institutions is facilitated by a process which can be requested after completion of 12 units. Policies are published in the catalog and a variety of counseling office forms. The Admissions and Records office and counselors participate in this process. The College offers a variety of transfer workshops as well as facilitating meetings with university representatives. (II.A.10)

The College has General Education (GE) patterns that incorporate institutional learning outcomes that are aligned with the standard. ISLOs are mapped with course SLOs for all degree programs. The College has identified rubrics for ISLOs which assist faculty in evaluation of learning outcomes. Program SLOs are either assessed indirectly through CSLOs or directly through an ePortfolio system. Program level outcomes are identified in the Program Mapper website. New courses must include ISLOs in the curriculum process. (II.A.11)

General Education (GE) requirements are established by the curriculum committee and described in board policy. They are published in the catalog and on counseling advising sheets. GE courses are articulated with GE requirements at transfer institutions. (II.A.12)

The College offers degrees in focused study areas. Course outcomes are designed to build program outcomes and are mapped to institutional learning outcomes. Outcomes are developed utilizing faculty expertise and industry standards. Career Education program outcomes include input from advisory boards. The team confirmed PSLO assessment practices in interviews. (II.A.13)

The College has 28 Career Education degree and certificate programs. These programs have advisory boards which contribute to curriculum and outcomes development as evidenced by advisory board minutes. Programs that lead to licensing exams have strong passage rates. Examples include nursing (89.4) and EMT (90.8). High licensure pass rates provide evidence of technical and professional competency. (II.A.14)

The College has a program viability committee charged with implementing BP 4021 (Program Viability - Initiation, Modification and Discontinuance) which addresses program discontinuance. The committee has only recently addressed discontinuance with a few programs as a result of industry and educational requirements. For instance, a program viability review process led to the discontinuance of a Sports Medicine AS degree in 2021. This has highlighted the need for more clear processes. Team member review of committee minutes confirmed that

processes have been implemented to support students through the discontinuance of programs. This support includes counseling regarding options, assistance with transfer to other institutions which provide the program and identification of alternate pathways. The committee has now established procedures which provide clear information, analysis of impact, support for faculty and students and timely notification of potential discontinuance. (II.A.15)

The College has a variety of plans driven by the mission, values and philosophy. Regular program review is evident as is curriculum review. Handbooks guide faculty and administrators on evaluation and improvement. The team encourages the college to continue work towards completion of its improvement plan item to monitor SLO mastery and achievement data in all modalities. (II.A.16)

Conclusions:

The college meets Standard II.A.

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

### General Observations:

College of the Canyons provides library and learning support services aligned with its mission to serve all students regardless of campus, location, or modality. The College continuously evaluates program effectiveness and alignment to the mission through the annual/comprehensive program planning, review, and resource request processes. The College regularly evaluates the services, collections, equipment, and contracts that they provide to ensure that they are of sufficient quality, currency, depth, and variety to meet student needs. Quantitative and qualitative data on usage, trends, and user feedback concerning collections and services is compiled and used to improve their library and learning support services.

### Findings and Evidence:

The College supports student learning and enhances the mission of the college through robust library and other support services. These services are sufficient in quantity, currency, depth, and variety to support the College's educational programs and are available to all students, regardless of location (Valencia or Canyon Country) or means of delivery, including a variety of distance and correspondence education formats. Information about these programs is widely published in the college catalog, faculty handbooks, orientation materials, department meetings, and provided directly to students through training presentations, emails, flyers, libguides, Canvas modules, and YouTube videos. The library facilities include physical materials, computer access, Wi-Fi access, study space, library instruction, reference support, and serve as a location to showcase student art. The Learning Center (TLC) provides free access to tutoring services, academic workshops, and educational resources. These resources can be utilized at physical locations and with web-based access through the virtual campus. TLC promotes its services through the college catalog, handouts, in-class presentations, guided tours, student newsletters, textbook inserts, and social media. (II.B.1)

Librarians have the primary responsibility to select and maintain educational equipment and materials to fully support student learning and enhance the achievement of the mission. Selection and services are discussed in library-wide meetings, retreats, and one-on-one meetings. Classroom faculty are invited to give feedback on learning materials and books and their needs are considered in the decision-making process. Similarly, learning support services professionals are appropriately and adequately involved in the selection of learning support materials and services. TLC staff meet weekly to evaluate current practices, develop additional resources, and address potential barriers to student learning. TLC staff also participate in the departmental meetings for math and English, to ensure that tutoring services are directly aligned to the goals and needs of the associated instructional departments. The practice reflects that tutoring is respected as a core element of the instructional team and is deeply interwoven within the academic departments at the College. (II.B.2)

The College conducts regular evaluations of the library and of learning support services through the program review, planning, and resource allocation processes. Program review is used to

evaluate and assess progress toward administrative service area outcomes and unit objectives. Library goals are shaped by qualitative data from user surveys and quantitative data concerning interactions with library users, use of collection materials, and participation in instruction sections. In addition to program review, these data are also used for discussion in librarian and department meetings. TLC goals are similarly shaped through qualitative data from user surveys and quantitative data including tutoring-hours reports, academic-year tutoring summaries, and use by students in specific courses. (II.B.3)

In addition to these internally collected data, the office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness evaluates student satisfaction with both library and learning support services access in the Annual Survey of Students. The library is in the process of designing and implementing an annual survey instrument that can more precisely evaluate student satisfaction with the various services offered by the library. The team encourages continued effort in this area to better understand student needs and to evaluate the sufficiency of services. (II.B.3)

The College has specific Board Policies and Administrative Procedures to govern contracts with outside entities (BP/AP 6340, Bids and Contracts) and the accessibility of information technology (BP/AP 6365). The College has arrangements with the Council of Chief Librarians that provides resources such as the library services platform, electronic databases, and a 24/7 chat reference service platform. In addition, the library contracts for additional databases and utilities that support the ability of the library to provide services. Formal agreements are documented, and the program review process is used to demonstrate that resources are adequate, accessible, and utilized by students. (II.B.4)

Conclusion:

The College meets Standard II.B.

## **II.C. Student Support Services**

### General Observations:

The college has devoted substantial resources to student support services in alignment with its mission. It has established a variety of alliances designed to connect and engage students and to provide appropriate support. It has adopted counseling and advisement in both online and in person modalities and added “Counseling to Go” which provides after hours support. Clubs, activities, and athletic programs provide additional engagement opportunities. The College regularly assesses its programs and uses data to make improvements.

### Findings and Evidence:

The student services areas of the College participate in regular program review as a primary means of evaluating services. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) is administered regularly to assess student engagement with these services. Improvements made as a result of these assessments include new non-credit curriculum development and increased information regarding total cost of attendance being made available. Services have been available online and at all sites, including the jail system until COVID issues removed access and forced a brief move to correspondence education for that population. (II.C.1)

The College has established Administrative Unit Outcomes which are reviewed during the regular program review cycle. Assessment of these outcomes is achieved through an annual student survey as well as the CCSSE and other research surveys. Improvements made include establishment of the Multi-cultural Center, enhanced wi-fi for students, and college efforts to address basic needs. (II.C.2)

Services are available online and in person. Information is easily located on the college website and is linked in Canvas. Student support information is also published in the college catalog. The College has indicated in its improvement plan that it continues to explore issues of basic need (food insecurity, homelessness, etc.) and plans to increase services as need is identified. (II.C.3)

The college has a wide variety of clubs, honor societies and alliances as well as an athletics program in alignment with its mission and provides additional supports and enhances student engagement. In 2020, more than 60 student clubs were operating at the College, along with seven honor societies. In 2019, the College began forming student Alliance Groups through its Equity Minded Practitioners Workgroup. These alliances or affinity groups allow like-minded students to have a place to turn to for help navigating college life. A key group that is receiving attention from the College is the Black Student Alliance. Additionally, the College offers 17 intercollegiate athletic programs for student participation. All of these activities and opportunities for student engagement are governed by board policy. (II.C.4)

Counseling and academic advising are available to all students and in a variety of modalities. Staff have a robust training program before starting, and ongoing weekly training ensures currency and a commitment to equity and success. Recent institutional research survey data

suggests that students are generally satisfied with counseling services (69%) and that peer advisers and counselors were seen as available and accessible (63%, Fall 2021 Data Highlights). The Behavior Intervention Team is available for students requiring more urgent support, and a health and wellness center provides mental health services for students, staff and faculty. (II.C.5)

The College's admissions policies are available in a variety of formats. Applications may be submitted electronically or on paper. Programs with admissions requirements based on external accreditation requirements are also published on program websites and in the college catalog. Clear pathways are defined and available through the Program Mapper and provided during counseling sessions. (II.C.6)

The College has recently re-designed placement practices in English, math and ESL in alignment with changes in California law. In fact, the College pioneered some of the placement reforms initiated in California that are designed to eliminate equity gaps and was recognized with a Bellwether Award in 2019 for its efforts. The process has eliminated placement tests and now relies on self placement that is guided by high school coursework and GPA. The process continues to be evaluated through research, faculty inquiry groups and supported through ongoing professional development. Student Services employees have training to ensure new processes are understood. (II.C.7)

The college has processes in place to secure student data and ensure confidentiality which are governed by BP and AP (5040 Student Records, Directory Information, and Privacy; and 3310 Records Retention and Destruction). Staff agree to confidentiality agreements upon each log-on to the system. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) training is ongoing for all employees who handle student records. In addition, the College hosts regular training on issues dealing with cyber security and password protections. (II.C.8)

### Conclusions:

The college meets Standard II.C.

## Standard III

### Resources

#### III.A. Human Resources

##### General Observations:

Based on a review of the evidence and interviews with college personnel, the College effectively uses its human resources to achieve its mission and to improve quality and institutional effectiveness. The College utilizes its budget and planning processes to determine appropriate staffing levels for faculty and staff needed to support effective programs and services for students and the community. Personnel are effectively evaluated with the process used to inform needed professional development opportunities. Professional development opportunities are provided in a range of offerings to support college mission and goals. The team was impressed with the breadth and innovation that is found in the College's professional development opportunities.

##### Findings and Evidence:

Based on a review of the evidence and interviews with college personnel, the College has processes to ensure it employs qualified personnel to address the needs of its student population. Requests for new personnel are reviewed and evaluated by the appropriate academic or classified staffing committees as well as Executive Cabinet members and the Human Resources (HR) Office. The College has policies and procedures to ensure well-qualified employees, with standards of skills, education and experience that exceed minimum qualifications. (III.A.1)

The College requires faculty to possess appropriate qualifications necessary to contribute to the college mission. Faculty are required to meet the minimum qualifications for faculty and administrators established by the California Board of Governors and Academic Senate. Through its job posting and interview processes the College ensures faculty are experts in their subject areas and serve the needs of a diverse student population. (III.A.2)

The College requires Administrators and other employees responsible for educational programs and services to possess appropriate qualifications necessary to contribute to the college mission. Through its job posting and interview processes the College ensures these personnel support institutional effectiveness and academic quality. The Vice President of HR develops the job announcements with participation of the appropriate administrative supervisor. Announcements clearly state job duties, knowledge, skills, abilities, and minimum qualifications necessary for job performance. (III.A.3)

The College adheres to policies and procedures to verify the required educational degrees of all faculty, administrators, and classified employees are from institutions accredited by recognized

U.S. accrediting agencies. Team member review of the College catalog confirms that faculty hold appropriate degrees that align with College policies. (III.A.4)

All personnel are regularly evaluated on criteria specified in negotiated collective bargaining agreements or administrative contracts. Evaluations review required duties, performance, and improvements since the last evaluation. Administrators complete self-evaluations which identify goals, areas of improvement, community and college engagement and assessment of their team. This is reviewed and commented on by the supervisor. Effective online teaching is evaluated through observations specific to the subject and delivery modality. (III.A.5)

III.A.6 is not applicable.

The College has policies and procedures in place to maintain appropriate faculty staffing levels. The procedures include assessing annual program reviews, considering budget and student and program needs. Current staffing levels place the full time faculty count at 215, complemented by 520 non-credit and part time faculty members. These numbers are in line with similarly sized institutions in the region. (III.A.7)

The College has policies and practices providing adjunct faculty orientation, oversight, evaluation, professional development, and opportunities to participate in district-wide governance and committees. HR provides onboarding to all new employees, and the Instruction office holds a paid orientation for new part time faculty. An Adjunct Handbook provides in-depth reference information. (III.A.8)

The College uses an integrated budget and program review process to ensure sufficient staffing. The Classified Staffing Committee and division administrators review budgets and requests for new staff annually. Staffing levels are determined by district budget, growth and overall changes in the student population and considers such factors as college initiatives, departmental goals, changing regulations, and the needs of new facilities. Fall 2021 staffing levels reviewed by team members indicate that the College has a classified staffing count (369) in line with similarly sized institutions in the region (CCC Data Mart). (III.A.9)

The College maintains a sufficient number of administrators with appropriate preparation and expertise to provide continuity and effective administrative leadership and services that support the institution's mission and purposes. At the time of the visit, the College reported that it has 65 classified administrators and 31 educational administrators. (III.A.10)

The district publishes its personnel policies and procedures and reviews them on a regular cycle. Constituent groups take responsibility for reviewing policies related to them. Employees are informed of these policies during onboarding and ongoing training. (III.A.11)

Based on a review of the evidence and interviews with college personnel, the College has policies and practices that create and maintain programs, practices, and services to support its diverse personnel. Board Policies and Administrative Procedures on nondiscrimination, Equal Employment Opportunity, prohibiting discrimination and harassment, and investigating complaints alleging discrimination or show the College's commitment to fair treatment of

employees. The College's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Plan, most recently revised and approved in 2019, addresses fair employment and best practices to create a diverse workforce. (III.A.12)

The College upholds a written code of professional ethics in BP 3050 Statement of Professional Ethics. It outlines the ethical obligations of those acting on behalf of the College. Consequences for violation of the code of ethics are subject to an investigation of such violation and potential disciplinary action. (III.A.13)

The College offers professional development opportunities for all college employees. The professional development program at the college is supported by 3 separate committees (faculty, classified, administrators) that are integrated through the Inclusive Professional Development Coordinating Committee. Professional development is also supported by several staff and is guided by an action plan linked to the college mission and priorities. All programs are evaluated and the results of assessments are used to plan improvements. The college should be complimented for its innovative professional development program, including the Leadership Education in Action Program (LEAP). Several hundred professional development sessions are held each year in a variety of modalities and topics. The LEAP program in particular helps to develop agents of institutional change. The program culminates with the writing of Business Plans by groups of participants. Those plans are used to promote change at the college. For example in 2021 one plan was to "help attract a more diverse applicant pool" to "aid in creating a more diverse workforce" that included practical steps the college can take to improve practice. Taken together, the professional development opportunities, including LEAP, are truly innovative in fostering a community of learners dedicated to student success. (III.A.14)

Personnel files are secured in the HR office. Team members were able to confirm via video tour that the files are kept secure in a locked office. There is a process in place for employees to review their HR files. (III.A.15)

### Conclusions:

The College meets Standard III.A.

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

#### General Observations:

College of the Canyons demonstrates its commitment to its students through its physical resources, as the college uses various physical plant and facilities standards to provide adequate access, resources, safety, and security to all its locations. Within its Board Policies the District complies with standards prescribed by applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations affecting employee safety, and to conduct continuous education and training to develop safe practices. In addition, over the last 20 years, the College has passed three local bond measures that delivered multiple modernization projects, new buildings, and instructional facilities. Bond funds have also helped create an ADA Transition Plan to ensure its Educational Master Plan and Facilities Master Plan align. The District meets the physical resources standard as it addresses instructional needs and improvement goals through an ongoing, interactive, collaborative planning process. Physical resources are created with health and safety as primary priorities, abiding by all state processes while meeting all regulatory requirements. Resources are planned and designed to be optimally efficient over their life cycle, minimizing energy, maintenance and labor costs.

#### Findings and Evidence:

The College has and maintains safe and sufficient physical resources to ensure access, safety, and security of all its physical resources. Team members reviewed the College's Clery Safety and Security Report and found very low crime rates at the Valencia and Canyons Country Campuses. The College has department structures that ensure compliance with the Educational and Facilities Master Plan and Decision-Making Guide through its bond implementation. These structures also follow the Uniform Building Code, California Building Code, Americans with Disabilities Act, and National Fire and Electrical Codes. The College is using bond funds to implement an ADA Upgrade project that enhances college accessibility for all. (III.B.1)

The College plans, acquires, builds, and maintains its physical resources to ensure effective utilization and continued quality to support its programs and services. The college uses its institutional plan, Educational Master Plan, Facilities Master Plan, and Strategic Plan to effectively plan the preventive maintenance schedule and update of physical resources. The College also ensures the use of campus grounds as a cooperative resource to bring learning elements and the community together. An example would be the Biodiversity initiative that uses the campus grounds as a living lab for inquiry, experiential learning, and a research garden that the community can partake in. Team members were impressed with this initiative at the College. The planning and collaborative way in which physical resources are maintained and then utilized demonstrates the college's commitment to using its physical resources to uphold its mission. (III.B.2)

The college uses its educational master planning to inform the facilities master planning. Plans are evaluated and updated regularly, using the annual program review, 5-Year Construction Plan, the Technology Plan, and program viability tools. This regular and ongoing sequence of planning

and evaluation processes, which employ utilization and other relevant data, assure the feasibility and effectiveness of the College's physical resources, including its facilities and equipment. The District completes annual reviews of all programs and compares them to the Educational and Facilities Master Plan. At the conclusion of the program review process, the Executive Cabinet reviews the data of both planning documents and suggests revisions to make any new plans or change existing plans to ensure instructional priorities are met when institutional funds are available. (III.B.3)

The college continuously evaluates its physical resources to provide facilities and services necessary to meet its long-range planning and improvement goals, with educational program planning and driving facilities planning. The college executes an annual 5-year Scheduled Maintenance Plan, to keep facilities operating at peak efficiency. In addition, the college uses Measure E General Obligation bond funds to sustain the maintenance needed to keep operations running effectively with expenses at a minimum, to the general fund. To minimize ongoing costs of maintenance and repair, equipment is identified that is reliable for a long time and ensures planning, reducing total cost of ownership expenses and good management of the facilities budget. This saves labor costs and reduces expenses while using its specification list of equipment and materials to house spare parts in its warehouse and keep costs down. The District's planning processes result in effective, safe, efficient facilities while maintaining the lowest possible total life-cycle cost. (III.B.4)

Conclusions:

The College meets Standard III.B.

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

#### General Observations:

The College effectively manages its technological resources to help achieve the mission and goals of the college and to support continuous improvement. It effectively and consistently manages resources across campuses through a centralized, district-wide approach. From resource allocation to continual compliance oversight, the district offices and participatory governance committees collaborate to make effective and timely decisions on technology and equipment. Processes, policies, and training are coordinated and guided by the College's Technology Master Plan (2017-2022). College surveys document high levels of satisfaction with technology services.

#### Findings and Evidence:

College of the Canyons offers centralized support for technological services, professional support, facilities, hardware and software through its Information Technology Division, which is broken into three main areas: Computer Support Services, Infrastructure and Information Security, and Enterprise Applications. These areas are informed by constituent needs drawn from annual and comprehensive Program Reviews, and supported by relevant committees (Technology Committee, Stand-Up Committee, Web Committee, Educational Technology Committee, Information Security Committee), each with constituent and expertise-based membership. The Technology Master Plan (TMP) guides resource allocation. (III.C.1)

The District IT department plans for, updates and replaces technology on a regular basis. The TMP (and the committees listed above) guide decision making and resource allocation. The TMP also includes a technology replacement schedule for all major technology areas at both campuses. Additional evidence of formal planning processes for continuous improvement of programs is also evident in the "Innovations Grant" program which allows, annually, for technology requests related to new and innovative teaching and learning projects. Team members were impressed with the Innovation Grant program as one of many entrepreneurial approaches to student teaching and learning that exists within the College ecosystem. The district maintains the quality and capacity to meet the faculty, and staff support services for technology. This is demonstrated by the 2021 survey indicating exceptionally high levels of satisfaction in areas including (but not limited to), "availability," "timeliness," "adequacy of resources," "replacement cycle," and "training on use." In fact, more than 90 percent of staff reported being satisfied or very satisfied with IT support services. (III.C.2)

Both the Valencia and Canyon Country campuses are provided with reliable, safe and secure technology. Technology across all sites is standardized, per the TMP. This includes Internet access through the Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California (CENIC). There are CENIC connections through a secure data network at each campus with standardized user-type access guidelines, standardized classroom technology set-ups, and "HyFlex" classrooms. The District has adopted CANVAS as its learning management system, offering a consistent and supported environment for all users. OneDrive is also made available (and supported) for all

employees. In spring 2021, the College completed the shift to a “single sign on” system. These elements offer a consistent and secure business software platform. Hardware security is maintained through pre-installed tracking devices on all district laptops, as well as through relevant Board Policy (including BP/AP 3535 - Public Safety Camera System). In addition, the District has contracted with an outside vendor to assess and improve its network security. It has subsequently hired a “Systems Security Administrator” to continue to monitor, recommend and implement security measures. Included in these are in house storage, off-site (cloud based) data archiving, and individualized IT staff accounts that ensure single sign-ons do not expose the entire system (III.C.3)

The College provides a wide range of technology-related professional development and support for all constituent groups and college areas. All new employees receive a brief introduction to cyber security (continuing employees have access to a full cyber-security training). The College hosts IT training workshops. These are ongoing and are advertised in a monthly newsletter (Powered On). The Online Education Department offers instructor training for online teaching (Since spring 2020 over 250 faculty have completed the full training). It also offers stand-alone, modular training by topic (over 25 different offerings). The College also hosts workshops based on an annual assessment survey which includes an opportunity to suggest technology-related needs. In addition, it hosts a Summer Technology Institute. Online Education hosts a student support site with computer support sessions via Zoom and information regarding online access to tutoring, the library, and Canvas support. (III.C.4)

The College is guided in the appropriate use of technology for teaching and learning by relevant District Board Policies and Administrative Procedures, including, BP/AP 3720 (Computer and Network Use) which includes explicit guidelines for students, faculty, staff and administrators. This policy is updated as part of a regular cycle of review and update. Additionally, it has updated the procedures in response to specific and changing needs, such as for the inclusion of a required confidentiality statement when users log into Ellucian Colleague. The College is also guided by newly established (2021) BP/AP 3721 (Information Security). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the College’s Academic Senate reviewed and approved Emergency Training requirements for remote instruction and it established the need for district-wide training for synchronous online instruction. Finally, the College uses its technology and constituent committees to consider, recommend and approve policies consistent with its teaching and learning goals, as evidenced by minutes from both the Educational Technology Committee and the Academic Senate. (III.C.5)

#### Conclusions:

The College meets Standard III.C.

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

#### General Observations:

The College's overall budget was \$327.2 million to support the development, maintenance, improvement and enhancement of programs and services by integrating financial resources with institutional planning through annual program review. The College's financial planning is integrated and done through the District's integrated program planning and review, and budget development process. The planning documents include the Strategic Plan, Educational and Facilities Master Plan, Five-Year Capital Construction Plan, Technology Master Plan, and Enrollment Management Plan. The college ensures through its budget policies and planning policies that appropriate checks and balances are present to ensure alignment of the budget development, strategic planning, Educational Master Plan, Facilities Master Plan and program review.

#### Findings and Evidence:

The college has sufficient resources to support and sustain student programs, services, and improved institutional effectiveness as demonstrated with their financial statements along with met contributions to STRS/PERS. In addition, the college has maintained a balanced budget and made changes based on Full time equivalent student (FTES) fluctuations throughout the last five years. Furthermore, all budget decisions are based on program review which makes the budget development process a part of the institutional planning process and incorporated into the fiscal planning process with short- and long-term options that ensure financial stability. This is all done through the shared governance process which centers around transparency. A series of audits over twenty years indicates a strong level of fiscal integrity. The College reports no fiscal findings in its audits during the last accreditation cycle. (III.D.1)

The college's financial planning is integrated and done through its integrated program planning and review, and budget development process. Planning documents include the Strategic Plan, Educational and Facilities Master Plan, Five-Year Capital Construction Plan, Technology Master Plan, and Enrollment Management Plan. Budget parameters are established by the District's fiscal policy and describe the following: Fiscally Responsible Criteria; Compliance with Community College Regulations; District Planning and Strategic Goals; Support for Student Access and Successful Completion; Budget Development—Revenues, Expenses, Categorical Funds; Budget Reduction. The budget is presented to the governing board by the Chancellor with alignment to complete all budget and planning by September 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. In addition, once the College has a tentative budget in place in June, any significant budget changes for the final budget (in September) are reviewed by the College's President's Advisory Council on the Budget (PAC-B) and approved by the Chancellor. The open forum in which the budget is presented and approved along with the integrated process under which the budget is developed supports institutional planning. (III.D.2)

The college has various participatory governance committees, processes, and constituency group participation to address the needs of the college (physical, hiring, supplies, equipment, and contract). The college has a digitally integrated program review and budget development process that align with the college's strategic goals which determines allocations through the budget process. The Vice President of Instruction works with the area Deans to achieve synergy between departments, resulting in efficient budgets that support the College's programs, goals and strategies. Specific planning occurs at the departmental level including program reviews,

strategic goals, student learning outcomes (SLOs) and administrative unit outcomes (AUOs). All recommendations for resource allocation must reference the strategic goals and therefore they utilize their Decision-Making Guide, Program Review, and Budget Handbook to develop annual program objectives based on input from faculty and staff. The process requires prioritization of requests which are vetted by the Executive Cabinet, the PAC-B before going to the Chancellor and ultimately the Board. Moreover, the Citizens Bond Oversight Committee meetings act as a way to provide updates and get input from the community on capital construction spending. This committee also reviews the performance of the College when it comes to compliance and fiscal responsibility on bond measures. (III.D.3)

The College uses an entrepreneurial approach in its partnerships with partners like Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital for Allied Health training and aerospace companies for manufacturing training. The college has been able to secure grant funding to augment resources for existing programs and provide startup funding for new programs. These partnerships have allowed the college to generate additional revenue outside of the state Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF). In addition, the passage of three General Obligation Bond measures provided capital resources allowing it to support instructional goals. The college provides departments and budget managers easy access to financial reports that allow the college, and the budget managers, to adjust spending and achieve funding goals in the most expeditious, coordinated and fiscally responsible way. (III.D.4)

The College has internal and external management information systems (MIS) systems and financial control mechanisms that allows them to provide regular updates to various committees and constituents as a method of assessing the effective use of financial resources. This feedback is incorporated into its planning processes to evaluate the use of resources and the impact of planning. In addition, the College has internal controls with its DataTel system and is backed up and reconciled by the L.A. County Office of Education (LACOE) for the audit trail. The Datatel system has been fully implemented in all areas including Fiscal Services, Student Business Office, Student Services, Human Resources, Instruction, Facilities, Public Information Office, and Institutional Research. The College uses these monthly reconciliations between their DataTel system and LACOE to provide monthly fiscal reports to the Board, which include the status of revenues, expenses and reserve levels. The District reviews its internal control system on a regular basis and any issues are discussed with the respective department or program and the college's auditors. Finally the college provides regular updates on new regulations and the role and responsibility that every manager has in ensuring controls, compliance, and fiscal oversight. (III.D.5)

The college's integrity of sound financial reporting is evident in not having a financial audit finding since 2001-02. The district did have an audit finding related to Financial Aid processes during this accreditation cycle. However it was related to a common audit finding that had to do with calendar year versus work calendar issues. The District's audits have received Unqualified/Unmodified Opinions, including District, Foundation, and General Obligation Bond finance and performance audits since 2002. The fiscal integrity and accuracy of reports is confirmed by these independent audits and examinations by outside agencies that audit federal and state-funded programs which give the District's fiscal documents a high degree of credibility. (III.D.6).

The College conducts yearly audits of all financial and operational resources as it relates to the college. The College has only had a few audit findings within the last 20 years and when audit issues are indicated, the Business Services staff worked with the appropriate department to implement immediate resolutions and to ensure future compliance. The College hires an audit firm to review general accounts and during the same period, the audit firm audits the College of the Canyons Foundation and the firm reviews General Obligation Bond Financial and Performance Audits. If any issues are identified, they are brought to the attention of the vice president and associate vice president of Business Services, who meet with the Executive Cabinet member supervising the area in question. The District communicates about budget, fiscal conditions, financial planning and audit results at the November meeting of the Foundation Executive Committee, at the January Board of Trustees Meeting, and in subsequent college budget presentations made by the CEO and CBO. (III.D.7)

The College hires an independent audit firm which evaluates and assesses the District's financial and internal controls for validity and effectiveness, and any resulting recommendations are used for improvements. The associate vice president, Business Services and staff work closely with all department and/or grant budget managers throughout the year to ensure checks and balances are maintained and revenues and expenditures are consistent with the intent of funding. All funds are regularly audited and reviewed by funding agencies, including federal and state grants and categorical funds, Certificates of Participation (COPs), General Obligation Bond funds and state construction funds. The District has never had a fiscal audit finding on its bond funds, and its arbitrage calculations reflect timely expenditure of bond funds on construction projects that fulfill spending requirements in the ballot measure language. (III.D.8)

The college has two to three months of payroll cash on hand at all times which is within the State Chancellor's Office minimum requirement of five percent. The college has sufficient cash flows and reserves to maintain stability and has been able to enact strategies for fiscal risk management to protect the District during years when state budget deficits or other emergencies impact the College. For example, during the pandemic, in order to balance the state budget, the state implemented \$1.5 billion in deferrals for community colleges. This equated to approximately \$17 million in deferred apportionment revenue for the District from February 2021 through June 2021, not to be repaid until July 2021 through November 2021. In early 2021, the District joined a Tax Revenue Anticipation Note (TRAN) pool with LACOE and issued a mid-year TRANs to provide cash flow not to exceed \$24 million. Team members confirmed that this TRAN was paid back by November 2021 as planned by the College. (III.D.9)

The College has oversight of various funding sources to include Financial aid monies, Associated Student Government (ASG, which is a part of the general fund), and the College Auxiliary Foundation. The District reconciles the allocations monthly and has established a liability for financial aid bad debts that must be absorbed and offset through a collection process. However, the College did have an audit finding this cycle in relation to financial aid processes. This finding was more to do with a timely issue as it relates to calendar year deadlines versus that of work week deadlines which makes this finding a standard one that does not rise to a significant level of concern. The ASG is not a separate auxiliary and the ASG budget is developed by established processes in accordance with its Constitution and is monitored and controlled by the ASG Senate under the supervision of the Vice President and Associate Vice President of Student Services. The COC Foundation is a 501(c)3 auxiliary organization and the Vice President of Business Services serves as the Foundation treasurer per the Foundation

bylaws. Business Services staff assist the Foundation and auditors, reconciling income to Foundation donor records, preparing a cash summary reconciliation for all bank accounts, and a comprehensive income sheet and revenue and expense analysis. The foundation is audited using the same firm the College uses for the general fund and Bond. (III.D.10).

The College has internal controls to ensure financial stability of the institution. For example, the College Fiscal Assessment Checklist demonstrates the District's financial stability when making short-range plans by considering its long-range financial priorities, identifying and planning for the payment of long-term liabilities and obligations. The college's liabilities are offset by commensurate reductions in expenses or fees associated with the particular projects. Moreover, the college has very few long-term liabilities, and some of those are offset by identified revenues such as student parking fees, energy savings from the Central Plant, and joint agreements that cover the cost of expenses associated with contractual obligations. (III.D.11).

The College plans for and allocates appropriate resources for the payment of liabilities and future obligations, including Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB). The college contracts with a third-party consultant who prepares the OPEB actuarial study every year, as required by GASB accounting regulations. Because of this GASB reform the District is no longer required to make an Annual Retirement Contribution each year; it just needs to show it can cover the current year's liability. The College has an OPEB liability of approximately \$18.7 million, with \$6.6 million in a revocable fund as of June 30, 2021. This shows the District's ability to meet its required liability, approximately \$500,000 each year. The District also estimates compensated leaves based on accrued salary rates and then budgets the current portion of that amount as a liability. This is regularly audited by the external auditors. (III.D.12).

The small debt that is owed by the College has been on a payment plan since 2017 and all payments have been made and are current. A Certificate of Participation (COP) note was refinanced in 2017, and as of June 30, 2021, there was about \$7.3 million outstanding on the principal. Payment is largely offset by other revenue, such as parking fees and student capital project fees and budget savings throughout the year. For example, the college incurred a TRAN debt of \$17 million due to state apportionment deferrals from February 2021 through June 2021. As indicated earlier, these deferrals were repaid within a planned period by November 2021. (III.D.13).

The majority of the college's debt is in the form of GO Bonds funded by local property taxes based on approximately \$180 million of bonds since 2014 from Measure M and Measure E. An Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee meets twice a year to review quarterly expenditure reports and annual financial and performance audits for the GO Bonds. The District website shows all CBOC committee notes including audit reviews. Financial resources raised by the college's Foundation are used for intended purposes identified in fundraising and all expenditures and contracts are reviewed and approved by the Foundation executive committee before presentation as information to its Board. The District also coordinates with the Foundation on its annual audits, which have been without any findings or significant issues. Team members met with COC Foundation leaders and all of them expressed appreciation of the integrity and work ethic of the College leaders that support Foundation operations. The District's director of Grant and Categorical Accounting and Compliance and two grant accountants ensure federal and state grants are used for their intended purposes. There have not been any fiscal audit findings related to bond finances nor grant/categorical processes. (III.D.14)

The college has independent audits that verify the integrity of financial management practices by reviewing the student loan default rates which are well below the federally established 30 percent benchmark (8.4 percent in the last year analyzed). However, if the default rate was to exceed federal guidelines, the college has a plan which: 1) identifies factors causing the rate to exceed the threshold, 2) establish measurable objectives and steps to improve the default rate, and 3) identify specific actions to improve the default rate, including counseling students on repayment options. The Fiscal Services Office adheres to the U.S. Department of Education timelines and processes for financial aid disbursements according to federal regulations. (III.D.15)

The College ensures that all contracts are vetted by legal services to align with California contractual standards. These contracts are negotiated and evaluated by legal counsel, as needed, and provided to the Board for approval. The District has not had any lawsuits or complaints regarding its contracts in eleven years. These legal services also review all sub-awardee and contractor agreements that support grant programs. The District maintains and controls its contracts and can change and terminate any that do not meet its standards. Legal counsel has approved several agreement templates, including a Professional Services, Basic Services, Guest Speaker Services, Facility Use, and Health Professions Agreements. Finally, for the most part templates are used to ensure the best protection, risk management, and the least exposure to liability or financial issues. (III.D.16)

Conclusions:

The College meets Standard III.D.

# Standard IV

## Leadership and Governance

### IV.A. Decision-Making Roles & Processes

#### General Observations:

College of the Canyons' institutional leaders create and encourage opportunities for innovation and collaboration across constituent groups and with the community it serves. The College centers its Mission, Vision, and Philosophy statements to guide their innovation, improving practices, programs, and services. The College uses effective shared governance practices to ensure an institutional culture of inclusion, planning, data driven decisions, and an effective organizational infrastructure. This results in an inclusive culture of collaborative innovation with sufficient financial resources that supports student learning. The descriptions of the fiscal processes and the institutional governance infrastructure demonstrate the college's commitment to effective participatory governance and fiscal integrity while meeting the complex 21<sup>st</sup> century demands of the community it serves.

#### Findings and Evidence:

The Team found that College of the Canyons uses its Mission, Vision, and Philosophy statements to encourage and guide all campus constituent groups in taking initiative for innovation, excellence, and continuous improvement. The College leadership inspires and encourages a culture of innovation and risk-taking in planning and implementing new ideas. Members of the faculty, classified, and administration all affirmed that the College leadership encourages them to present new ideas and contributions to the college to better serve students. As a result, College of the Canyons has a vibrant college culture that addresses the needs of the community it serves. The College demonstrates its effectiveness in its ability to innovate and collaborate in addressing the needs of its students, staff, and the community it serves as evidenced by a number of unique and vital programs. The team report highlights just a few of these innovations here. The Center for Civic Engagement has established a series of programs and workshops that promote civic engagement for COC students, staff, and the broader community. Team members were impressed by the program's efforts and its ability to promote high levels of voter registration and participation by College students. The Leadership Education in Action Program (LEAP) represents a significant, multi-year commitment to on-going professional development that has embedded at its core institutional improvement and collaboration. The Center for Teaching and Learning (CETL) offers a host of quality programs annually to promote improved teaching and learning. All constituent groups, no matter their title, seem committed and engaged in supporting all aspects of student life. For example, in recent years, Classified Professionals lead efforts to ensure students have access to what they need to have food security and career preparation through the Fresh Success program. The Team observed the use of digital and multimedia tools to inform the campus community about programs and activities. The Team also observed the College's culture of global awareness and

civic engagement embedded into the campus culture by including information about current events and links to provide assistance and actions in meetings. The Team found that College of the Canyons has an institutional culture of documenting and consistently informally assessing processes for continuous improvement. The breadth and scope of college innovations are worthy of commendation and emulation. (IV.A.1)

The College establishes and implements policy and procedures delineating the responsibilities and expectations of administrator, faculty, and staff participation in decision-making processes. It has a complex infrastructure that supports effective participation across the campus committees, ensuring multi-constituent group representation on district committees, constituent senates, and unions. To ensure effective participation, the College offers training through its LEAP training program. This complex infrastructure demonstrates the College's commitment to support effective participatory governance and a culture of collaborative innovation. In addition to board policies and administrative procedures describing governance and planning processes, the College Planning Team (CPT) developed and published The Decision-Making Guide. The Decision Making Guide describes, in detail, the college committees, their purpose and function in, planning, resource allocation, and governance processes across constituent groups. (IV.A.2)

The College's institutional governance structures are clearly defined in BP and AP 2510 (Participation in Local Decision Making). The College relies on BP/AP2510, The College Decision Making Guide, and each constituent group's bylaws and guides to ensure effective participation of staff, faculty, and students in the shared governance process. The Team observed that administrators, faculty, and classified professionals seem to be familiar with the processes as described in The Decision Making Guide. Some leaders acknowledged that they do not refer to the Decision Making Guide, but their description of the planning, resource allocation and governance processes aligned with the information in the Decision Making Guide. The College develops and sustains a dynamic institutional infrastructure to support innovation and continuous improvement through its effective participatory governance practices. The College leadership recognizes the dynamic quality of its complex infrastructure and encourages changes and improvements to ensure that campus voices are recognized and heard. Constituent group leaders were able to describe the process and reflect on areas they are working to improve effective participation and communication of decisions. For example, the Classified Senate, using the college processes to forward policies for Board approval, created Board Policy and Administrative Procedure 7270 (Classified Professionals Participation in Collegial Consultation) to clarify the role of Classified in multi constituent committees to ensure their effective participation and involvement in the college decision making. The Team observed that the College, as mentioned in the ISER, views policies and mandates as the minimum they can do. The College sets its vision beyond what the law requires and works as a community to meet its goals. (IV.A.2)

The College has a systematic approach to integrated planning to achieve its strategic goals, which integrates program review, planning, and resource allocation by encouraging a culture of collaboration and planning to address the evolving needs of students. The Team found that the College continues to engage in continuous improvement in this area. The College has an organized decision-making structure that is inclusive, described in board policies, procedures, in the College Decision-Making Guide, and in the constituent senates and association bylaws. The

institutional infrastructure supports a culture of effective participation in shared governance. A key committee is the College Planning Team (CPT). The CPT is co-chaired by a faculty member and the CEO and conducts an annual review of college priorities and progress on implementation and student outcomes. Coupled with the CPT, the college has a large committee structure that includes more than 50 committees that provide input to several key, overarching committees at the college. There is even a Committee on Committees. The college's 174 page comprehensive Decision Making Guide sketches out the relationships of these committees to each other and to express the college's decision making philosophy and values, but team members found the guide overwhelming in its size and scope and there is evidence that college constituents feel unsure about where and how decisions are made. This became evident in team interviews and the team learned that a special Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative Partnership Resource Team (IEPI-PRT) process that the college was working on at the time of the visit is addressing this concern. The PRT work is designed to improve communication across all the committees so that people can understand more clearly where and how governance decisions are made and how each committee carries out its responsibilities. (IV. A.3)

The College recognizes the role of faculty through policy, procedures, and in The Decision Making Guide. The College has appropriate policies, procedures, and practices to ensure the Academic Senate engages in its responsibilities. The Academic Senate's role in academic and professional matters and its participation in the mutual agreement process are described in Board Policies, the College Decision Making Guide, the Curriculum Handbook, and other documents. The Board relies primarily on the recommendations of the Academic Senate in matters related to curriculum, degree, and certificate requirements, attendance, and grading policies, student preparation and success, faculty professional development and the refinement processes for program review in its planning process through the work of the Academic Program Review Committee. (IV.A.4)

Through its system of board and institutional governance, the College ensures the appropriate consideration of relevant perspectives; decision-making aligned with expertise and responsibility. The College of the Canyons describes its institutional governance and planning infrastructure in BP/AB 2510 and The College Decision Making Guide. The College Policy Council, a representative body of all constituent groups, advances all policies and administrative procedures to the board. At the time of the visit, the team observed that College and the Board were working to catch up on their regular cycle of BP and AP review and that some significant effort had been made in the 2021 calendar year. Some significant policies and procedures were well past their anticipated review date, and the work of revising and updating board policies and administrative procedures should continue. The team recommends that the College expedite its regular assessment and review of board policies and administrative procedures and ensure timely actions are taken on them. (IV.A.5)

Governance roles are clearly defined in policy and are designed to facilitate decisions that support student learning programs, services, and institutional improvements. The College communicates the processes for decision-making in The College Decision Making Guide, which serves as the primary institutional level resource for institutional decision making. The College communicates decisions by documenting and disseminating them through a variety of mediums,

including Board Docs, Board meeting minutes, IE2 meetings, and through department deans, constituent group senates and associations (unions). ( IV.A.6)

Leadership roles and processes are regularly assessed for integrity and evaluation results are used for improvements. The College cites board policies, administrative procedures, and board agenda items as evidence of consistent assessment of institutional roles and processes. The College also provides multi-constituent committees and senates and collective bargaining groups that engage in different aspects of assessing institutional roles and processes. The College encourages a culture of self-reflection and continuous improvement. The College recognizes the breadth and complexity of its institutional structure. As part of the IEPI-PRT team consultation mentioned earlier in this standard, the College included improving its committee structure as one of five focus areas for the improvement process. That PRT Team helped the college develop strategies to improve committee effectiveness and communication between and within committees. The College hired a consultant to assist with the implementation of the PRT Action Plan. In the College of the Canyons infrastructure, the Committee on Committees is charged with ensuring that the College regularly evaluates the effectiveness, function, and coordination of committees. This committee is implementing the IEPI PRT Action Plan to improve committee coordination and enhance communication within and across committees and at the time of the visit, the College had completed many of the action plans identified in the plan. The Committee on Committees holds annual retreats where data that assesses college processes are reviewed and appropriate changes are suggested. These changes are communicated to the campus community through a variety of mediums. The College Policy Review Committee and the College Planning Team also assess their processes. All of the College's committees, including CPC and CPT, are assisted by the institutional research office in deploying surveys to their members on an annual basis and the feedback is used to implement improvement strategies. Through the work of the Classified Senate clarifying the 9+1, changes were made to the membership of the College Policy Council to ensure equitable representation on that committee. There are now four representatives per constituent group on this committee. The Team encourages the College to continue to implement the IEPI PRT plan relating to committee efforts and assess its effectiveness (IV.A.7)

Conclusions:

The college meets Standard IV.A.

Recommendation 1: In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the Governing Board and College expedite its assessment and review of Board Policies and Administrative Procedures and continue to ensure that timely actions are taken on policies and procedures. (IV.A.5, IV.C.7)

## **IV.B. Chief Executive Officer**

### General Observations:

The college benefits from the leadership, skills, and extensive experience of a long-serving CEO who has strong connections with the Santa Clarita Valley community. College processes are overseen by her and a dedicated complement of organizational leaders, faculty, and staff. The CEO and college have established effective planning processes that ensure a focus on the college's mission and a spirit of innovation to foster institutional improvement. Committee structures are in place to guide effective planning and cycles of improvement, although the college's decision making guide may need revisions to provide more clarity and coherence for where and how decisions are made. The college has an outstanding track record of executive leadership and innovation, and the CEO is well-connected and seen as a community leader in economic development and workforce improvement efforts.

### Findings and Evidence:

College of the Canyons has a very experienced Chancellor providing leadership to advance the quality of the College's operations. The evidence in the report suggests that leadership in planning is delegated to the CEO and that planning processes are effectively engaged through a governance framework. Existing plans are in place to guide educational and facilities planning through the end of 2022, and at the time of the visit, the College's newly drafted master plan was nearing completion for the period 2022-26. The team reviewed evidence to indicate that the College Planning Team (CPT), co-chaired by the CEO, meets regularly and engages in collegial dialogue on a host of relevant topics. The CEO has authority delegated to her to make appropriate decisions on behalf of the district in the selection of personnel and as indicated earlier, the college has sufficient staff, faculty, and managers to operate the college in pursuit of its mission. The college has a long history of exemplary work to promote professional development for its employees and the CEO has been a consistent champion of that work. Evidence of this effort is seen in the college's Leadership Education in Action Program (LEAP) that has seen a large contingent of faculty, staff, and managers complete training and professional development in action oriented projects to foster institutional improvements. The program's success in professional development has allowed it to branch out even beyond the college to community leaders from civic and community organizations. Institutional effectiveness is also a function overseen by the CEO. The college has a complement of researchers and institutional planning staff who support assessment of institutional effectiveness, regular program review processes, and cycles of improvement (IV.B.1)

The College's organizational structure is designed to help the college meet its mission. The size of the College's organizational structure in terms of units and management functions was reviewed by the team and fits with the size, scope, and complexity of work that the College addresses in its day-to-day operations. The CEO oversees 12 direct reports, including seven assistant superintendents/vice presidents, two vice presidents that oversee workforce/economic development functions and the public information and advocacy functions; a deputy chancellor

and chief diversity officer; a director of the College foundation, and a special assistant that oversees the management of day-to-day operations in the office. During the team visit, search processes were under way for a couple of key leaders, including the Vice President of Economic and Workforce Development and the Assistant Superintendent/Vice President of Human Resources. The team reviewed job descriptions and evaluation processes and appropriate responsibilities are delegated to the managers. The team confirmed that regular meetings take place within the management team and that team members are satisfied with their assignments and duties (IV.B.2).

The college has established policies, procedures, and practices in place that the CEO uses to guide the improvement of the teaching and learning environment. Embedded within this work, the CEO and college representatives have fostered an environment of collegial dialogue and a shared commitment to the mission of the college. A key forum for this effort is the College Planning Team, composed of 57 representatives who meet regularly throughout the year. While large in representation, the CPT's size reflects constituent group representatives drawn from the diversity of groups within the college, including student government leaders, full and part time faculty leaders, classified staff, and administrative leaders. The CPT is co-chaired by a faculty member and conducts an annual review of college priorities and progress on implementation and student outcomes. Team members confirmed that the CEO ensures through the college planning process that institutional performance standards for student achievement have been set and are regularly tracked. Moreover, the CEO oversees a structure and has hired staff to ensure that high quality research and data are available for college constituents to use for planning and program review processes, and that data are analyzed for disproportionate impacts. As noted earlier, the educational planning that takes place at the college is well connected with resource allocation processes. The college also is oriented toward improving student learning through its planning processes. A key piece of evidence documenting this work is the college's statewide leadership in the implementation of basic skills reforms that led to the establishment of AB 705 and its goal of eliminating unnecessary remediation sequences for students in English and Math. This work to eradicate institutional barriers to student success brought the college national recognition with the 2021 Bellwether College Consortium Award (IV.B.3)

The CEO serves as the primary leader for the College's accreditation and for ensuring that the institution meets eligibility requirements. The College's Assistant Superintendent/Vice President of Instruction serves as the college's Accreditation Liaison Officer. The college's accreditation cycle has included adequate and relevant training of staff, faculty and managers on key accreditation issues, and the college's effort to develop the ISER reflects a broad commitment of institutional participants from various segments of the college. The CEO engaged in the process by participating in the review and writing of the report, serving as chair of Standard IV of the report, ensuring that accreditation and writing of the ISER was a regular item at the CPT, initiating and promoting accreditation training sessions, and by attending those training sessions (IV.B.4).

The College's CEO has authority delegated to her to ensure the college complies with and implements statutes, regulations, and governing board policies and that college practices are consistent with the mission and college policies. This delegation is evident in Board Policy 2430 (Delegation of Authority to the CEO) and in the Chancellor's employment contract. The College

Policy Council serves as a governance forum to ensure that policy revisions are vetted through a collegial consultation process before board adoption. As discussed earlier in Standard III.D, college policies also require the use of effective budget and spending controls in the pursuit of the college mission. The CEO has a strong track record of ensuring stable budget reserves (well above a policy level requiring 6 percent). The CEO and her team have been extremely successful in obtaining outside resources for the college, resulting in more than \$134 million in external grant, foundation, and training revenue support since 2014 (IV.B.5).

The team confirmed that the CEO works and communicates effectively with the communities served by the college. Several communication channels exist that allow the CEO to disseminate information to internal college representatives, including regular Chancellor’s Monday Morning Reports, budget highlight memos, college webinars during the COVID-19 pandemic, and “the Bottom Line,” a community report that details college achievements in student learning, workforce development and other key matters every semester. External communications include the College’s Annual report, and “the Breaking News,” a broadsheet that gets delivered to every home in the district roughly three times a year. The CEO has an established Education Alliance and two other advisory committees that meet regularly throughout the year, bringing community leaders together to discuss what the college is doing, where it is going in the future, and how the college can bring innovative ideas to solve community problems. The CEO is also active in community organizations, is well-connected to local K-12 districts, and serves as a community leader for workforce investment initiatives. The CEO is an effective champion for the college in local meetings. Her advocacy and leadership have brought her community awards, including the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce in 2019 (IV.B.6).

#### Conclusions:

The College meets Standard IV.B.

## **IV.C. Governing Board**

### General Observations:

The Governing Board of the College of the Canyons is composed of 5 elected members and one Student Trustee, who are responsible for its oversight. The Governing Board establishes appropriate policies, in accordance with its mission and goals. It regularly reviews and updates those goals in an annual cycle of evaluation and establishing of priorities. In addition, it establishes the authority of the CEO to enact its policies and procedures and evaluates their performance annually. The Governing Board acts in accordance with its policies and according to its standards. It actively reviews the educational programs, initiatives and progress towards goals through regular updates and workshops as well as through Strategic Planning updates. It also monitors and ensures the fiscal stability of the district through monthly budget updates. At the time of the team visit, the Board and College were behind in the cycle of BP/AP review and revision and the College was working to catch up on that process. The team found evidence of significant effort in this regard, but there was still work to be done.

### Findings and Evidence:

The District has a Governing Board that demonstrates both authority and responsibility for the quality, integrity, efficacy of its programs and services, and its financial stability. Board Policy 2200 (Duties and Responsibilities) outlines those areas of responsibility. In addition, Board Policy 2410 (Policy and Administrative Procedures) establishes both the responsibility and general guidelines for creating and revising board policy, as well as for revisions to policy and procedures. In addition, the Governing Board is guided by Board Policies 2710 (Conflict of Interest) and 2715 (Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice), which offer expectations for ethical and responsible actions, as well as defining both the range and limits of its authority. (IV.C.1)

The Governing Board acts as a collective entity, as is required in BP 2715 (Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice). Even when there are differences of opinion and rare split votes, once there is a decision, the trustees indicate they abide by the body's decision. Through team interviews and review of board self evaluation reports, team members discovered that a period of board division, discord, and a degree of incivility had hampered the board's cohesion in prior years (2017 through 2019). However, at the time of the visit, board members expressed that the Board was in a better place. Board members noted that they feel free to share their different perspectives and to argue for them powerfully, but that they also respect the outcome of the body. While acknowledging that some division and discord may have hampered the Board's cohesion for a few years, the Board members interviewed expressed satisfaction with their work at the time of the visit. A review of the Board's Self-Evaluation Reports from 2019 and 2021 reflect progress in the Trustees' perception of their own cohesiveness and in their standards of practice regarding mutual respect, public demeanor, and delegation of authority and responsibilities to the CEO to manage the College. (IV.C.2)

Board Policy 2431 (CEO of the District Selection) establishes the Board's responsibility for selecting a CEO and determining a process. This BP was last reviewed in 2013 (with no updates) and is not accompanied by an Administrative Procedure. It is worth noting that the Board has not had to exercise this authority since 1988 (when the current CEO was hired). Beginning in 2020, the Board president appointed herself and another trustee to serve on an ad hoc policy committee to provide input on policy updates and revisions that pertain to out-of-date BPs/APs and to begin the process of updating them with the assistance of the CEO and a deputy chancellor. The team began the process of updating them and formally charting policies to ensure timely updates in the future. At the time of the visit, all but five of the board-specific BPs had been updated, and the Trustees indicated that the remaining 5 (including the board self-evaluation process and hiring of a CEO) are scheduled to come to the board this semester. The College recognized at the time of the visit that other BP's and AP's were in need of review and revision. The board also performs an annual evaluation of the CEO, per BP 2435 (Evaluation of the CEO of the District). The most recent evaluation was completed in 2021. (IV.C.3)

The responsibility of the Governing Board to serve as an independent, policy-making body - which reflects the public interest is established in Board Policy 2200 (Board Duties and Responsibilities). Board Policies 2310 (Regular Meetings of the Board), and 2345 (Public Participation at Board Meetings), establish both the public nature of the meetings and the role of the public in those meetings (the latter information is also included in every public agenda). The degree to which each elected Board member represents the voters and their interest has been addressed, in part, through a newly adopted (2015) election process, which included establishing area boundaries for each seat as well as shifting elections to even years. The review of trustee area boundaries was recently completed in accordance with 2020 Census data. During the visit, board members expressed satisfaction with this new district-based election process. (IV.C.4)

The Governing Board maintains awareness and understanding of the current needs and quality of the institution and its programs through regular reports at its monthly meetings. These include reports from the Academic and Classified Senates, CEO, Administrators, the Student Trustee, and Associated Student Government. Board Policy 2200 (Duties and Responsibilities) also notes the role of the Governing Board in maintaining quality. This is further supported with Board Policies regarding Curriculum, and Program Development. Board Policy 1200 establishes the Board's responsibility for regular review and update of the Mission Statement. Responsibility of the financial integrity and health of the institution is established in BP 2200 (Duties and Responsibilities) and BP 6305 (Fund Balance, Unrestricted General Fund) and is monitored through a standing, monthly agenda item. Board Policy 6305 also establishes the expectation of a 6% budget reserve. (IV.C.5)

The Board publishes its bylaws and policies specifying the size, duties, responsibilities, structure and operating procedures. BP 2010 establishes the Board's size and structure. BP 2200 establishes responsibilities and duties. A number of additional BPs (2340, Agendas; 2345, Public Participation in Meetings; 2350, Speakers; and 2365 Recording) established varying operating procedures, including public posting of the agenda, public comment, role of the student trustee, and audio and video recording protocols. Information regarding the Governing Board Bylaws and Policies are made available on the institution's Website - on the Governing Board page. They are also available upon request in the Chancellor's Office. (IV.C.6)

The role of the Governing Board in establishing, reviewing and updating policies is noted in Board Policy 2410 (Policy and Administrative Procedures). The process of review and update includes the opportunity for relevant expertise in the revision process and review at the College Policy Council before moving to the Governing Board for vote/adoption. Information regarding the Governing Board Bylaws and Policies are made available on the institution's Website - on the Governing Board page. They are also available upon request in the Chancellor's Office. Although some board-specific BPs and APs have not been reviewed since 2013, the College was working to address this gap and four of the five in question were in alignment with CCLC model language. At the time of the visit, only a handful remained out of date, while most of the rest had been updated within the last two years. Additionally, there are a number of out-of-date BP's/APs in other areas of College operations, including BP 3510 (Workplace Violence), BP 3530 (Weapons on Campus), BP 4300 (Field Trip Activities), BP 7250 (Educational Administrators) to name a few. The College Policy Committee has created a chart and schedule to address out-of-date policies and procedures and establish an easy-to-track update schedule. A review of BPs and APs reveals a similar pattern of significant catch up within the last two years, but the team confirmed that there was still work to get fully caught up on BP/AP review and revision. The team recommends that the College and Board expedite its assessment and review of Board Policies and Administrative Procedures and continue to ensure that timely actions are taken on policies and procedures. (IV.C.7)

The Governing Board receives regular updates at its monthly meetings. Since 2019, Governing Board meeting minutes demonstrate that these have included reports on topics such as Student Success and Equity Plans, Guided Pathways, and Dual Enrollment. These have also included updates on progress towards Strategic Plan Goals and key metrics related to those goals. (IV.C.8)

Board Policies 2740 (Board Education), and 2100 (Board Elections) establish new and ongoing training/education as well as Governing Board continuity through a staggered election process. Since 2013, the Governing Board has participated in the CLCC's Excellence in Leadership and Governance Program as well as the Excellence in Trusteeship Program. The Governing Board also conducts "study sessions" to improve their knowledge in relevant areas. Recent sessions have covered: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, the Brown Act, and Accreditation. (IV.C.9)

The Governing Board's Policy and Administrative Procedure 2745 establish the expectation and detail the process for completing an annual self-evaluation. This evaluation requires reflection on themselves individually, the body as a whole, and on other board members. AP 2745 also requires that this is made public and that it is part of the source material for the Board's annual session to establish goals and improvement priorities for the coming year. Governing Board meeting agendas demonstrate that these actions have occurred within the last 12 months (April 2021). At the time of the visit, trustees shared that they had utilized the practice of hiring a consultant to facilitate the self-evaluation and noted that it had resulted in frank, thoughtful reflection that improved goal setting and board member cohesion. (IV.C.10)

Board Policy 2715 (Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice) guides the Governing Board in matters of ethics standards of practice. In addition, Board Policy 2710 indicates the expectations and processes regarding Conflicts of Interest. Trustees submit a Statement of Interest Form annually

and a copy is maintained in the Chancellor's Office (and are available upon request). The Governing Board also conducts "study sessions" on relevant topics (recently, on the Brown Act) to ensure knowledge and compliance. Finally, Administrative Procedure 2715 includes procedures for violations of these standards. Visiting team interviews revealed that the College Board of Trustees had been through a period of in-meeting conflicts for several years prior to the team visit and that tensions had animated board member comments and conduct that reflected negatively on the College and likely violated its Board Policy 2715 (Code of Ethics and Standards of Good Practice). By the time of the visit, Board members indicated that relations were improved through concerted work of board evaluation workshops led by an external consultant, through the modification of behavior by members, and through enhanced collaboration between the CEO and Board President. The team urges the board to continue that work and to continue to honor its commitment to the standards of good practice in Board Policy 2715. (IV.C.11)

Board Policy 2200 establishes the Board's role in delegating authority to the CEO to implement its Policies and Procedures. Board Policy 2430 further delineates the scope of the expectations for the Chancellor in that work. The Governing Board holds the Chancellor accountable through the performance of an annual evaluation. Governing Board Agendas demonstrate that this was last conducted in June of 2021. (III.C.12)

The Governing Board receives updates and training regarding accreditation. Most recently (March 2021) the CEO arranged for the Governing Board to host an Accreditation Workshop. Topics included: Accreditation's Purposes, Processes, and Standards; Changes at the ACCJC; Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees and Advice for Board Excellence (challenges, accountability, roles, responsibilities, and common concerns); Review of the ISER and the Board's Role in It. In addition, the Governing Board reviews relevant standards of the Institutional Self Evaluation and Mid-Term Reports (no evidence provided). The current Institutional Self Evaluation Report was presented and discussed as an information item at a Board meeting on November 10, 2021. (IV.C.13)

#### Conclusions:

The College meets Standard IV.C.

See Recommendation 1.

## Quality Focus Essay

The Quality Focus Essay (QFE) expands the work that has been done to support “Canyons Completes” or guided pathways efforts and identifies selected projects intended to increase student learning and achievement, particularly for the most disproportionately impacted students. These projects have three goals, 1) re-engineering and launch of a new Early Alert and Intervention Program through Canyons Connects; 2) development of Academic Program Maps and adoption of the Program Pathways Mapper visualization tool; and 3) Creation of Student Success Teams focusing on addressing disproportionately impacted student populations.

Below is a brief description of each project/activity.

- 1) **The Canyons Connects** program (powered by the Starfish platform) is an early alert and intervention strategy intended to improve course success, retention, and certificate/degree completion rates, keeping students “on the path.” The program connects instructors, students and critical student support services together under one umbrella. This gives instructors the ability to raise awareness if small nudges may help struggling students, and it also provides ways to celebrate student successes. Canyons Connects allows for instantaneous referrals to help students intentionally and exactly where and when they may need support. This support can encircle the students with multiple services, ensuring high touch support, and making sure that no student is left behind.

The College will use data to develop the program and provide professional development and promotional materials to encourage faculty adoption.

- 2) **The Program Mapper** is used to present the recommended path to complete certificates, degrees, and/or transfer. Maps highlight the sequence of courses, including the appropriate math and English courses for a program, and identify significant milestones that contribute to student success in a clear and comprehensive format. The Program Pathways Mapper is a customized visual representation of the College Catalog, organized by academic Schools/Divisions, which are groups of similar programs. These help students select a program of study and progress towards completion. The tool includes information on occupations and careers commonly associated with each program, including typical wages and the labor market demand in California.

The College will review the processes and procedures to ensure sustainability, marketing of the program, and expansion of programs maps availability to students.

- 3) **A student success team** is an academic and student services support team that collaborates to plan and implement data-informed, equity-infused practices along the student journey. The College has chosen to implement student success teams based on disproportionate impact data, selecting to launch an African American/Black student success team first, with student success teams for other disproportionately impacted populations to follow.

The College will work to identify the resources that are needed to expand and sustain these practices.

The College has made significant progress with identifying timelines and action steps to meet these goals. Intended outcomes are outlined and resources to sustain implementation efforts are included in each activity.

The QFE demonstrates the ongoing commitment the College has made to address equity gaps and support the Vision for Success Goals outlined by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. The integrated approach supports advancing efforts to support the mission of the College to ensure learning and success.