



ACCREDITATION FOLLOW-UP REPORT

Submitted to:

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Merced College
3600 M Street
Merced, CA 95348-
2898

CERTIFICATION OF THE FOLLOW-UP REPORT

Date: October 2018

To: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

From: Chris Vitelli, Superintendent/President
Merced College
3600 M Street
Merced, CA 95348-2898

This Follow-up Report is submitted to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges for the purpose of determining the resolution of recommendations identified during the March 2017 comprehensive site visit.

I certify that there was broad participation and review by the campus community and believe this report accurately reflects the nature and substance of the institution.

Carmen Ramirez, President, Board of Trustees

09/11/2018

Date

Chris Vitelli, Superintendent/President

9/11/18

Date

Kelly Fowler, Accreditation Liaison Officer

9-11-18

Date

Julie Clark, President, Academic Senate

9/11/2018

Date

Andrea Hall-Cuccia, President, Classified Senate

9/11/18

Date

Julius M. Sweet, President, Associated Students of Merced College

9/11/2018

Date

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Statement on Report Preparation

Merced College submitted a Self-Evaluation Report of Educational Quality and Institutional Effectiveness and received a visit from an Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) external evaluation team in March 2017. The evaluation team submitted their report in April 2017. The College received its letter of reaffirmation dated June 23, 2017 that detailed six recommendations.

Following receipt of the letter of reaffirmation, the College began immediate work to address these recommendations. The letter required all six of the recommendations to be addressed in a Follow-Up Report due October 2018.

The Accreditation Liaison Officer convened the Standing Accreditation Committee during the fall 2017 term which met during the fall and which continues to meet in order to develop the Follow-up Report. The timeline governing this work follows this section of the report. Members of the Standing Accreditation Committee were assigned lead roles for each recommendation and engaged members of the college community for assistance writing to each recommendation and/or serving as a resource person.

Members of the [Standing Accreditation Committee \(SAC\) met on August 22, 2017](#) to discuss and identify a timeline to draft and finalize Merced College Follow-Up Report:

Timeline	Action Item
August 2017	Review of evaluation report, recommendations, and evidence
August 2017	Identify writing teams
Merced College Follow-Up Report First Draft	January 23, 2018
Merced College Follow-Up Report Second Draft	March 20, 2018
Merced College Follow-Up Report Final Draft	March 15, 2018
Edits, updates, and evidence finalized	Summer 2018
Merced College Constituency Group Review, Feedback, and Approval	August and September 2018
Merced College Board of Trustees Review, Feedback, and Approval	August and September 2018
Final Merced College Follow-Up Report submitted to ACCJC	October 2018

Faculty, staff, administrators, and students reviewed and shared feedback regarding the College's Follow-up Report during the spring 2018 semester. The Board of Trustees also reviewed the report and provided feedback to the College President. The Board of Trustees approved the report on September 11, 2018.

Response to Recommendation 1 (Compliance)

Recommendation #1: *In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the College engage in robust data analysis, including data disaggregation, to identify the underlying causes that impedes student success, develop interventions to improve student performance, assess the effectiveness of interventions upon implementation and communicate results to the campus community.*

Merced College engages in robust data analyses, including data disaggregation, to identify the underlying causes that impedes student success, develops interventions to improve student performance, assesses the effectiveness of interventions upon implementation, and communicates results to the college community. To address the need of data-driven institutional planning and decision making, the Superintendent/President established an [Office of Institutional Effectiveness](#) (OIE) in 2016. The mission of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness is to facilitate the ongoing planning and assessment based on research, data, and evidence to foster continuous quality improvement. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness includes a total of four full-time staff including the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness, two full-time Senior Research Analysts, and an Administrative Assistant.

The Dean of Institutional Effectiveness, in collaboration with the Director of Technology Services, developed several data platforms to engage faculty, staff, and administrators in robust data analyses. This collaboration resulted in two substantial data platforms, Merced Analytics and Tableau. These two data platforms are built on a recently established data warehouse which is the primary data source for each platform. [Merced Analytics](#) provides data to end users in a spreadsheet format for easier manipulation of data for review and analysis. Merced Analytics is a spreadsheet style data platform enabling the end user to easily manipulate the data. [Tableau](#) is a data visualization tool to help end users easily analyze and visually interpret the data. Merced Analytics and Tableau are used regularly by administrators and staff to [monitor enrollment trends](#).

The [Merced Analytics](#) platform includes data dashboards for enrollment management, Student Equity, and Student Support and Success Programs (SSSP). This dashboard is used by the instructional deans, student services deans, and senior management to monitor and direct enrollment management initiatives. This platform is also used to conduct analysis for enrollment management that includes longitudinal FTES projections, headcount, enrollment trends, fill rates, productivity, and efficiency. The dashboard has data on Student Equity and SSSP that can be used to determine gaps and disproportionate impact. The Office of Technology Services ensures relevant and accurate data by refreshing the data set every 20-30 minutes.

In addition, Merced College implemented a data analysis platform, [Tableau](#), to allow the user to hover, drill down, and conduct multiple levels of data analysis. The Tableau software provides the ability for graphic visualization of the data in the form of tables, charts, and graphs. Currently, Tableau is more intensely used for tracking and conducting analysis for enrollment management. Administrators, staff, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness regularly utilize the data analysis components of Merced Analytics and Tableau. In addition, the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness is making progress in transitioning key aspects of these reports to the Merced College website.

An example of the college engaging in robust data analysis to identify the underlying causes that impede student success, develop interventions to improve student performance, assess the effectiveness of interventions upon implementation, and communicate results to the college community is the development and implementation of the Merced College Educational Master Plan. Beginning in the fall of 2017, the college community engaged in the process of the development of the [Merced College 2018-2023 Educational Master Plan](#) (EMP) with the assistance of the Collaborative Brain Trust (CBT) Consultant Group. Faculty, staff, students, administrators, and community representatives participated in this process to establish a roadmap for the future of Merced College. The Vice President of Student Services, with the support and direction of the CBT consultants, led the College through three major phases of this project: the discovery phase, the preparation of the data portfolio, and goal setting.

As part of this data analysis process, faculty, staff, students, and administrators reviewed and analyzed a comprehensive collection of college and community data sets. [Data sets](#) included an internal scan, external scan, enrollment data, demographic data, student success data, labor market data, and college survey data. After a robust review of this qualitative and quantitative data, the Educational Master Plan Task Force engaged in objective and collaborative dialogue ([reflected in minutes](#)) about new and existing academic programs and support services. This discussion led to the development of the core goals to be included in the Merced College Educational Master Plan. These goals are intended to improve overall student success and student achievement.

The Superintendent/President, Vice President of Student Services, and the Director of Technology Services ensured frequent and transparent communication was shared with the college community about the progress of the Educational Master Plan. This included a dedicated [Educational Master Plan web page](#) on the College's website which includes a [Superintendent/President's message](#), [timeline and project phases](#), [goals](#), [data portfolio](#), [project updates](#), [task force membership](#), [task force meeting dates](#), [listening sessions](#), and a [comment submission form](#). The results of the efforts related to the Educational Master Plan were communicated to the college community through multiple [presentations](#) along with updates shared on a regular basis during the [Educational Master Planning Committee](#), a college-wide shared governance committee.

Instructional faculty engage in robust data analysis as part of the [Instructional Program Review \(IPR\) process](#). The Dean of Institutional Effectiveness ensures relevant and disaggregated data sets are provided to instructional faculty to identify gaps for improvement of instructional programs and services. Data provided as part of these data sets includes student success data, staffing data, enrollment management data, and disaggregated demographic data. The [Instructional Program Review \(IPR\) datasets](#) are made available to all disciplines and programs every year. Faculty, staff, and administrators use the results of the program review reports to identify data trends, interpretation of outcome assessment results and how to use those results to improve student performance, factors to improve student access to services and programs and goals/plans for improvement.

[The CalWORKs 2016-2017 Program Review](#) is also an example of faculty and staff engaging in robust data analyses to identify the underlying causes that impedes student success, develops interventions to improve student performance, assesses the effectiveness of interventions upon implementation, and communicates results to the college community. The CalWORKs faculty and staff reviewed and assessed the disaggregated equity data with the Student Services Program Review Coordinator and determined that Asian and male students in the CalWORKs program were

underrepresented in the utilization of their work study program. One of the underlying causes impeding utilization of the work study program was the limited work study options for students outside of the Child Development Department. Through the departmental discussions of the data analysis, the CalWORKs faculty and staff recognized that many male students may not be interested in working in the Child Development Center. To address this gap, faculty and staff identified strategies to increase the number of work study options for students on campus to demonstrate the benefits of working on campus to CalWORKs students. As part of the continuous review of the CalWORKs program, faculty and staff are assessing the effectiveness of their work study program in the 2017-2018 CalWORKs program review.

Within the Student Services Division, data is reviewed and analyzed on a regular basis to gauge both the quality of the services provided through the regular meetings of the [Student Services Master Planning Committee \(SSMPC\)](#). The mission of the SSMPC is to provide broad oversight, advocacy, vision, and direction for all Merced College student services programs to help ensure student success. During the fall 2017 semester, the Vice President of Student Services requested that the Office of Institutional Effectiveness conduct a [student survey](#) to analyze the effectiveness of the services provided by the Student Services Division. In [January 2018](#), the Office of Institutional Effectiveness shared the [survey results](#) with the members of the SSMPC. During this presentation, committee members discussed the data and identified student support strategies to better support students in the Student Services Division. The survey results were a valuable tool to assist with communication about awareness campaigns for the low usage centers of the College. In addition, members of the SSMPC discussed the frequency of administering the survey to avoid over-surveying the students.

Instructional faculty engage in robust data analyses to identify underlying causes that impede student success, develop interventions to improve student performance, assess the effectiveness of interventions upon implementation, and communicate results to the College community through the [program review process](#). Every fall semester, each program submits a finalized annual [Program Review Report](#) to the [Instructional Program Review and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee \(IPRSLOAC\)](#). As part of the program review process, faculty describe essential elements of the program such as a program overview, how the program supports the mission of the college, staffing, course outcome assessment and program outcome assessment. Special attention is paid to evaluate program changes by reviewing 5-year data trends for the area. Resource overview, program needs, and program goals are adjusted annually based upon the completion of prior annual goals and changes in data trends. Faculty regularly and systematically evaluate all programs and make adjustments based on qualitative and quantitative data. Program review is a regular, effective, and systematic process that is an integral part of integrated planning for the College.

As part of the [program review process](#), faculty review and analyze various data sets to improve student success in their programs. This includes student success data provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness as well as an analysis of the assessment data of course and program learning outcomes. For example, the [Biological Sciences 2016-2017 Program Review](#) report includes a thorough analysis of the course and program outcomes assessment. As a result of the data analysis, the Biological Sciences faculty developed plans for improvement that including better alignment of course outcomes to program outcomes, addressing course outcomes that need

to be formally assessed, developing a tracking mechanism of students from introductory biology classes to indicate how students major in biology perform in higher level major classes, identify strategies to promote careers and job opportunities in biological sciences, and to phase in updated microscopes in all biology labs due to continual use by students. Faculty in the biological sciences will review and discuss the progress of these goals in the 2017-2018 Biological Sciences Program Review report. In addition, all of the instructional programs include similar data analyses and complete a program review report for their program annually. All of these program review reports are available to the college community on the Instructional Program Review and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (IPRSLOAC) [website](#) through the Merced College portal.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides ample [data reports](#) that are available and easily accessible to the college community by posting these on the [Office of Institutional Effectiveness portal website](#). These data reports include the Institutional Profile and Quick Facts, Gainful Employment, high school application and registration data reports, Student Success Scorecard analysis, Career and Technical Education Outcomes Analysis, transfer reports, the nursing students' admission support, the Consequential Validity Study, the Basic Skills and Student Outcomes Transformation (BSSOT) report, the Attrition Report, and Student Equity reports that include the analysis of disproportionate impacts. In addition, data reports assist in the planning processes within the district such as the Faculty Hiring Prioritization Analysis, program discontinuation, basic skills and tracking longitudinal student performance, achievement standards, and the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiatives [IEPI] indicators.

Response to Recommendation 2 (Compliance)

Recommendation #2: *In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College engage in processes that ensure the quality, integrity and effectiveness of its distance education program, including:*

2.a. A framework that identifies the rationale for which courses are delivered in the distance education format.

Merced College engages in processes that ensure the quality, integrity and effectiveness of its distance education program, including identifying a framework and rationale for which distance education courses are offered. As noted in the [Distance Education Faculty Handbook](#), distance education courses support Merced Community College's mission to increase success in mastering learning outcomes to expand the College's instructional outreach to the community. The Merced College [Distance Education Faculty Handbook](#) identifies the rationale for which courses are delivered in the DE format. In collaboration with the Distance Education Committee and the Office of Instruction, a Distance Education Faculty Handbook was developed at Merced College and presented at the Academic Senate in Fall 2017 (see [Academic Senate Agenda & Minutes, 2017.10.12](#)).

On April 12, 2018, the Academic Senate passed [Resolution 4-18](#) formally adopting the Distance Education Handbook which was developed in close collaboration with faculty and the Distance Education Committee. The new [Distance Education Faculty Handbook](#), which aligns with the

current [Merced College Educational Master Plan](#), provides a framework to define the rationale for which courses are delivered in the distance education format. Regular and substantive faculty-initiated contact is defined and explained thoroughly in the [Distance Education Faculty Handbook](#). For example, on page 12, “Instructors need to make certain that there are measures for instructor-initiated regular effective contact incorporated into online and hybrid course design and delivery. Regular effective contact means that instructors must initiate contact with students in a consistent and timely basis to both ensure the quality of instruction and verify their performance and participation status.” Faculty are provided further guidance through a [guide to regular and substantive contact](#) linked on the website and in the Handbook.

As outlined in this new handbook, Merced College’s emphasis is to grow distance education and develop online courses within the area of Associate of Transfer Degrees (ADTs) and Career and Technical Education (CTE). New distance education courses will be aligned with degree or certificate requirements with an emphasis on high impact courses. Additionally, courses developed by faculty who are trained in current effective online learning pedagogy in collaboration with the Distance Education Committee to ensure course quality and compliance with 508 (accessibility) FERPA privacy and accreditation.

As described in the [Distance Education Faculty Handbook](#), distance education courses at Merced College go through the same rigorous curriculum approval process as traditional courses with an additional curriculum approval processes for the distance education format. Distance education courses are separately reviewed by the Distance Education Committee and then approved by the curriculum review committee following the same official course outline of record with the DE addendum. ([AP 4105](#), [AP 4020](#))

A recent example of this distance education framework being applied occurred during the fall 2017 semester. Veteran faculty members who have been trained in online teaching methodologies, and who have experience serving on the Curriculum Committee and Distance Education Committee, recently proposed two new CTE courses, an area identified for growth within the DE format as outlined in the Distance Education Handbook. One of these courses is a new course, but it will be an elective as part of an existing CTE certificate. The [AOM 56](#) course is part of an existing CTE certificate, so both courses were developed according to the rationale outlined in the new DE Handbook. Additionally, as outlined in the new distance education framework, new courses like [AOM 56](#), [MATH-61](#), [MATH-62](#) are reviewed by the Distance Education Committee to ensure regular and substantive faculty initiated contact is incorporated into the proposed courses.

2.b. Mechanisms for determining selection of faculty for teaching in distance education and the training of those faculty.

Merced College engages in processes ensure the quality, integrity and effectiveness of its distance education program, including identifying a methodology for the selection of faculty to teach distance education courses and providing meaningful and effective professional development for those faculty. The [Distance Education Faculty Handbook](#) addresses the selection and training of distance education faculty at Merced College. According to a process endorsed by the Distance

Education Committee (see [DE Committee Minutes, 2017.09.22](#)), training will be provided to certify faculty teach distance education courses.

The new [Distance Education Faculty Handbook](#) outlines methods faculty may obtain this training. Prior to teaching an online course at Merced College, faculty must meet one of the following requirements:

- Have completed formal training or college-level coursework from an accredited college or university in online teaching and associated technology;
- Have completed courses for online teaching and learning such as the Chancellor's Office sponsored @One Online Teaching Certificate or the newly developed Merced College Certified Master Online Instructors Certificate;
- Have successfully completed two semesters of teaching in an online format, preferably using Merced College's Learning Management System (LMS).

As outlined in the [Distance Education Faculty Handbook](#), faculty who have already met the above criteria will be expected to keep their online teaching skills current through participation in additional professional development in order to fulfill College policy, meet federal and state regulations, and accreditation requirements. A recent example of this training includes flex day training (see [Fall 2017 FLEX Brochure](#)), and the first ever Merced College Distance Education Summit which focused on ways to leverage Canvas for student equity, and utilizing course design to ensure regular and effective instructor initiated contact and student success (see [Spring 2018 FLEX Brochure](#) and [DE Summit Program](#)). After the Distance Education Summit, Merced College was inspired to begin a rigorous in-house training course. The Dean of Learning Resource Center who oversees distance education contracted with Michael Smedshammer, Course Design Coordinator at Modesto Junior College, to provide instruction for the first 10 week Certified Master Online Instructor Training [course](#). The Dean of Learning Resources Center reviewed the [feedback from faculty](#) and submitted a [resource allocation request](#) to fund another Distance Education Summit in 2018-2019.

The course was so well received that the Dean of Learning Resource Center offered a second 10 week Certified Master Online Instructor Training [course during summer 2018](#) taught by two of the faculty who were graduates of the first cohort. With two faculty teaching the course, the College doubled the number of faculty who could participate in this training. The new cohort included both new and veteran online instructors whose positive comments about what they are learning in the course can be read [here](#).

A third cohort was launched in September which resulted in 85 instructors completing the rigorous [training program](#) designed to teach faculty how to build an equitable and accessible online course geared for high retention and student success through regular and substantive instructor initiated contact and "instructor presence" techniques like embedded videos and engaging project based assignments and assessments.

To teach online courses, the instructional deans assign faculty to teach online courses who meet the minimum qualifications for their subject area and have experience and training in distance education. The distance education department maintains a list of faculty who have been [certified](#)

[to teach online](#). Deans have access to the list of trained faculty who meet the criteria to teach online at Merced College as specified in the [Distance Education Faculty Handbook](#). New faculty who are interested in teaching online are required to complete coursework, such as the @One Online Teaching Certificate or the new Merced College Certified Master Online Instructor training, which was launched with the first cohort of faculty in the Spring 2018 semester. Faculty may request to be added to the list of certified instructors once they have successfully completed the @One training or the equally rigorous Merced College Certified Master Online Instructor Training Certificate. Faculty who have met these training requirements may complete an application [form](#). This form is reviewed by the Dean of Learning Resources Center and Distance Education and the appropriate area Dean of Instruction before approval.

2.c. The development and evaluation of DE courses to ensure faculty initiated regular and substantive contact.

Merced College engages in processes that ensure the quality, integrity and effectiveness of its distance education program, including the development and evaluation of distance education courses to ensure regular and substantive contact. The Curriculum Committee checks policies and procedures for defining and classifying a course as offered by distance education are in compliance with USDE definitions and Title 5 regulations, Sections 55200, 55202, 55204, 55206, 55208, 2210, and 58003.1. All distance education courses at Merced College follow the same course outline of record as face-to-face courses ([Merced College Academic Senate Resolution 7-00A](#)).

Distance education courses at Merced College go through the same rigorous curriculum approval process as traditional courses with an additional curriculum approval process through the Distance Education Committee. The additional curriculum review required for approval for online courses includes techniques to ensure quality and appropriately robust methods of regular and substantive instructor initiated contact with students. The chair of the Distance Education Committee reviews all proposed new courses and makes recommendations regarding the sufficiency of the instructor initiated contact in new courses with input from the Distance Education Committee. The standards for regular and effective instructor initiated contact are described and defined in the newly adopted [Distance Education Faculty Handbook](#) and in the Merced College Academic Senate resolutions [7-12](#) and [20-13](#) and [4-18](#). The Distance Education Handbook on page 14 provides effective methods of regular and substantive contact such as course announcements, messaging, personalized feedback, discussion boards, chat/instant messaging, videoconferencing, Skype, and phone/voicemail. Further, the Distance Education Handbook reminds faculty to include means for all types of interaction in the course design, utilize appropriate media for accessibility, design daily or weekly assignments and projects to promote collaboration among students, model course netiquette at the beginning of the semester with instructor-guided introductions, pose questions in the discussion boards to encourage various types of interaction and critical thinking skills among all course participants, monitor content activity to ensure students participate fully and discussions remain on topic, create a specific forum for questions regarding course assignments, and ask students for feedback about the course on a regular basis and revise content as needed.

The Distance Education Handbook reminds faculty about the importance of timeliness in interaction and the necessity to establish guidelines for frequency of contact that are similar to a face-to-face classroom. Faculty are encouraged to communicate to students their anticipated response time for student questions/inquiries and assignment feedback (e.g. 1-2 business days), and maintain an active daily presence, particularly during the beginning weeks of a course with frequent and substantive feedback throughout the course. This is one of the assignments in the Certified Master Online Instructor Training course and guidelines for regular effective contact are included in the [DE Handbook](#) on page fifteen. A regular and substantive contact [quick-guide](#) provides faculty with additional guidance on regular and substantive faculty initiated contact with students.

Current, the College is offering a ten-week [Master Online Teaching Certification Course](#) which teaches faculty effective methods to provide regular and effective instructor initiated contact with students using multiple modalities. The first cohort included twenty faculty, and an additional 37 faculty were trained in the summer of 2018, and an additional cohort of faculty are going through the training in the fall 2018 semester. In addition to FLEX trainings, regularly scheduled [drop-in training sessions](#), and special training sessions where faculty members mentor other faculty and showcase their work (see [Canvas Show & Tell flyer](#)), 85 faculty have completed a rigorous 10-week course where they designed accessible courses that include regular and substantive instructor initiated contact. At the recent Online Teaching Conference in Anaheim, Merced College was commended as a leader in turning around the campus DE culture with a robust faculty training program.

In addition, the College's online education [website](#) provides faculty with information about regular and substantive [contact](#), and the Dean of the Learning Resource Center regularly provides faculty with professional development and training on best practices in achieving regular and substantive faculty initiated contact with students.

Merced College was recently accepted into the next Online Education Initiative Cohort (see [DE Committee Minutes, 2017.12.01](#)), as part of this process, courses at Merced College will need to meet the Online Education Initiative (OEI) [Course Design Rubric](#) which is discussed in the Merced College DE Handbook and linked on the Merced College Online Education website. The Education Technology Specialist provides regular training on the OEI Rubric which specifically addresses instructor initiated regular and substantive contact with students ([OEI Rubric flyer](#)). As part of the next OEI cohort, Merced College courses will go through a peer review process to ensure courses meet existing regulatory and accreditation requirements including faculty initiated regular and effective contact. A new local committee, Peer Online Course Review Colleagues, was recently formed to review online courses and make suggestions to faculty regarding accessibility and regular and substantive faculty initiated contact.

2.d. The disaggregation and review of data SLO by mode of delivery and an evaluation of the implications for the Distance Education program.

Merced College engages in processes that ensure the quality, integrity and effectiveness of its distance education program, including the disaggregation and review of course outcome data and an evaluation of the implications for the distance education program. All class offerings, regardless of delivery mode, follow the same [course outline of record \(COR\)](#) and student learning outcomes (SLOs) as face-to-face courses. SLO data is collected for all courses regardless of location and delivery mode. Distance Education courses follow the same assessment cycle as face-to-face courses.

Merced College recently adopted eLumen software for assessment reporting. The course level [SLO report forms](#) have been completed and faculty are beginning implementation and collection of assessment data for the Fall 2018 semester. The software allows the college to review and disaggregate SLO level data at the program and course levels by demographic subgroups and by mode of delivery.

An analysis of the SLO level data by mode of delivery will provide the College with data to improve the quality of DE courses for all demographic groups at Merced College. An analysis of retention and success data for distance education and face-to-face courses at Merced College revealed an approximate 5% completion gap and a slightly higher 8% gap in student success ([Course Retention and Course Success data](#)). At the College’s Distance Education Summit, distance education faculty looked at data for distance education courses and discussed the implications for different demographic subgroups at Merced College and the implications for improving student success for different demographic subgroups at Merced College (see Mike Smedshammer’s workshop in [Spring 2018 FLEX Brochure & DE Summit Program](#)). In direct response to the data and [this presentation](#), Merced College launched the Certified Master Online Instructor Training course, funded through student equity. This [training](#) is specifically targeted to reduce student equity gaps and increase retention and student success through appropriate online teacher initiated contact and online pedagogy.

2.e. The development of equitable and accessible student support services and processes for evaluating for quality, demand and sufficiency.

Merced College engages in processes that ensure the quality, integrity and effectiveness of its distance education program by providing online student support services that are equitable and accessible to students who take distance education courses. The chart below lists student support services that are provided in person and the comparable online service that are available to distance education students.

Face-to-face Student Support Service	Comparable Online Student Support Service
Counseling	Online Counseling
Tutorial Center	Online Tutoring

Application Services	Online Application
Admissions and Records	Online Instructions and Support
Financial Aid	Online Instructions, Support, and Dedicated Email Service for Q&A
Student HelpDesk - STU 127	Online Student HelpDesk and 24-hour Call Service
Orientation	Merced College Online Orientation - https://mc4me.mccd.edu/onlineo/index.asp

The students are notified about these online student support services through the following websites:

Online Student Support Services/Program	Student Notification
Counseling	http://www.mccd.edu/resources/counseling/index.html
	http://www.mccd.edu/resources/counseling/online-counseling.html
	http://www.mccd.edu/getstarted/catalog.html
Tutoring Services	http://www.mccd.edu/resources/tutoring/online-tutoring.html
	http://www.mccd.edu/getstarted/catalog.html
	Screenshot of student access to Smarthinking and Free Online Tutoring services via portal (jpg)
	Screenshot of Email Communication Announcing Free Online Tutoring for All Students
Application Services	http://www.mccd.edu/admissions-aid/index.html
	https://www.facebook.com/mercedcollege/
Admissions and Records	http://www.mccd.edu/admissions-aid/index.html
Financial Aid	http://www.mccd.edu/resources/financialaid/index.html
Student HelpDesk	http://www.mccd.edu/resources/techsupport/index.html
Social Media	http://www.mccd.edu/socialmedia/

DSPS Disability Verification	http://www.mccd.edu/resources/dsps/resources/downloads/Disability_Verification.pdf
DSPS Program Application Academic Accommodation Plan	http://www.mccd.edu/resources/dsps/resources/downloads/Program_Application_Academic_Accommodation_Plan_Nov_16_2016.pdf
DSPS Student information Handouts	http://www.mccd.edu/resources/dsps/resources/downloads/Student_Information_Handouts.pdf
DSPS Brochure PDF	http://www.mccd.edu/resources/dsps/downloads/DSPS_brochure.pdf

Online Courses for DSPS & CalWORKs students in person	MercedCollegeOnlineOrientation- https://mc4me.mccd.edu/onlineo/index.asp
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CalWORKs

30 day Participation Record	https://mc4me.mccd.edu/supportprograms/calworks/Documents/30-day-Participation-Record-2016march2016ER.pdf
Intake/needs Sheet with Data Collection	https://mc4me.mccd.edu/supportprograms/calworks/Documents/Intake%20%20Data%20Collection%20FormER.pdf
New Student Orientation	https://mc4me.mccd.edu/supportprograms/calworks/Documents/2017-2018%20online%20orientation%20presentation.pdf
Madera Count New Student Orientation	https://mc4me.mccd.edu/supportprograms/calworks/Documents/Madera%20online%20orientation%20presentation%202017-18.pdf
Stanislaus County New Student Orientation	https://mc4me.mccd.edu/supportprograms/calworks/Documents/Stan%20County%20online%20orientation%20presentation%202017-18.pdf
Instructions for submitting forms online	https://mc4me.mccd.edu/supportprograms/calworks/Documents/instructions%20for%20submitting%20online%20forms.pdf
Activity Participation Record – Monthly Sample	https://mc4me.mccd.edu/supportprograms/calworks/Documents/30%20day%20Participation%20record%20sample%2010%202013.pdf
2017-2018 Program Handbook	https://mc4me.mccd.edu/supportprograms/calworks/Documents/Large%20Handbook%2017-18%20PDF.pdf
Madera County Program Handbook	https://mc4me.mccd.edu/supportprograms/calworks/Documents/Large%20Handbook%2017-18%20MADERA%20PDF.pdf
Stanislaus County Program Handbook	https://mc4me.mccd.edu/supportprograms/calworks/Documents/Large%20Handbook%2017-18%20STANISLAUS%20PDF.pdf
CalWORKs –Student Portal Page	https://mc4me.mccd.edu/supportprograms/calworks/Pages/default.aspx

Student Services regularly surveys students regarding their awareness, usage, and satisfaction with student support services both in-person and online including counseling, tutoring, online applications, instruction and support for online admissions and records, and financial aid. Students are asked about what additional services or resources they might need and how these services might be improved to better meet their needs. The responses are disaggregated to capture appropriate demographic data and the experience of distance education students. Survey questions assessed the following: awareness of services, use of services, satisfaction with services, satisfaction with hours, improvements in services and resources, additional services and resources. Overall, students were aware of and satisfied with the student services available to them. When asked what improvements they would like to see in student services, respondents mostly

commonly cited better hours. A few students mentioned improvements in customer service, improvements in counseling, and more tutors. (see [Student Services Survey 2017F](#) & [Student Help Desk Survey F16](#)).

Response to Recommendation 3 (Compliance)

Recommendation #3: *In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the College assess all course, including program, and institutional level outcomes and use the results to improve student learning.*

Merced College assesses student learning outcomes for all courses, service areas, and programs, and for general education (institutional level outcomes) and uses the results to improve student learning. The assessment process of course, program, and general education outcome assessments drive the improvement of instruction, programs, services, and general education for the College. Faculty, staff, and administrators use the results of learning outcome assessments to develop plans for improvement and to request resources for the implementation of those plans. Assessment, analysis, and goals are captured in every program annual Program Review Report.

The College utilizes several committees within the [shared governance structure](#) to assist with the assessment and analysis of outcomes at the course, program, and institutional level. The primary role of the [Assessment Review Committee \(ARC\)](#) is to prepare an annual comprehensive summary of the key components from the four major master planning committees: Instructional Master Planning Committee, Student Services Master Planning Committee, Administrative Services Master Planning Committee, and the Facilities Master Planning Committee. This report, called the [“State of the Assessment Review Committee Report,”](#) is presented to the Educational Master Planning Committee as well as presented to the college community during [Convocation](#) (held on the Friday prior to beginning of the fall semester). The [co-chairs ARC](#) work closely with [IPRSLOAC co-chairs](#) to coordinate and implement the assessment cycle of the College’s Institutional Student Learning Outcomes, called General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs) at Merced College, using authentic and sustainable methods. The recent implementation of the eLumen software will facilitate the assessment of all GE outcomes for the 2018-2019 academic year.

The [Assessment Review Committee \(ARC\)](#) is also charged to coordinate and implement the assessment cycle of the College’s institutional student learning outcomes (ISLOs) using authentic and sustainable methods. To better assist with understanding the role of institutional learning outcomes, the College has renamed ISLOs to General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs). The five major general education learning outcomes for the College are:

1. Compose coherent written communication appropriate to the audience.
2. Read and analyze written communication appropriate to the subject.
3. Construct and deliver oral communication appropriate to the audience.
4. Comprehend, analyze, and utilize aural and visual communication in its various modes.
5. Design and deliver presentations appropriate to the audience.

[The Assessment Review Committee](#) assessed and analyzed [GELO #1](#), [GELO #2](#), and [GELO #3](#). [Members of the ARC](#) have developed a timeline to assess and analyze the two remaining general education learning outcomes [#4 and #5](#).

Merced College currently assesses 100% of course level outcomes and uses the results of these outcomes for improvement. The results of course outcomes are also part of the analysis process of assess [program and institutional level outcomes](#). This is demonstrated by a course outcome [mapping](#) to program and institutional level outcomes. Both course and program level assessment reports are generated by discipline faculty and discussions occurred at the course and program levels. An analysis of the results are captured in the annual Program Review Report. These reports are submitted each fall to the Assessment Review Committee. All courses taught in the last five years have been assessed at least once, with the plan to assess every active course at least twice every five years.

Below is a table that captures the progress made of course learning outcomes over the last three years:

Course Information	2015	2016	2017
Number of college [active] courses with ongoing assessment of learning outcomes:	431	630	782
Total number of college [active] courses:	724	783	782
Percent	60%	80%	100%

Departmental dialogue and plans for improvement are reflected at the course and program level of course across disciplines. Specifically, the [Chemistry](#), [Anthropology](#), and [Nursing](#) programs as well as [Automotive](#) courses indicate that changes have been or are being initiated at both the course and program level to improve student learning. How these changes will effect learning will be evident upon the next round of course and program level assessments.

Every program at the College has identified [program learning outcomes \(PLOs\)](#). Discipline faculty [map](#) student learning outcomes to program level outcomes and all program level outcomes are listed in the College catalog. Faculty work closely with the CATs (cohort assessment trainers) to establish timelines for assessing student learning outcomes, program level outcomes, analyzing the results, and implementing improvements to courses and programs. All faculty submit annual program review reports in the fall to their cohort assessment trainer (CAT). The role of a CAT is to review and assess the program review report for completeness and accuracy. Instruction deans provide feedback and also create a [summary report](#) of the program review reports submitted for their area. Members of the Instructional Master Planning Committee review the plans and submit a summary of the program review reports to the Educational Master Planning Committee for review and discussion. In addition to reporting outcomes and program level assessment progress in the annual Outcomes Report, faculty include them in their annual Program Review report to inform both immediate and long-term plans and goals. In Program Review goals, faculty also identify resources they needed to support improvement in student learning and/or address any gaps.

These resources may include additional staffing or faculty, equipment, or technology. The Instructional Program Review and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (IPRSLOAC) reviews programs' goals, and then departments may submit requests for resources through the [resource allocation process](#). In addition, each service area in student and learning support services have developed service area outcomes (SAOs) that describe what students will receive, understand, experience, and/or be able to do as a result of their interaction with the service area. All service areas assess SAOs and align them to the College's general education learning outcomes.

In 2017, based on the recommendation of the Assessment Review Committee (ARC), Merced College [purchased eLumen, a web-based software](#) to automate the assessment process for all programs at Merced College. To better assist the college community in the course, program, and institutional outcomes assessment, Merced College began [implementation of the eLumen software platform](#) in fall 2017. [The eLumen software program](#) provides a platform to support the assessment and analysis of student learning, program level, and institutional learning outcomes. The three major modules of eLumen are curriculum, student learning outcomes, and program review. This will provide a unified platform for linking the assessment and analysis of student learning outcomes (SLOs) and service area outcomes (SAOs) with key planning elements such as program review, strategic planning, and resource allocation. Canvas, eLumen, and Colleague/Datatel all link seamlessly together allowing data-sharing between the platforms allowing assessment down to the student level. However, the College has been in a transitional phase of assessing as the implementation of eLumen has occurred over the past year. As part of the eLumen implementation, the Assessment Review Committee (ARC) and the Institutional Program Review and Student Learning Outcomes Committee (IPRSLOAC) have played a key role with the [implementation](#) of eLumen.

Data for course student learning outcomes are linked in the curriculum module of eLumen and provide a reporting mechanism to review and analyze outcome data and result for improvement. Additionally, the eLumen platform provides a framework to map the course student learning outcomes (SLOs) and service area outcomes (SAOs) to the program learning outcomes and institutional student learning outcomes/general education learning outcomes (ISLOs/GELOs). Faculty and staff use their previous experience in the outcomes process to determine how students are expected to develop the identified outcomes. Faculty, staff, and administrators will effectively identify which areas contribute to student development in a particular program and also measure how well the institution is performing at meeting or exceeding its current institutional student learning outcomes. This process supports continuous quality improvement to enhance students' performance and increase student achievement rates, but has been hampered in the past by the ability to consolidate the outcomes into the program review reports.

To assist the college community with the implementation of eLumen, [a specialized training](#) was held for members of the Institutional Program Review Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (IPRSLOAC) in March 2018. In addition, the members of the ARC and IPRSLOAC conducted trainings and professional development activities to educate faculty, staff, and administrators about the assessment aspects of eLumen as it relates to outcomes and program review. While the college has been in transition of implementing eLumen, assessment of course outcomes, program outcomes, and general education learning outcomes (GELOs) has continued.

During the fall 2018 semester, the Assessment Review Committee implemented a GELO timeline of assessment for all general education learning outcomes for the next five years. This timeline includes utilizing the reporting mechanism of eLumen to assess general outcomes through the mapping of course and program outcomes, student services outcome and survey data, as well as college-wide survey data from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE).

Response to Recommendation 7 (Compliance)

Recommendation #7 (Compliance): *In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the College plan and manage its financial resources in a manner that ensures sustainable financial stability. (III.D.1).*

Please note: The 2017-18 numbers are still fluid at this point and won't be finalized until the week of the 20th. The current 2018-19 numbers reflect what was reported for Tentative Budget. .

The Vice President of Administrative Services, in collaboration with faculty, staff, and administrators, plans and manages the college's financial resources in a manner that ensures sustainable financial stability for Merced College. The Office of Administrative Services ensures that the College's financial resources are sufficient to support and sustain student learning programs and services by reviewing and assess current and relevant budgetary data such as salary data, budgetary projections, facility needs, and prior year budgetary requests. Based on the most current information available, the Vice President of Administration Services uses this data when projecting the total revenues required for the District to ensure appropriate and adequate financial resources.

In 2014-15, Merced College received one-time funding of \$5.4 million plus an additional \$900,000 in 2015-16. As of June 30, 2018, approximately **\$1.9 million** of those funds remain unspent, including **\$866,455** in reserves that has not been allocated to any specific project. In addition to reserves in the general operating fund, these one-time dollars have helped sustain the College during years of deficit spending that occurred in fiscal years 2014-15 and 2016-2017. The following table illustrates the College's actual reserve percentage and net income (deficit) for 2015-16 and 2016-2017 as well as the projected figures for 2017-2018 and [2018-2019](#).

Including One-Time Funding	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018*	2018-2019**
Reserve Percentage	17.93%	13.35%	13.49%	10.00%
Net Income (Deficit)	\$5.9M	(\$2.1M)	(\$0.6M)	(\$1.9M)

Excluding One-Time Funding	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018*	2018-2019**
Reserve Percentage	8.26%	7.55%	9.68%	9.82%
Net Income (Deficit)	\$445K	(\$279K)	\$1.3M	\$270K

* Projected prior to closing the fiscal year

** Based on District's Tentative Budget

In 2018-2019, a [new student-centered funding formula](#) was adopted for the California Community College system. Based on preliminary projections from the California Community College Chancellor’s Office, the new formula provides sufficient funding for the College to maintain financial stability and sustainability. Based upon 2018-2019 budget simulations provided by the California Community College Chancellor’s Office budgetary simulations, Merced College will receive additional state apportionment funding of approximately \$5.7 million. This is a ten percent (10%) increase above the College’s 2017-2018 funding. The additional funding allows the College to provide equitable access for all students and programs, as well as take appropriate measures to ensure their completion and success.

In March 2017, a standing budget update discussion item was added to the weekly [President’s Cabinet agenda](#) for the purpose of discussing current and future budget issues impacting Merced College’s long-term fiscal stability. Members of President’s Cabinet include the Superintendent/President, Vice President of Administrative Services, Vice President of Instruction, Vice President of Student Services, Associate Vice President of Human Services, Director of Technology Services, and the Director of Advancement and Public Relations/Executive Director of the Merced College Foundation. Discussions during Superintendent/President’s Cabinet include current revenue and expenditure trends, pending legislation changes, as well as other state budget actions that will potentially impact multiple future fiscal years. Budget proposals and estimates are finalized taking into account other budget assumptions as part of the Merced College [budget development process](#).

To assist with the planning of the College’s budget, the Vice President of Administrative Services prepares [multi-year budget projections](#) with various assumptions that have been reviewed and approved by the Superintendent/President and Superintendent/President’s Cabinet. This multi-year projection document is presented to the Merced College Budget Committee as an informational item to the Board of Trustees. This document will continue to be reviewed and updated as necessary multiple times each fiscal year.

Each fiscal year, as part of the budget development process for the upcoming fiscal year, the Vice President of Administrative Services meets with every budget manager to discuss their respective departmental discretionary budget accounts. These meetings include discussions on resource

allocation requests, budget augmentation requests with linkage to program review, and strategic planning. In 2016-2017, these [meetings](#) were expanded to include a discussion regarding current year spending needs through then end of the fiscal year. The College generated \$562,850 in savings as a direct result of those meetings. Merced College held similar [meetings](#) in 2017-18 and generated an additional \$619,338 in savings.

The Superintendent/President also recognizes the importance of faculty, staff, and administrators to understand the fundamental elements of strategic enrollment management and the generation of FTES (full-time equivalent students) for careful fiscal planning. The strategic planning of generating FTES also assists with the financial stability of the college. In September 2017, the Superintendent/President created a new college-wide [Strategic Enrollment Management Committee](#) that consists of faculty, staff, and administrators. The charge of this committees is to provide support to the Office of Instruction with regard to strategic enrollment planning and implementation.

In addition, Merced College is one of fifteen community colleges statewide to participate in the [California Community College's Chancellor's Office Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative \(IEPI\) for Strategic Enrollment Management \(SEM\)](#) program, [a comprehensive one-year program](#) that [provides training, coaching and resources in SEM](#). A team of ten participants, included representatives from instruction, technology, and student services, participated in the initial [two-day workshop](#) at Newport Beach in June, 2018. As a participating college in the IEPI SEM project, participants completed an [institutional self-assessment](#) based on [core elements](#) of enrollment management such as student-centered schedule, data informed, technology, policies, facilities, targeted enrollment goals, equity-focused, and scheduling and program pathways. The team reviewed the self-assessment during the two-day workshop and developed a strategic enrollment management action plan. In addition, these ten participants of faculty, staff, and administrators established a temporary task force to assist the College in effective and efficient enrollment management strategies. The IEPI SEM taskforce met frequently over the summer and fall semester to drive the enrollment planning efforts for the College.

In June of 2018, the Vice President of Instruction resigned and a new Vice President of Instruction started in July. As part of this transition process, the new Vice President of Instruction and Deans of Instruction participated in [workshops](#), trainings, and [discussions](#) about enrollment management. At the conclusion of the first session of the IEPI SEM enrollment management training, an information enrollment management task force naturally formed consisting of the participants of the IEPI SEM workshop. The members of this information enrollment management taskforce are collaborating to establish effective and efficient enrollment management strategies for the College. This includes the review of best practices in the area of strategic enrollment management and provides recommendations to those involved with enrollment management. Currently a one-day intensive workshop of faculty, staff, and administrators is planned for November 9th to address specific reference points to improving enrollment management include enhanced outreach efforts, increased retention efforts, expanded advertising within Merced College's service area, and an intense review of room scheduling practices.

In July, the Superintendent/President arranged for the College to participate in another [professional development activity](#) centered on strategic enrollment management. The Superintendent/President selected nine college representatives (the Vice President of Instruction, the VPI administrative assistant, six instructional deans, and the Director of Institutional Research) to attend the [Enrollment Management Academy for a four-day workshop at Claremont Graduate University](#). This workshop provided an intensive [investigation](#) into [best practices](#) of effective enrollment management. During this training, the Merced College team established a [framework](#) of ten [goals](#) to assist the College in developing an enrollment management plan based on the latest trends of enrollment data. These efforts will continue throughout the 2018-2019 year with additional workshops and planning [meetings](#). In addition, enrollment management efforts of the College will also [align with the implementation of Guided Pathways](#).

Merced College utilizes the services of consultants to take steps ensuring enrollment management is embedded in College's Educational Master Plan. These services included reviewing the adjunct faculty expenditure account lines to develop a process to better monitor and project expenditure trends, providing enrollment management and schedule building, and identifying strategic enhancements of student enrollments and improved scheduling for student access and success in 2019 and beyond.

Merced College is committed to the success management of the College's financial resources in a manner that ensures financial stability. Financial resources are sufficient to support and sustain student learning programs and services. The College has adequate reserves and the College's budget is sufficient. Through thorough planning and oversight of the College's financial resources, Merced College is financial sufficient to support all of the College's existing financial commitments.

Response to Recommendation 8 (Compliance)

Recommendation #8: *In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends the Board follow its policy on performing and conducting the bi-annual Board self-evaluation. (IV.C.10).*

Members of the Merced College Board of Trustees have been following the Board of Trustees policy on performing and conducting the Board's self-evaluation every two years. This self-evaluation process is delineated in Board Policy 2745 and Administrative Procedure 2745. To support the ongoing dialogue, the Board of Trustees held two workshops on [April 24](#) and [April 25, 2017](#) to focus on several major topics including becoming a more effective board, effective trusteeship, Brown Act, ethics of board members, conflicts of interest, and developing a Board of Trustees handbook. In the final version of the [Board of Trustees Handbook](#), a section is dedicated to the evaluation of the board. During the workshop, board members and the College Superintendent/President discussed the importance of these topics in understanding the self-evaluation process of the Board of Trustees and plans for compliance to meet the Accreditation Standard IV.C.10.

The Administrative Procedure 2745 ([AP 2745](#)), titled *Board Self-Evaluations*, indicates evaluations should be conducted each even-numbered year. Since [BP 2745](#), *Board Self-Evaluation*, indicates a commitment to assessing their own performance, the Board decided to conduct an “off-cycle” evaluation in 2017 to both demonstrate this commitment and meet the compliance requirements of this recommendation.

The table below (Table 1) describes the process and timeline for the self-evaluation process for the Board of Trustees in 2017.

Per AP 2745, the following process will be followed in conducting the Board’s self-evaluation:	Compliance measures taken by the Board to conduct an off-cycle evaluation in 2017:
The Board shall determine the instrument or process to be used for the board’s self-evaluation. Any evaluation instrument shall incorporate criteria contained in these board policies regarding board operations, as well as criteria defining board effectiveness promulgated by recognized practitioners in the field.	At the September 12, 2017 meeting , the Board of Trustees discussed and approved the process for the board’s self-evaluation, including the criteria for the evaluation and approval of the survey instrument .
The process for evaluation shall be recommended to and approved by the Board.	At the September 12, 2017 meeting , the Board of Trustees discussed and approved the process for the board’s self-evaluation, including the criteria for the evaluation and approval of the survey instrument .
A self-evaluation will be distributed to all board members at the first meeting in September of each even-numbered year.	The Board of Trustees received a hard copy of the evaluation instrument and also received an electronic version of the instrument via email and administered with Survey Monkey.
All board members will be asked to complete the evaluation instrument and forward it to the Superintendent/President on or before the first meeting in October of each even-numbered year.	All board members completed the evaluation instrument by the October meeting and a summary of the evaluation feedback was included in the Board of Trustees Special Meeting agenda on November 14, 2017 .
The Superintendent/President shall compile the results of the assessment for distribution at the first meeting in November of even-numbered years.	Results were compiled by the Superintendent/President and included in the Board of Trustees Special Meeting agenda on November 14, 2017 .
A summary of the evaluations will be presented and discussed at a board session scheduled for that purpose. The results will be used to identify accomplishments in the past year and goals for the following year.	A summary of the evaluations were both presented and discussed during the Board of Trustees Special Meeting agenda on November 14, 2017 . It was determined the Board were able to adhere to the new Board of Trustee Handbook and new protocols. The Board used the results to self-monitor as well as discuss how their feedback can

	be incorporated into goals for the Educational Master Plan.
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In reviewing the process delineated in the table above (Table 1), the Merced College Board of Trustees has fully complied with its policy to perform and conduct the Board self-evaluation as demonstrated through an off-cycle evaluation in 2017.

In addition, the Board of Trustees is adhering to their policies and procedures starting with the next regularly scheduled Board’s self-evaluation in fall 2018. According to AP 2745, the members of the Board will utilize the evaluation instrument as approved by the Board of Trustees on September 12, 2017. As described in AP 2745, the self-evaluation instrument will be distributed by the Superintendent/President to all Board members at the first meeting in September. All Board members will submit their completed self-evaluation instrument to the Superintendent/President on or before the first Board meeting in October 2018. The Superintendent/President will compile and share the results of the self-evaluation instrument at the first meeting in November 2018. A summary of the self-evaluation results will be presented and discussed during a Board session scheduled for the purpose of reflection and review of the self-evaluation results. The self-evaluation results and discussions will be used to identify accomplishments and goals for the Board of Trustees, for the 2018-2019 year. These goals will be reviewed during the next subsequent self-evaluation cycle in 2020.

Response to Recommendation 9 (Compliance)

Recommendation #9: *In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends the Board follow its policies regarding delegation of authority related to the Superintendent/President and ensure the Superintendent/President is able to implement and administer Board policies without Board interference in college operations. (IV.B.5, IV.C.7, IV.C.12).*

The Merced College Board of Trustees is following the board policies regarding delegation of authority related to the Superintendent/President and ensures the Superintendent/President is able to implement and administer Board policies without Board interference in college operations.

In response to Recommendation 9, the Board of Trustees scheduled and hosted a two-day workshop on [April 24](#) and [April 25, 2017](#). Board members and the College Superintendent/President met specifically to address this recommendation. These workshops also provided opportunity for discussion regarding becoming a more effective board, effective trusteeship, Brown Act, ethics of board members, conflicts of interest, and developing a Board of Trustees handbook. To facilitate the discussion, Donna Miller, a consultant with the Community College League of California, addressed the following topics:

1. Appropriate Board behavior to meet accreditation standards
2. Appropriate Board behavior and roles for interaction with employees and the community

3. Conducting more effective and efficient Board meetings
4. Enhancing communication between Board members and throughout the campus

In compliance with [Board Policy 2430](#), *Delegation and Authority to Superintendent/President*, the Board discussed strategies to fully comply with this recommendation. Further, it was discussed among the trustees, reaffirmed by the consultant, and agreed to by the Board the delineation of the following roles as aligned with Standard IV, Leadership and Governance:

1. The district chief executive officer (CEO) has primary responsibility for the quality of the institution. The CEO provides effective leadership in planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness
2. The district has a governing board that has the authority over and responsibility for policies to assure the academic quality, integrity, and the effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the district
3. The governing board acts as a collective entity. Once the board reaches a decision, all board members act in support of the decision.
4. The governing board establishes policies consistent with the district mission to ensure the quality, integrity and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them. The governing board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters and financial integrity and stability.
5. The governing board upholds a code of ethics and conflict of interest policy, and individual board members adhere to the code. The board has a clearly defined policy for dealing with behavior that violates its code and implements it when necessary.

The Board of Trustees fully understands and abides by Board Policy 2430 and Education Code §70902(d) and 72400. For example, the Board demonstrated this understanding by delegating authority to the Superintendent/President in hiring four senior executive administrator positions. In the past twelve months, the Superintendent/President has hired a new [Vice President of Instruction](#), [Vice President of Administrative Services](#), [Associate Vice President of Human Resources](#) and [Executive Director of the Foundation](#). With each of these hires, the Board recognized the operational hiring process, without interference, of the District. The Board unanimously voted to hire the Superintendent/President's recommendations for each of the positions; thus, appropriately delegating authority to the Superintendent/President to fully oversee the hiring process and make the final recommendations for consideration to the Board.

Another example is deferring to the Superintendent/President regarding a new soccer sports program for the College. During the [March 13, 2018](#) meeting, the Board was presented a [Soccer Feasibility Report](#) by the Vice President of Student Services. The report was requested by the members of the Board of Trustees as a result of feedback from the community regarding an interest to start a new soccer sports program at Merced College. After the report was given, Board members had several questions and inquires about starting a new soccer program, but ultimately deferred to the Superintendent/President for direction and leadership on the matter recognizing that starting new programs is both an academic matter, which should be deferred to Academic Senate, and operational issue for the District outside of the purview of the Board's role.

In addition, Merced College experienced a serious security concern in February, 2018. During this possible threat to the main campus at Merced College over the weekend of February 23, 2018, the Board of Trustees were notified of a potential active shooter. The Board Superintendent/President and members of the Board of Trustees completely deferred to the Superintendent/President to appropriately manage the crisis, including working with local law enforcement and the Federal Bureau of Investigators, without interference. Once the incident was mitigated, the Board of Trustees were given an update in closed session on [March 13, 2018](#) regarding security vulnerabilities and plans to appropriately address threats to the District.

The Board of Trustees also demonstrated their delegation of authority to the Superintendent/President in regards to the development of the Merced College Educational Master Plan (EMP). On [September 12, 2017](#), the Board of Trustees approved the recommendation of the Superintendent/President to contract with the Collaborative Brain Trust (CBT) to provide technical support services for the development of the five-year Merced College Educational Master Plan. During the 2017-18 academic year, the Board members appropriately delegated authority to the Superintendent/President to work with CBT to gather data, conduct listening tours, assess workforce and program data, and develop the final Educational Master Plan.

The Board of Trustees met during a special meeting on [November 14, 2017](#) to review initial findings, presented by the Superintendent/President, and to discuss the overall vision for the District. The Board members summarized their vision and provided [feedback](#) to the established EMP Task Force to consider in the development of the final EMP. The Board members were not involved in the development of the EMP, but rather stayed engaged through updates and monthly reports by the Superintendent/President. During a special meeting on [March 27, 2018](#), the Board of Trustees received a copy of the draft EMP goals and objectives, presented by the consultants of CBT. The Board members provided input, asked questions, and provided overall direction, but did not exert any authority in the final outcomes of the Educational Master Plan. During the [April 10, 2018](#) meeting, the Board officially adopted the 2018-2023 Educational Master Plan Goals and Objectives; thus, honoring the process and allowing the Superintendent/President to work with the appropriate leaders and constituencies to develop the final EMP for the District.

The Board of Trustees finalized the Merced College Board of Trustees Handbook during the [April 24, 2017](#) meeting and embedded agreed upon norms and protocols ensuring compliance with the delegation of authority standard and board policies. The Board of Trustees officially approved the final version of the [Handbook](#) at the [August 8, 2017 regular meeting](#) and is currently operating under the agreed upon terms and protocols. The Board members review and adopt the protocols and practices delineated within the Handbook on an annual basis.

The Board of Trustees sign an [agreement](#) each August that the Board members have read and agreed to the governance team norms and protocols in the Handbook to support a positive and product working relationship among the Merced Community College District Board of Trustees, staff, students, and the greater community.

Evidence Links:

Evidence for Introduction

SAC Agenda with Timeline for ACCJC Response Letter

http://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/StandingAccreditationCommittee_MeetingMinutes_2017-08-22.pdf

Evidence for Response to Recommendation 1

Office of Institutional Effectiveness [OIE] Staff –

<http://www.mccd.edu/offices/institutional-effectiveness/index.html>

Merced College Tableau Platform Screenshot -

http://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/MC_Tableau_Dashboard_Screenshot.pdf

Merced College Dashboard Data Analytics Screenshot-

http://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/MC_Data_Analytics_Dashboard_Screenshot.pdf

President's Cabinet Agenda 5-2-18 –

http://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/Presidents_Cabinet_Agenda_05022018.pdf

Merced College 2018-2023 Educational Master Plan –

<http://www.mccd.edu/about/committees/emp/index.html>

- EMP Data Sets – <http://www.mccd.edu/about/committees/emp/data-portfolio.html>
- EMP Minutes – <https://www.mccd.edu/about/committees/emp/meetings.html>
- EMP Web Page – <https://www.mccd.edu/about/committees/emp/index.html>
- Superintendent/President's Message – <https://www.mccd.edu/about/committees/emp/presidents-statement.html>
- Timeline and Project Phases – <https://www.mccd.edu/about/committees/emp/timeline.html>
- EMP Goals – https://www.mccd.edu/about/committees/emp/downloads/Merced_EMP_Draft_Goals_Objectives_2018_03_19.pdf
- Data Portfolio – <https://www.mccd.edu/about/committees/emp/data-portfolio.html>
- Project Updates – <https://www.mccd.edu/about/committees/emp/project-updates.html>
- EMP Task Force Membership – <https://www.mccd.edu/about/committees/emp/membership.html>
- EMP Task force Meeting Dates / Agendas and Minutes – <https://www.mccd.edu/about/committees/emp/meetings.html>
- Listening Sessions – <https://www.mccd.edu/about/committees/emp/listening-sessions.html>
- Comment Submission Form – <https://www.mccd.edu/about/committees/emp/comments.html>
- Campus Forums – https://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/EMP_Campus_Forums.pdf

- EMPC Agenda and Minutes –
https://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/EMPC_Agenda_Minutes.pdf

Instructional Program Review (IPR) Datasets
http://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/IPR_Datasets.pdf

Instructional Program Review (IPR) Process / Guidelines –
http://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/Guidelines_MC_PR_2016_17.pdf

CalWORKs 2016-17 Program Review –
http://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/CalWORKs_2016-2017_Program_Review_Final.pdf

Student Service Master Planning Committee (SSMPC) –
https://mc4me.mccd.edu/student_services/STUSRVCS_Committees/SSMPC/default.aspx

Student Services Survey Tool –
http://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/Student_Services_F17Survey_Tool.pdf

Student Services Master Planning Committee (SSMPC) Minutes 2017-01-23 –
http://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/SSMPCMeeting_Minutes_2018-01-23.pdf

Student Services Survey Results –
http://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/Student_Services_SurveyF17_Write-up.pdf

Program Review Process –
<http://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/accreditation/ProgramReviewHandbookfall-2016.pdf>

Program Review Report –
http://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/Program_Review_Template_2016-17.pdf

IPRSLOAC Creation / Mission – Academic Senate Resolution 12-11 –
http://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/AS_Resolution12-11_IPRSLOAC.pdf

Program Review Guidelines -
http://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/Annual_Program_Review_Guidelines.pdf

Biological Sciences Program Review 2016-27 -
http://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/Biological_Sciences_Program_Review2016-17.pdf

IPRSLOAC Website Screenshot -
http://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/IPRSLOAC_Portal_Screenshot.pdf

OIE Reports - http://www.mccd.edu/about/downloads/OIE_Reports_Screenshot.pdf

Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Portal Site-
https://mc4me.mccd.edu/presidents_office/pres_areas/OGIR/default.aspx

Evidence for Response to Recommendation 2

Distance Education Faculty Handbook – http://www.mccd.edu/faculty-staff/online-classes/downloads/DRAFT_MC_DE_Handbook_9.19.17.pdf

Academic Senate Agenda & Minutes 10/12/2017 –
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