

Standard IV

Leadership and Governance

The institution recognizes and utilizes the contributions of leadership throughout the organization for continuous improvement of the institution. Governance roles are designed to facilitate decisions that support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness, while acknowledging the designated responsibilities of the governing board and the chief administrator.

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

The institution recognizes that ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization enables the institution to identify institutional values, set and achieve goals, learn, and improve.

A.1. Institutional leaders create an environment for empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence. They encourage staff, faculty, administrators, and students, no matter what their official titles, to take initiative in improving the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved. When ideas for improvement have policy or significant institution-wide implications, systematic participative processes are used to assure effective discussion, planning, and implementation.

Descriptive Summary

The Vision Statement of Merced College affirms the high standards of the institution and its commitment to serving the needs of its students and the community. This statement is widely disseminated (College Catalog, Faculty Handbook) and is frequently invoked by college leadership. Faculty are well aware of the student-centered nature of the Vision Statement.

Board policy, citing Title V, affirms the need of the administration to consult collegially with faculty in academic planning and policy making. The Merced College Planning Handbook (1998) outlines the planning model of the institution, showing the Vision Statement as the overarching goal of the college, which shapes the master planning process. This handbook makes it clear that the planning process is based on the principle of shared governance, involving “all segments of the campus community and the governing board,” and that “staff participation is essential for the successful implementation of the . . . process.”

The six master planning committees (Educational, Administrative Services, Student Services, Instructional, Technology, and Facilities), outlined in the Planning Handbook and on the college's Master Planning MC-Net (intranet) site, are composed of representatives from all campus constituencies. The Academic and Classified Senates play active roles in collegial consultation regarding the development of policy and planning. These planning committees and other faculty and staff bodies make regular reports to the college community and to their constituencies regarding planning.

The membership of the Merced College Program Review Committee includes representatives from the faculty and classified senates, various faculty areas (Arts and Sciences, the Learning Resource Center, Guidance, etc.), the administration, and the campus research analyst. Chaired by a faculty member, the committee is responsible for coordinating division self studies and program review reports and submitting the findings to the college president, vice president for instruction, and faculty senate president. Divisions are encouraged to use the results of such studies in future planning. The work of this committee is also communicated with the Educational Master Planning Committee.

Ongoing dialogue involving all of the campus community regarding the annual expenditure of college funds (and informing and educating the college community about the process of developing the budget) is the charge of the Committee on Budget Review and Recommendation (CBRR). This committee "serves as a forum for dialogue concerning on-going fiscal activities such as monthly and quarterly fiscal reports" to the trustees. CBRR's purpose and procedures are detailed on its home page on MC-Net.

Contract negotiations with the Merced College Faculty Association (MCFA) and the Merced College Chapter of the California School Employee's Association (CSEA) also provide faculty and staff with information and input regarding the budgeting of funds.

Self Evaluation

The institution partially meets the standard.

Information about institutional performance is available in a variety of forms. In response to recommendations from the 1998 accreditation report, the college has developed a number of means for the systematic assessment of progress in meeting institutional goals. The college has endeavored to track progress in meeting the goals of the Partnership for Excellence program. It has implemented a variety of data gathering activities and, through the activities of the research analyst and the availability of information via the campus database service (Datatel), information about the institution, its programs, and student outcomes is widely available to individuals and groups.

Information on the MC Net is regularly updated for the Accreditation Committee, and for the Educational, Instructional, and Technology Master Planning Committees, providing easy access to current developments and information to the college community.

The pages for Student Services and Administrative Services have not been recently updated as of this writing, and the Facilities Master Planning Committee page is apparently under construction. The Program Review site on the MC Net is blank, making it difficult for faculty to gain easy access to information about this undertaking.

The Committee on Budget Review and Recommendation's home page provides information on procedures, agendas and minutes, and the budget calendar, but does not include membership information.

The Faculty Senate maintains a comprehensive site on MC Net, with up-to-date postings of current senate activities.

The Classified Senate site is under construction.

The CSEA site provides online copies of the classified agreement with the district, but no other information.

The Merced College Faculty Association has no presence on MC Net. Current communications with the faculty focus on negotiations and are managed through discussions with division representatives to the Negotiations Committee. The MCFA Executive Board communicates infrequently and informally with its constituency.

MC Net provides an easily accessible medium for communicating policy, procedures, and current developments across the range of planning committees and the various campus constituencies. To improve communication of policy and procedures on campus, the web sites of all these entities should follow the models presented by the Senate, EMPC, IMPC and TMPC and present up-to-date information about membership, policy, agendas, and minutes.

Planning Agenda

1. Complete construction of the presently incomplete web sites for Classified Senate, Program Review, and Facilities Master Planning Committee.
2. Update Student Services and Instructional Services Master Planning Committee web sites.
3. Provide more complete information about membership of the Committee for Budget Review and Recommendation on its MC Net site.

4. Develop an effective and accessible medium for communication for the MCFA.

A.2. The institution establishes and implements a written policy providing for faculty, staff, administrator, and student participation in decision-making processes. The policy specifies the manner in which individuals bring forward ideas from their constituencies and work together on appropriate policy, planning, and special-purpose bodies.

a. Faculty and administrators have a substantive and clearly defined role in institutional governance and exercise a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning, and budget that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise. Students and staff also have established mechanisms or organizations for providing input into institutional decisions.

Descriptive Summary

Institutional Board Policy 3700 of the Merced Community College District establishes, supports and encourages the implementation of organizational “shared governance.” The core of this “collegial” policy is based upon “mutual trust, commitment, cooperation, communication and consultation by faculty, classified staff, students, management staff, administration and the Governing Board” throughout the decision-making process of the institution. Administrative Procedure 3700 implements the policy of shared governance by outlining the operations, procedures, and consultations necessary to carry out policy.

The Merced College Planning Handbook (December 1998), in concert with the organization’s shared governance structure, specifies the planning model by which policies and procedures, duties and planning responsibilities, and communication and input are implemented throughout the campus community. “Merced College’s Planning Model,” (p.ii) offers a detailed explanation of the planning and governance process, both short and long-term, throughout the organization.

The Handbook includes descriptions and roles of individual planning committees: 1) Educational Master Planning Committee, 2) Facilities Master Planning Committee, 3) Instructional Master Planning Committee, 4) Student Services Master Planning Committee, 5) Administrative Services Master Planning Committee and 6) Technology Master Planning Committee, as well as the Committees on Budget Review and Recommendation, Program Review Task Force, and the Vision Task Force, plus the relationship and role each committee has with the other.

Board Policy 6200, “Budget Preparation,” describes the responsibility of the President to present a budget to the Board that is prepared in accordance with Title 5 and Administrative Procedure 6200. It also details how budget planning will support institutional goals and be linked to “other institutional planning efforts.”

Within The Merced College Planning Handbook, the College’s “Planning Model” organizational chart (p.ii) illustrates a mutual and reciprocal reporting relationship and flow of information throughout the planning development processes. The master planning and budgeting calendar (p.iii) designates the duties and responsibilities for all committees regarding the budget development, recommendation and ratification process.

Board Policy 5400, “Associated Students Organization,” designates and recognizes the role this organization has as the official voice of Merced College students in district decision-making processes.

Board Policy 2015, specifies a “Student Member” of the board shall be entitled to participate in dialogue about issues. The student member “shall have the privilege to cast an advisory vote, although the vote shall not be included in determining the vote required to carry any measure before the board.”

Self Evaluation

The institution meets the standard.

The Merced College Planning Handbook specifies administrative procedures and role responsibilities regarding “shared governance” and is readily available to the public and college community. The college encourages dialogue and communication throughout the campus and is committed to the principle of collegial shared governance in the planning and decision-making process among all constituent groups on the campus.

Planning Agenda

No changes are indicated at this time.

b. The institution relies on faculty, its academic senate or other appropriate faculty structures, the curriculum committee, and academic administrators for recommendations about student learning programs and services.

Descriptive Summary

Merced College Board Policy 2500, “Role of the Faculty Senate at Merced College” describes the official responsibilities and authority of faculty in curricular and other educational matters. It recognizes the Faculty Senate as the official faculty representative in the formation of organizational policies on academic and professional matters. Title V, Section 53201 also provides the faculty with a formal and effective procedure for participating in the formation of district policies on academic and professional matters.

Furthermore, Board Policy 2505, “Consulting Collegially on Academic and Professional Matters,” states that “Trustees will operate according to the Provision of Title V, Section 53200-53204 in ‘consulting collegially’ with the Faculty Senate for Merced College.” This policy further specifies that this includes relying on “advice and consent” with respect to curriculum, degree and certificate requirements, grading policies, standards for student participation and success, and professional development programs.

This policy describes how the Board will come to a “mutual agreement” with the Faculty Senate in affairs of educational program development, governance structure, accreditation processes, program review, planning, and budget development, as well as “other academic and professional matters as mutually agreed upon between the governing board and the Faculty Senate.”

Board Policy and Administrative Procedure 4020, “Program and Curriculum Development,” describes district policy and programs regarding curricula quality and procedural development. Recommendations for “additions, changes and deletions to the curriculum are developed by the Curriculum Committee and forwarded through the Office of Instruction to the Superintendent/President and then to the Board of Trustees for approval.”

Administrative Procedure 4020 goes on to state that the Curriculum Committee “is a standing committee of the Faculty Senate of Merced College and represents the varied and diverse views of both faculty and students.” The Curriculum Committee has the primary duty and responsibility of working in a collaborative manner to ensure “the philosophy and mission of the College in the development, review and renewal of all Merced College instructional programs and courses” is assured.

Board Policy 2501 recognizes the organization’s commitment to the principles of academic and intellectual freedom, “open inquiry,” to “speak and to question” and that the board will “demonstrate their support by actively working to foster this freedom.”

Self Evaluation

The institution meets the standard.

Merced College polices and administrative procedures regarding official responsibilities and the authority of faculty and administrators in curricular and other educational matters are available on the College web site or at campus administrative offices for the college community and for public review.

Board Policy 2501, Academic Freedom, affirms the district’s commitment to “free discussion and open inquiry” and the board’s active support “to foster this freedom.” This statement, along with attendant “duties and responsibilities of the instructor,” is published in the Merced College Faculty Handbook.

Planning Agenda

No changes are indicated at this time.

A.3. Through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution. These processes facilitate discussion of ideas and effective communication among the institution's constituencies.

Descriptive Summary

The Governing Board of the Merced Community College District recognizes, through Board Policy 2500, the Merced College Faculty Senate as the official representative of the Merced College faculty (including credit part-time faculty but excluding members of management as defined by the Merced College Board of Trustees in the formation of district policies on academic and professional matters).

The purpose of the Faculty Senate is to provide the faculty with a formal and effective procedure for participating in the formation of district policies on academic and professional matters (Title V, 53201). As the independent representative of the faculty, the Faculty Senate may make recommendations to the administration of Merced College and to the Governing Board of the Merced Community College District with respect to academic and professional matters (53200b).

Also, Board Policy 2505 defines the concept of “consulting collegially” between the Faculty Senate and the Merced College Board of Trustees in accordance to the provisions of Title 5, Section 53200-53204.

“Consult Collegially” means that the District Governing Board shall develop policies on academic and professional matters through either or both of the following methods according to its own discretion:

1. Relying primarily upon the advice and judgment of the Faculty Senate; or
2. That the District Governing Board, or its representative(s) as it may designate, and the representatives of the Faculty Senate shall have an obligation to reach mutual agreement.

For the following items, the Board of Trustees will rely primarily upon the advice of the Faculty Senate:

1. Curriculum, including establishing prerequisites and placing courses within disciplines;

2. Degree and certificate requirements;
3. Grading policies;
5. Standards or policies regarding student preparation and success;
8. Policies for faculty professional development activities.

For the following items, the Board of Trustees will come to mutual agreement with the Faculty Senate:

4. Educational program development;
6. District and college governance structures, as related to faculty roles;
7. Faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes, including self-study and annual reports;
9. Processes for program review;
10. Processes for institutional planning and budget development;
11. Other academic and professional matters as mutually agreed upon between the governing board and the Faculty Senate.

NOTE: These items are numbered to be consistent with Title V, Section 53200 of the Ed. Code.

Not only does Board Policy 2505 implement the concept of “consulting collegially,” but the Superintendent and Governing Board of the District have also established six master planning committees, which “facilitate the discussion of ideas and effective communication among the institution’s constituencies.”

They report to the College’s President and include: 1) the Educational Master Planning Committee, 2) the Facilities Master Planning Committee, 3) the Instructional Master Planning Committee, 4) the Student Services Master Planning Committee, 5) the Administrative Services Master Planning Committee, and 6) the Technology Master Planning Committee.

The Educational Master Planning Committee receives five-year plans from each of the divisions or departments, as well as five-year plans from the other five master planning committees. It uses this information to prepare the College’s overall educational master plan. Each planning committee may draft policy or make recommendations, but the final approval of these policies or recommendations rests with the President and the Board of Trustees.

Some of the planning committees have special relationships with other planning committees in terms of reporting and direct cooperation. These special relationships are detailed below:

1. There is an important relationship between the five master planning committees and the Educational Master Planning Committee. It is from the work of these five

committees, and in the context established by the Vision Statement, that the Educational Master Planning Committee works to produce the College's Educational Master Plan.

2. Because the Facilities Master Planning Committee meets on an ongoing basis throughout the year, it has a special responsibility to work closely with the Educational Master Planning Committee in order to ensure that it is following the College's Educational Master Plan.

3. The Facilities Master Planning Committee should also have a close relationship with the Committee on Budget Review & Recommendation due to the inherent need to coordinate the ongoing costs of facilities planning and development with the preparation of the College's annual budget. A member of the Facilities Committee represents the Committee at meetings of the Committee on Budget Review & Recommendation in order to improve communication and coordination between these two key committees.

4. There must be a close relationship between the Staff Planning & Priorities Committee and the Committee on Budget Review & Recommendation to take into account the College's present and future available resources.

The planning process and the Accreditation Self-Study are closely related. Each provides information for the other. For example, the Accreditation Self-Study is distributed to the College planning committees so that they can begin implementing the plans and recommendations for change and improvement included in the self-study. These plans and recommendations are thus incorporated into its planning process.

Together, the planning committees are responsible for reviewing, evaluating and improving all elements found in the institutional standards for accreditation.

The continuing development and implementation of shared governance has been effective in improving communication at Merced College. The implementation of the College's planning model has provided an increased number of well-defined avenues of communication for faculty and staff. The organization and interaction of the planning committees requires effective communication.

Most planning committees prepare minutes of their meetings, which are distributed to others at the College. Drafts of plans, policies or procedures being considered for approval and implementation are distributed frequently for comment.

Self Evaluation

The institution meets the standard. The present policies, procedures and processes related to governance appear to be adequate and should remain in place.

Planning Agenda

No changes are indicated at this time.

A.4. The institution advocates and demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies. It agrees to comply with Accrediting Commission standards, policies, and guidelines, and Commission requirements for public disclosure, self study and other reports, team visits, and prior approval of substantive changes. The institution moves expeditiously to respond to recommendations made by the Commission.

Descriptive Summary

Merced College responds honestly and expeditiously to recommendations of the accrediting commission. This responsiveness is documented in the Accreditation Mid-term Report (2001), circulated to the Faculty and Classified Senates, the MCFA, the local chapter of CSEA, the Management Council, and the leadership of the Associated Students of Merced College. This document specifically addresses the college's responses to recommendations in several standards from the previous self-study, and includes a copy of the 1998 accreditation self-study report. The recommendations and the college's responses are candidly reported and assessed.

For example, in Standard 1, the commission recommended that the institution work to "establish long-term goals that are a part of the college-wide planning process and integrated with the mission statement," to "clearly define and implement the program review process and integrate it with the College planning and budgeting process," to "systematically assess progress in meeting the College mission, planning goals, and identified priorities for improvement of programs and services by integrating institutional research with, and in support of, planning and evaluation of outcomes," to "enhance the use of technology in programs and services throughout the college," to "continue to integrate multiculturalism more broadly throughout programs," to "increase the number of ethnic minority faculty, staff, and management personnel by expanding and refining activities in such areas as mentoring, recruiting, and retention," and to "adopt policies and procedures for the regular assessment of the Board and CEO that meets the accreditation standards. Evidence presented in this section of the current self-study suggests that the institution has made a serious commitment to addressing these recommendations.

The institution's communications with the public detailing its qualities and level of effectiveness are accurate.

Merced College makes regular reports to these agencies:

1. United States General Accounting Office – "Survey on the Role of Community College and Technical Schools in Workforce Development." This is a relatively new

report that seeks to track community college vocational education and technical preparation student demographics and achievements.

2. Inter-segmental Post Secondary Educational Data System (IPEDS). A major report, IPEDS requires reporting (*severe* penalties are strictly enforced) on a three-month schedule. There are 12 individual reports (about 3 per period) dealing with everything from faculty salary schedules to student demographics to financial aid. These reports form the basis of the institution's data profile for the NCES (National Center for Education Statistics), the master site for all federally collected data on colleges throughout the country. They establish our eligibility for student federal financial aid, eligibility for federal grants, and classification listings for ethnic/race determinations on state reports; they are also referenced for budgets and expenditures, as well as other selected information.

3. California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO). The CCCCCO is in reality a collection point for many data sets: assessment instrument validation reports, matriculation data, articulation data and reports, and Partnership for Excellence data and reports. Generally, they are maintained by member community colleges through grants funded by the CCCCCO. We maintain files and report to the appropriate area as necessary.

4. Annual Performance Reports are required by various funding agencies at the state or federal level. The college currently maintains about six large grants, including two Title V Hispanic-Serving Institution grants, as well as a number of local pass-through grants at the county level. The college maintains files and reports as required by local, state, and federal agencies.

5. The Department of Education accesses the data reported to the CCCCCO and others. For instance, some of the IPEDS reports are forwarded to the NCES by the Chancellor's Office, which the Merced College researcher then reviews and edits if necessary. These data are picked up by the California Post Secondary Education Commission (CPEC) and also used for their reports. In addition, they are used by the California State Department of Education. At the federal level, IPEDS is the main source of college information.

6. Much data is not directly reported. The district maintains the data files for their own use and research and in anticipation of potential site visits by outside agencies.

Self Evaluation

Merced College meets the standard.

The college advocates and demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies and complies with Accrediting Commission standards, policies, and guidelines, and the Commission's requirements for public disclosure, self study and interim accreditation reports, team visits, and the need for prior approval of any

substantive changes. Merced College has responded honestly and expeditiously to previous recommendations of the Accrediting Commission.

Planning Agenda

No changes have been indicated at this time.

A.5. The role of leadership and the institution's governance and decision-making structures and processes are regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness. The institution widely communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement.

Descriptive Summary

In response to recommendations from the 1998 accreditation self-study report to adopt policies and procedures for the regular assessment of the Board and CEO, "the Merced College Board of Trustees has established a policy of regular assessment of the Board," and has "established a process by which the CEO [is] evaluated on an annual basis" (Accreditation Mid-term Report).

Self Evaluation

The institution partially meets the standard.

Leadership personnel are regularly evaluated and the institution communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement.

The institution's governance and decision-making structures and processes, however, are not regularly evaluated in a systematic way.

Planning Agenda

The institution will develop a systematic means of evaluating decision-making structures and processes.

B. Board and Administrative Organization

In addition to the leadership of individuals and constituencies, institutions recognize the designated responsibilities of the governing board for setting policies and of the chief administrator for the effective operation of the institution. Multi-college districts/systems clearly define the organizational roles of the district/system and the colleges.

B.1. The institution has a governing board that is responsible for establishing policies to assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution. The governing board adheres to a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the chief administrator for the college or the district/system.

Descriptive Summary

Merced College has a seven person Board of Trustees whose members are elected by residents of the District. A student trustee participates and “votes” in an advisory capacity. The Merced Community College District has a comprehensive manual, Board Policy and Administrative Procedures that contains information on the Board’s policies with respect to student learning programs and services, as well as the financial stability of the institution. These policies are reviewed and updated as necessary on an ongoing basis. Board policies 1100, 1200, and 2010 describe the district, its mission, and board membership.

The policy describing selection of the chief administrator is contained in Board Policy 2111, last updated in October of 1995. This policy is currently being reviewed and may be revised. The new policy will be titled Board Policy 2431, “CEO Selection”.

Merced College has had only five presidents during its forty-plus years of existence. The most recent presidential hire took place in 1998, when Dr. Benjamin Duran was selected. Although Dr. Duran was already a district employee, Board Policy 2111 was followed. Dr. Duran was interviewed as part of a nation-wide search. There was input from a wide variety of constituencies as part of the selection process, although the final decision belonged to the Board of Trustees.

Self Evaluation

The District has an effective Board of Trustees system. Presidential hiring follows established Board Policy.

Planning Agenda

No changes are indicated at this time.

a. The governing body is an independent policy-making body that reflects the public interest in board activities and decisions. Once the board reaches a decision, it acts as a whole. It advocates for and defends the institution and protects it from undue influence or pressure.

Descriptive Summary

Board Policy 2010 “Board Membership” states that no person who is an employee of the district may be a member of the governing board, and further directs that no member of the board shall hold an incompatible office during their term of service. The Merced Community College District is part of the public system of higher education maintained by the State of California; therefore, no members of the board are owners.

Merced Community College District Board Policy 2100 mandates that the Board of Trustees represent seven geographic regions within the service area of the district. The district's trustee areas were redistricted most recently in 2001. According to correspondence with the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, dated January 28, 2002, the Board decided that the “District should study the feasibility of revising the process by which Board members were elected so that members of the Board would be elected by and represent only the voters of their individual trustee areas rather than the District at large. In addition, the Board chose to establish a majority minority trustee area.” The plan for redistricting was discussed at Board meetings in May, August, September, and October 2001, when the new geographical boundaries were approved.

At the present time, any person who meets the criteria for board membership (such as geographical representation and lack of conflict of interest) is eligible to be elected. The current Board of Trustees is also diverse in ethnicity and gender.

Self Evaluation

According to Trustee James Glidden, the Board of Trustees “speaks with one voice.” This is intended to demonstrate that the board operates as a whole and to prevent either external or internal divisiveness. Board members are active and visible in the community and at the state and national level. One trustee currently is president of the California Community College Trustees (CCCT), a statewide organization.

Planning Agenda:

No changes are indicated at this time.

b. The governing board establishes policies consistent with the mission statement to insure the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them.

Descriptive Summary

The Merced Community College Mission Statement, as described in Board policy 1200, places the college's "focus on students and their success." Specific language is included in this statement that reflects the expectations of the Board: "We set high standards to encourage students to reach their highest potential in a supportive environment." The "Board of Trustees Goal Statements" (readopted September 4, 2001) contains Board expectations regarding strengthening teaching and learning, providing access to all students, keeping technology available and current, and building and maintaining facilities that meet student needs. Board Policy 4020 also mandates that "programs and curricula of the district shall be high quality, relevant to the community and to student needs, and evaluated regularly to ensure quality and currency."

Self Evaluation

Board policies are consistent with the current Mission Statement, including the Board of Trustees Mission Statements and Board Policy 4020. Board interest in the college's mission, vision, and goals can be validated in numerous documents. Sample documents are dated January 19/20, 1996, April 18, 19, 23, 1997, October 1, 1998, November 3, 1998, December 15, 1998, May 8, 2002, April 2, 2002, and May 7, 2002.

Planning Agenda

Annual Board planning meetings to review goals should continue to support the quality and improvement of the college's student learning programs.

- c. The governing board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity.*

Descriptive Summary

The Board acknowledges these responsibilities through their actions at each of their meetings. All shared governance committees explicitly recognize the Board's authority. The Board is responsible for approving all contracts, budgets, as well as addressing legal matters. The Board's role is delineated in several Board policies, including Board Policy 2410, which states, "The Board may adopt such policies as are authorized by law or determined by the Board to be necessary for the efficient operation of the District."

Self Evaluation

As part of the state community college system, Merced College trustees cannot operate completely independently. The Board is subject to the California Education Code, regulations established by the legislature, and the Chancellor's Office reporting requirements. As long as their decisions do not conflict with state laws and regulations, the Board of Trustees can establish policy, make financial decisions, and otherwise make

decisions affecting Merced College. Normally, these actions are considered final. However, according to Trustee James Glidden, the Board reserves the right to review and alter policies as needed. The Board also solicits the advice of experts when needed.

Planning Agenda

No changes are needed at this time.

d. The institution of the governing board publishes the board bylaws and policies specifying the board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures.

Descriptive Summary

The Merced Community College District Board Policies and Administrative Procedures may be found in several locations including the Merced College web site, the college library, the President's office, and several administrative offices.

Self Evaluation

Merced College policies and administrative procedures are readily available to the college community and the public.

Planning Agenda

No changes are indicated at this time.

e. The governing board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. The board regularly evaluates its policies and practices and revises them as necessary.

Descriptive Summary

Merced College board policies are gradually being updated in numerical order as part of the district's cooperation with the Community College League of California. The League produces standardized college board policies that may be adopted and revised as needed by member institutions. This process ensures high quality policy development that has been reviewed at several different levels. Several different policies are reviewed at each Board meeting. Policies may be changed at any regular board meeting. Policies that may need updating more often are reviewed more often. Board members believe that their actions are consistent with their policies and bylaws.

Self Evaluation

Board members and the President believe that this process for updating policies and procedures is working well for Merced College. The system allows for the development and implementation of new policies on a priority basis while paying attention to the need for a comprehensive review of all policies. A review of multiple Board meeting minutes indicates that the process was initially addressed at a special workshop on September 17, 1996. Training was provided by Cindra Smith, Director of Educational Services for the Community College League of California.

Planning Agenda

No changes are indicated at this time.

f. The governing board has a program for board development and new member orientation. It has a mechanism for providing for continuity of board membership and staggered terms of office.

Descriptive Summary

Board Policy 2100, “Board Elections,” states that the term of office for each board member will be four years. Elections are scheduled every two years in even-numbered years. A listing of all Merced College trustees and their terms of office is included in the Standard 4 documents. Terms of trustees are staggered so that, as nearly as practical, one half of the trustees shall be elected at each trustee election.” Vacancies on the Board may be filled by special election or by provisional appointment (Board Policy 2110). Student participation on the board is achieved by having an elected student, usually the annually-elected Student Body President, serve in a non-voting capacity, as outlined in Board Policy 2105 “Election of Student Members”.

Self Evaluation

Special Board meetings are scheduled each year to increase Board member knowledge about college functions, especially the budget. Board members also attend various statewide meetings in order to have a broader perspective. Board members have a history of leadership in statewide organizations. For example, board member, Lewis Braxton, is currently president of the California Community Colleges Trustees organization. Trustees have copies of the Trustee Handbook, a publication of the Community College League of California that provides a general overview of the California Community Colleges' system.

Merced College traditionally has a mentoring program for new trustees. The other Board members and administrators orient new members to all facets of college operations, as well as the role and responsibilities of the board. At the time of this writing, all trustees

have been in office since at least 1998. Two of the three most recently elected trustees are retired Merced College faculty members and are very familiar with community colleges. They also served as trustees for school districts. The third new Board member received more intensive mentoring and orientation at the time of her election. Any potential trustee candidate is offered an opportunity for a general orientation to the college as well.

In addition, Board members and Board chairpersons attend the annual Community College League's legislative conference. This conference is preceded by training for new Board members and Board chairpersons.

Board members receive information about accreditation standards and the self-study process on an ongoing basis. In addition, they have always been involved with approval of college curriculum and other programs related to learning outcomes. It is the Board's perception that the college's administration and faculty keep them apprised of new developments and issues in a thorough and timely way. Trustee Glidden believes that the Board will need more in-service due to the significant changes in the accreditation standards, and this will occur as the self-study develops.

Planning Agenda

Although the previous methods for orienting Board members met their needs, it is believed that improvements will be needed if a trustee is elected who is not familiar with Merced College and/or the California Community College system. The Board of Trustees will develop a more formalized orientation system for new Board members.

g. The governing board's self evaluation process for assessing board performance are clearly defined, implemented, and published in its policies and bylaws.

Descriptive Summary

Board Policy 2745, "Board Self Evaluation," speaks to the need to address performance, including areas "which are working well and those which may need improvement." This policy is followed by the Board as described. Administrative procedures outline six steps, which include determination of an evaluation instrument or process, how the evaluation will be distributed and completed, frequency of self evaluations, how the results will be presented, and how they will be used for goal setting. The "Merced Community College District Board of Trustees Assessment Instrument" contains thirty-three items for consideration, including several related to mission and goals, planning, and Board education.

Self Evaluation

Trustee Glidden perceives the instrument as effective in terms of self evaluation. He personally would like some better method for external review, but the Board has not been successful in finding a mechanism that would allow for frank feedback. Many employees might be unwilling to express their true opinions for fear of reprisal. The eventual conclusion was that the electorate ultimately determines Board effectiveness, and that alternate candidates would be encouraged to run if there was discontent with the incumbents' performance.

Planning Agenda

No changes are indicated at this time.

h. The governing board has a code of ethics that includes a clearly defined policy for dealing with behavior that violates its code.

Descriptive Summary

Board Policy 1615, "The Tenets of Merced Community College District Trusteeship," address a variety of ethical issues and district purposes. The second paragraph of Policy 1615 states that, "The primary purpose of the Board of Trustees is to serve as a representative force, always expanding and improving the College's service to people." Succeeding sections address commitment, service, evaluation, allegiance, purpose, responsibility, and teamwork. The policy specifies that trustees should avoid conflicts of interest and recognize their level of authority and legal responsibilities.

All college policies are gradually being updated and/or replaced as part of the college's partnership with the Community College League of California. Board Policy 1615 will be replaced at a future date.

Self Evaluation

Previously, there has been no stated or written process for dealing with unethical behavior by board members, beyond the submission of an annual conflict of interest statement. No one contacted could remember any history of unethical Board member behavior.

Planning Agenda:

Recently, a copy of the Community College League's "Board Policy 2715 - Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice" was obtained for review and consideration by the Merced

College Board of Trustees. This policy was adopted by the Board on May 4, 2004. Board Policy 2175 now provides a code of ethics for the college's Board of Trustees.

i. The governing board is informed about and involved in the accreditation process.

Descriptive Summary

Trustee Jim Glidden has been appointed as a liaison to the current accreditation self-study team. He has served as an information conduit to the Board regarding the accreditation self-study. Mr. Glidden also worked with the Board to inform them of changes in the accreditation standards.

The Vice Presidents of Instruction and Student Personnel Services have provided Board training and information about accreditation for many years on an ongoing basis. The trustees are apprised of, or receive copies of, reports that are sent to the Commission. These typically take place during board meetings or during special board workshops. Board members are involved with the self-study, both as sources of information, as well as in planning and oversight.

Board actions demonstrate a commitment to institutional improvement, particularly in the area of educational master planning. In some cases, the Board's hands are tied in terms of resource allocations. For example, they cannot designate how categorical funds will be used since they must adhere closely to existing state and federal regulations.

Self Evaluation

The Board has been supportive of learning outcomes in those areas where there is flexibility. For example, they approved the Partnership for Excellence projects (such as assistance from Norton Grubb) when funding was available, and they have supported efforts to bolster the college's matriculation plan. They also were instrumental in the passage of Bond Measures J and H, which will vastly enhance the college's educational facilities in Merced and Los Banos.

Planning Agenda

The Board's self-assessment process will be reviewed to compare it with the new standards at their Spring 2004 Board Workshop. Their current self-assessment was created when the previous standards were in effect.

j. The governing board has the responsibility for selecting and evaluating the district/system chief administrator (most often known as the chancellor in a multi-college district/system or college chief administrator (most often known as the president) in the case of a single college. The governing board delegates full

responsibility and authority to him to implement and administer board policies and holds him/her accountable for the operation of the district/system or college, respectively.

Descriptive Summary

Board Policy 2430 is titled “Delegation of Authority to Superintendent/President.” It states that the Superintendent/President is responsible for administering policies and “all decisions of the Board requiring administrative action.” The President may delegate powers and duties to others, but he remains responsible to the Board for the completion of these duties. In addition to these general powers, Board Policy 6100, “Delegation of Authority For General Business Procedures” specifically cedes to the Superintendent/President the authority to manage the fiscal affairs of the institution.

The President also is empowered to interpret Board policy. He is expected to perform the job duties as defined in his job description, which includes making sure that laws and regulations are followed and that required reports are completed as specified. In addition the President also assists with policy development.

Board Policy and Procedures 2111 outline the selection and appointment process for the Superintendent/President. The Board may contact a wide variety of people and groups to assist with the recruitment process. A committee, which includes wide representation from the college community, assists the Board in recruitment and selection, but the Board retains the right of final approval. This policy was utilized when the current Superintendent/President was hired in 1998.

Board Policy and Procedures 2435 describe the process for evaluation of the Superintendent/President. The process is developed collaboratively between the President and the Board on an annual basis. The evaluation criteria are based on the President’s job description and the “goals and objectives developed in accordance with Board Policy 2430.”

In delegating its authority for general business procedures to the President, (Board Policy 6100), the Board sets clear expectations for regular reports. The President is required to “...make appropriate periodic reports to the Board and shall keep the Board fully advised regarding the financial status of the District.” To this end, an annual budget must be submitted to the Board, as well as a copy of the annual audit of the district’s financial records (Board policies 6200 and 6400).

The Superintendent/President’s contract includes specific language about how authority is delegated to him by the Board of Trustees. According to Trustee Glidden, there have been no concerns about delegation of authority to the President. Mr. Glidden believes that expectations are clear. He stated several times that the Board receives extensive information from the President and other college employees regarding all significant

areas of the college, including educational services, the budget, and legal issues. He also believes that shared governance generally has had a positive impact on Board performance and actions.

Self Evaluation

The process for selecting the Superintendent/President works well for Merced College. Delegation of authority and responsibility by the Board to the President has been clear and effective.

Planning Agenda

No changes are indicated at this time.

B.2. The president has primary responsibility for the quality of the institution he/she leads. He/she provides effective leadership in planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness.

Board Policy 2430 (Delegation of Authority to Superintendent/President) specifies that the Board delegates to the Superintendent/President the executive responsibility for administering the policies adopted by the Board and executing all decisions of the Board requiring administrative action.

The Superintendent/President may delegate any powers and duties entrusted to him or her by the Board, including the administration of individual colleges and centers, but will be specifically responsible to the Board for the execution of such delegated powers and duties.

a. The president plans, oversees, and evaluates an administrative structure organized and staffed to reflect the institution's purposes, size, and complexity. He/she delegates authority to administrators and others consistent with their responsibilities, as appropriate.

Descriptive Summary

As stated in Board Policy 2220, Assistants to Chief Administrative Officer, an administrative structure has been developed to help the President of the college oversee and manage institutional goals and responsibilities.

The College's administration includes the Management Team, which has about forty members. However, many of these employees are not considered senior administrators.

For example, the group includes confidential secretaries. Besides, the President, the top level of administration includes three Vice Presidents (Administrative Services, Student Services, and Instruction). In addition, there are five Deans (Student Services [1], Instruction [3], and Off Campus Centers [1]), and a number of directors, including: Learning Resource Centers, Research and Development, and Information Services. There are also several Educator Directors in charge of such programs as EOPS and DSS. Managers meet as a group on a monthly basis, and weekly in subgroups.

The Merced College Organizational Chart lists all administrators and staff responsible for helping the President of the College manage institutional goals and provide effective leadership. This chart can be found on the Merced College Intranet.

The President meets twice monthly with a shared governance group called the President's Staff. The President's Staff consists of the Superintendent/President, Vice President of Instruction, VP of Student Personnel Services, VP of District Administrative Services, Faculty Senate President, Classified Senate President, and the Chairperson of the Management Council. Minutes for the President's Staff are kept by the Administrative Assistant to the President and are posted on the Intranet.

Self Evaluation

When appropriate, the President delegates authority to administrators and others consistent with their responsibilities. It appears that the staffing available to support ongoing college management and administration currently reflects the state budget shortfall. For example, the Registrar's and Financial Aid Director's positions were combined in 2003 as method of cost savings.

If the budget was not an issue, areas like Health and Safety and Recycling and Environmental Improvement could be delegated to a new position that could assume the duties and responsibilities for these areas, as well as other responsibilities delegated by the President of the college.

No changes are likely to occur until California's budget situation improves.

Planning Agenda

None.

b. The president guides institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment by the following:

- Establishing a collegial process that sets values, goals, and priorities;*

Descriptive Summary

The Merced College Community District developed a Mission Statement, a Vision Statement, and a statement of the college's Core Values and Beliefs.

The Merced College Board of Trustees developed a "Board of Trustees Goals Statement," which reviews long-term goals, institutional advancement, fiscal stability, student access/success, diversity, outreach and collaboration, physical resources/facilities, technology, and teaching and learning.

The President of the college has established a collegial process that reviews values, goals, and priorities. The planning process consists of several committees such as the Educational Master Planning Committee and the Committee for Budget Review and Recommendation, as well as several other master planning committees that follow shared governance processes. The roles of these committees have been described extensively elsewhere in the self-study.

Self Evaluation

In October 1998, trustees and representatives of the college community participated in a vision workshop that resulted in the development of a mission statement and a vision statement for the institution. Subsequent to that workshop and using the mission and vision statements developed in 1998, the Board of Trustees established a series of goal statements to guide both the short-term and long term planning for the district in the years to come. In mid September of 2000, the Board reviewed and discussed the content of the goal statements. The review resulted in some revisions of the previous year's goals. On the October 3, 2000, Board Meeting, the trustees adopted the revised goals.

The Merced College Mission Statement and Vision Statement are reviewed about every two years. Last revisions were done on May 7, 2002.

The Board of Trustee Goals Statement was re-adopted on September 4, 2001. The Board of Trustees and the President plan to review goals in the spring of 2004.

Merced College Mission Statement and Vision Statement and the Board of Trustees Goals Statement can be found on the Merced College Intranet site.

Planning Agenda

The College will continue to evaluate and update the Mission and Vision Statements on a regular basis. Shared governance continues to evolve naturally, but a more methodical approach to evaluating its effectiveness would be helpful.

- *Ensuring that evaluation and planning rely on high quality research and analysis on external and internal conditions;*

Descriptive Summary

The Merced College Office of Research and Development consists of the Director of Research and Development, a Research Analyst, and a Research Assistant (categorically funded). The department works with all areas on campus, but major emphasis is placed on student success and matriculation-related analysis. There is regular data and analysis provided to the Curriculum Committee.

The Director of Research and Development reports to the Vice President of Instruction and has access to the President of the college. The President meets regularly with the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services to review data and analysis.

The Office of Research and Development also develops and writes grants. The Director works with many areas, such as the Office with Relations of Schools, Admissions and Records, Financial Aid, the Assessment Program, Tri-College Center, instructional departments and divisions, as well as off-campus sites. The Director is also responsible for redistricting, accreditation support, and support for college planning.

The Program Review Committee reviews college instructional programs. The Committee plays an important role in insuring that all instructional departments and divisions on campus are fairly evaluated based on their performance and effectiveness.

Self Evaluation

The Office of Instruction, in conjunction with Student Services programs, reviews student outcomes. It works with the Office of Relations with Schools for matriculation and articulation purposes. The Office of Research and Development also works with the assessment program to analyze student placement and success in classes. The Research Analyst works with off-campus sites to provide support for college assessment at high school sites. The Analyst also regularly reviews assessment programs such as CELSA-ESL (English/Spanish) and LASSI.

The administrative procedures associated with Board Policy 5050 (Matriculation) specify that there will be “post-enrollment evaluation of each student’s progress.” This evaluation is done both individually and by group.

The Office of Research and Development is small. The Director spends much of his time on grant development. The Research Analyst does not have enough time to engage in the all of the research projects desired by faculty and administration. Research emphasis is placed on creating reports mandated by the Chancellor’s Office and other agencies (IPEDS, etc.). There is insufficient time available for non-mandated studies.

The President feels he is familiar with data and the analysis of institutional performance. He reviews student enrollment, student outcomes, and oversees the governance model on a regular basis to make sure it tightly integrates district goals and mission.

Planning Agenda

1. There is a need to perform additional research concerning the institution's effectiveness, student learning outcomes, institutional planning processes, and the resource allocation process.
 2. It is recommended that a user-friendly mechanism be developed to allow faculty and other employees to learn how to access the District's databases. This will allow information to be extracted in a timely way, which does not require the assistance of the Research Analyst.
 3. There does not appear to be a set mechanism in place that specifically evaluates research except when specially requested by the department head or the head of Research and Development.
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- ***Ensuring that educational planning is integrated with resource planning and distribution to achieve student learning outcomes;***

Descriptive Summary

The Planning Model at Merced College has six Master Planning Committees (including EMPC). These Master Planning Committees process information related to staff, facilities, instruction, administration, and student services needs and interrelate these needs with the College's budgetary resources.

The lead committee is the Educational Master Planning Committee (EMPC). This committee receives five-year plans from each of the divisions or departments, as well as five-year plans from the other five master planning committees. It uses this information to prepare the college's overall educational master plan. This committee may draft a policy or make recommendations, but the final approval of these policies or recommendations rests with the President and the Board of Trustees. Information about the Educational Master Planning Committee can be found in the Merced College Planning Handbook.

Self Evaluation

The work of the master planning committees is coordinated and culminates in a comprehensive integration by the Educational Master Planning Committee.

Planning Agenda

The Planning Handbook should be updated in conjunction with EMPC and the other master planning committees and under the supervision of the President and Board of Trustees.

- *Establishing procedures to evaluate overall institutional planning and implementation efforts.*

Descriptive Summary

Merced College has a Planning Model that is based on the principles of shared governance. This model and governance structure can be found in the Merced College Planning Handbook, which was revised and approved by the Board on December 15, 1998. The current President follows the procedures that have been evolving over the past decade.

Institutional planning involves a comprehensive process that encompasses both short and long-range planning in a broad-based committee structure. The master planning process at the college incorporates input from various institutional planning committees.

These master planning committees process information related to staffing, facilities, instruction, administration, and student services needs and relate these needs to the College's budgetary resources. Planning committees identify institutional priorities and influence the acquisition and allocation of human, financial and physical resources.

There are six Master Planning Committees. They report to the College's President and include: 1) The Educational Master Planning Committee, 2) the Facilities Master Planning Committee, 3) the Instructional Master Planning Committee, 4) the Student Services Master Planning Committee, 5) the Administrative Services Master Planning Committee, and 6) the Technology Master Planning Committee.

Each planning committee may draft policy or make recommendations, but the final approval of these policies or recommendations rests with the President and the Board of Trustees.

Self Evaluation

The President of the college communicates institutional values, goals, and direction by reviewing and updating board goals and integrating planning as part of the shared governance process.

Planning Agenda

Evaluation of student learning outcomes and institutional and shared governance planning should be parallel, and possibly convergent, activities. A methodology for evaluating planning effectiveness should be developed.

- c. *The president assures the implementation of statutes, regulations, and governing board policies and assures that institutional practices are consistent with institutional mission and policies.***

Descriptive Summary

As specified in Board Policies 2410 and 2430, the President assures implementation of statutes, regulations and governing board policies by directing administrative staff to follow rules and regulations. The President may also utilize attorneys or other specialists as needed for obtaining compliance with statutes, regulations and governing policies. Board policies are reviewed by the Board of Trustees, President, and governance groups on a regular basis to ensure that they are consistent with the district's mission and goals.

Self Evaluation

The President assures that institutional policies and practices are consistent with institutional mission and goals by using a planning process that ensures district and board goals are consistent.

Planning Agenda

No changes are indicated at this time.

- d. *The president effectively controls budget and expenditures.***

Descriptive Summary

The President exercises considerable control over budget and expenditures and follows the budget plan approved by the Board of Trustees. The Committee on Budget Review and Recommendation plays a key role in this process. All this is accomplished through a system of shared governance. The Board of Trustees and the President of the college set budget reviews and recommendations.

The Committee on Budget Review and Recommendation (CBRR) provides advice and recommendations for the development of the College's annual budget. With each new budget cycle, the budget development process is reviewed and recommendations for improvement are implemented. The President chairs this committee.

Self Evaluation

Once the budget is set through CBRR, the President usually meets with all the Vice Presidents on a weekly basis to review the budget. The Vice Presidents meet frequently with their managers to review major expenditure plans. It is managers' responsibility to make sure that they spend within their individual budgets.

It appears that expenditures currently track the budget closely. The Educational Master Planning Committee, CBRR, and the other master planning committees also review the status of program expenditures relative to the budget.

Planning Agenda

It appears that budget and expenditures for all areas currently reflect the budget. No changes are recommended at this time.

e. The president works and communicates effectively with the communities served by the institution.

Descriptive Summary

Merced College established the Office of Institutional Advancement, which strives to be a comprehensive, full-service operation supporting the college through a variety of public relations, community outreach, and private fund-raising activities. Institutional Advancement encompasses a range of programs and services that enable the college to develop a positive public image, build lasting and beneficial relationships with all college constituencies, and raise private financial support.

The college also works to communicate effectively with the communities it serves through college outreach, community events, participation in service clubs and charitable events, and distribution of a wide variety of public information materials.

The mission of the Office of Institutional Advancement is to enhance the image of Merced College through a meaningful public relations and marketing program, to build relationships between the college and the community, and to advance the educational opportunities and services of Merced College by generating financial gifts from potential donors.

The President serves on a number of community boards and is perceived as a leader both educationally and for improving the region's economic and social status. He is deeply involved with economic development and was instrumental in the acquisition of the land donated for the new Los Banos Campus.

Self Evaluation

As with several other college departments, the Office of Institutional Advancement has a small budget and staff, which consists of a full-time director, three-quarter time administrative assistant, and part-time public information assistant, who assists in producing press releases and other public information and marketing materials. The director is also the executive director of the Merced College Foundation, the District Public Information Officer, and has oversight responsibilities for many of the district's communications and publications programs. The administrative assistant also is the district's Health and Safety coordinator and Drug Testing program officer, as well as a member of the Ergonomics Committee. The public information assistant also helps coordinate Merced College Foundation activities, such as donor contact, and special events planning. The office is productive, but limited by its small staff size and budget constraints.

Planning Agenda

The Merced College Foundation has completed a draft of its new Five-Year Strategic Plan, which will be reviewed by the Board of Directors at its April, 2004 meeting. The Foundation has identified the need for district planning, for additional staff, and an increased budget.

Note: Electronic and paper documentation for each standard can be found in the last section of the Accreditation Self-Study, "A List of Documents Used to Prepare the Self-Study."