ACCREDITATION TEAM VISIT
MERCED COLLEGE

March 22-24, 2005

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Merced Community College District was established in 1962 and serves the residents of Merced County, the area of Chowchilla Union High School District in Madera County, and the Dos Palos Joint Union Elementary School District. Classes were first held in the fall of 1963 at the current college site. Classes were first held in Los Banos in 1971 in leased facilities. Los Banos received center status in 1979 as a grand fathered operation, since it had been functioning since 1971. In 1982 the District moved the Center to temporary, District-owned facilities where it has remained in operation. A recently passed local bond measure provides for construction of a permanent campus on donated land. Additionally, the college is offering extended education at numerous locations across the District.

From March 22-24, 2005, a ten-member accreditation team visited Merced College for the purpose of evaluating the college's application for reaffirmation of accreditation. Team members were trained as a group by staff of the Commission. Training and preparation of the team included review of the Commission Handbook for Evaluators and specific orientation to the (new) 2002 Standards. Team members reviewed, in advance of the site visit, the college's self study, the previous team's evaluation report and recommendations, and the college's response to those recommendations.

As a result of team training and orientation, the focus of the visit was upon *documentation* and direct observation of evidence for the claims made by the institution in the self study. A limited number of classroom visits were conducted in order to observe teaching approaches and to examine course syllabi provided by professors teaching those classes. The team also interviewed college leaders, self study writing teams, and committee members in the various areas of planning and governance. Two open meetings were held, one on the Merced campus and the other at Los Banos, at which anyone could address the team on any subject. The Board of Trustees arranged a special meeting with the evaluation team. A considerable amount of coordination was needed on the part of college staff to accommodate these extensive processes, and team members appreciated the spirit of cooperation that was evident in all instances.

The last accreditation visit occurred in March 1999. A Midterm Report was conducted in 2001. The current self study report was prepared in the spring of 2004 and received final board approval in November 2004. There was a delay in finalizing and submitting the report due to scheduling considerations of the Commission. When the team came to the campus in March 2005, they found that significant portions of the self study were already out-of-date. However, the team made extra-ordinary efforts at further data and document collection in order for the Team Report to be as accurate as possible.

The self study was very readable. It followed point by point the accreditation standards. Some standards were more thoroughly developed and well organized than were others. The college cited 20 items of Eligibility Requirements instead of the 21 currently in use by the Commission. The overall document was judged to be very straight forward and helpful to the team in gaining an understanding of how well the college aligns with standards of good practice. The team was provided with hard copy of many of the documents cited as evidence in the self study. Several additional documents had to be requested, and staff was very cooperative in this regard. Program review and student learning outcomes and documentation that flows from these areas of emphasis was only partially available as these processes are still under development. E-file documents were readily accessible on the college's Intranet; however, the team observed most should have been on Internet.

The college is commended for the broad participation of faculty, administrators and board members in preparation of the report. However, student involvement was missing entirely. The writing team produced a document that was very candid. There were a significant number of focused planning agendas. There were also a number of areas where the planning agendas were too general and were not expressed in terms of specific actions to be considered or taken. At the time of the last accreditation visit, there was new executive leadership for the district. During the six years under review for this visit, there has been continuity in the position of superintendent/ president as well as other senior administrative staff. There has also been continuity in board membership.

The evaluation team observed within Merced College a very collegial learning community dedicated to the centrality of student success in its mission and organizational culture. A number of exemplary attributes were observed that were related to accreditation standards and the team is pleased to share the following special commendations:

- The college has been responsive to developing student learning outcomes (SLOs) as an accreditation requirement. As a first step, the necessary processes have been put in place and the requisite training provided to the faculty. Additionally, there are pilot projects to incorporate SLOs at the course and program levels that other disciplines can build upon. Recognizing that full embodiment of SLOs at the institutional, program, and course levels is a multi-year endeavor; the faculty is commended for the initial phase of SLOs adoption.
- The college is commended for faculty leadership that resulted in the establishment of the Teaching and Learning Academy that supports new fulltime faculty members.
- The college is commended for the successful passage of local bonds, Measures J and I, for securing the donation of 120 acres for the Los Banos campus and for obtaining significant state funding for capital projects.
- The college is commended for the manner in which it recognizes and utilizes contributions of leadership throughout the institution, led by the president and the Board of Trustees, to create a cooperative and collaborative atmosphere based on dialogue.
- The college is commended for the integrity and candor with which it deals with the Commission and other constituencies, as evidenced by the self study report.

- The college is commended for its accomplishments in acquiring technology infrastructure and systems as well as technology planning and coordination since the last accreditation report.
- The college is commended for improvements in student services that resulted from student surveys and program reviews.
- The college is commended for improving its planning structures through college-wide dialogue and especially broad-based faculty involvement.

Recommendations of the team in 1999 that were not fully addressed relate to 2002 standards for program review, student learning outcomes and connectivity of the full cycle of planning, evaluation and resource prioritization. There are also new areas the team assessed for standards adoption. The team is mindful of the Commission's direction to emphasize learning outcomes and institution wide dialogue on effectiveness using data-driven decision-making. In summary the team recommends:

1) In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the college implement its new program review process in a focused and expeditious manner, including a published schedule as to when all college programs and services are committed to undergo the full process. Integration of program review with the institutional planning and budgeting processes, the development of student learning outcomes, and student achievement data is also recommended. This is imperative given that the program review process was cited by two previous teams as not meeting the standards. (Standard I.B.1, B.3, B.6, B.7; Standard II.A.1.a, b, c, A.2.a, b, c, e, f; B.1, B.3.d, B.4, C.2; Standard III.A.1, A.4.a; B.1.a; Standard IV.A.1)

2) In order to meet the standards, the college needs to develop student learning outcomes for all courses and programs. Additionally, institutional student learning outcomes need to be integrated with General Education and Competency Requirements. Assessment of student learning outcomes needs to show how course credit and the awarding of degrees and certificates is based on student achievement of stated student learning outcomes and how outcome assessments are used to improve courses and programs, improve teaching and learning strategies, and promote student success. (Standard I.B, B.2; Standard II.A.1.a, c, A.2.a, b, e, f, g, h, i, A.3.a, b, c, 6.a; B, B.4, C, C.2)

3) In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the college fully embrace its stated commitment to a student-centered environment by structuring a leadership development program for student involvement in the college shared governance process. (Standard I.B.4; Standard II.B.4, Standard IV.A.1, A.2, A.3, A.5, B.2.a)

4) In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the college develop an assessment plan to provide ongoing and systematic evaluation and integration of all institution-wide planning processes. This assessment should include the current planning processes, program reviews, data-driven decision-making and resource allocation processes, and their interrelationships. (Standard I.A.4, B.1, B.2, B.3, B.5,

B.6, B.7; Standard II.A.2.e, f; B.3.b; Standard III.A.6, B.2.a, b; C.1.a, C.2; D.1.a; Standard IV.B.2.b)

RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 1999 ACCREDITATION EVALUATION

1) Establish long term goals that are part of the mission statement and integrated with the college wide planning process as well as a means of regularly evaluating progress toward meeting those goals.

Since the last visit, a process has emerged by which the board establishes long-term goals, reviews goals annually and disseminates them throughout the institution. These goals have the effect of expanding the brief mission and vision statements. These documents have been integrated into long- and short-term planning processes.

Merced College's Planning Model was last updated in 1998. It does not reflect the program review process or its integration with planning and resource allocation. In order to fully meet this recommendation, the college still needs to develop an institution-wide assessment to include ongoing and systematic evaluation of integrated planning. This should include the current planning processes, program review, and data-driven evaluation support.

2) Clearly define and implement the program review process and integrate it with the college planning and budgeting process.

The program review model in instruction has been altered significantly since the last team visit, and indeed since the writing of the self study. While the new model is more directly connected to the student learning outcomes model, over its two-year life it has been minimally implemented. The program review process feeds into the college's master planning and budgeting process as documented in the September 19, 2003 power point presentation entitled "Academic Program Review." At the present time, the college is field-testing the newest program review process within the Business Division, believing that it will be a more effective cycle of review, analysis, and revision than previous attempts.

Currently the college is focusing on instructional program review and does not plan to review student services or business services. This is a matter of concern, since program review should drive all planning and allocation systems. Program review takes on additional importance since it is now part and parcel of the accreditation emphasis on institutional improvement through data collection and analysis. Cited as a problem in the prior visit, the level, formality, role, and implementation of program review are thus a matter of continuing concern. The team believes this recommendation has not been fully met.

3) *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.*

The college response to this recommendation focuses on institutional research, specifically the hiring of a full-time research analyst six years ago, and the positive impact that person has had on the college planning processes. There is a Director of Research and Development. This position's major effort is in grant acquisition and administration, and the college has met with good success in those endeavors. Since the last accreditation visit, the college has acquired the Datatel information processing system, a system used by numerous community colleges in California and one that has the potential to yield large quantities of data and information. The evaluation team's major concern is that the generated data is used primarily to issue standard reports and to develop grants. To fully meet the intent of this recommendation, a greater effort should be made to utilize data to support SLOs, program reviews and institutional planning processes.

4) *Enhance the use of technology in programs and services throughout the college by providing better coordination, maintenance and technical support.*

The college has made significant progress in coordination and planning of technology. The use of technology has increased across the institution. Rewiring of the campus two years ago as well as connection of faculty and staff computers to the network has had a significant impact. In addition, the A2T Access to Technology Project prepared faculty for greater utilization of technology. The implementation of Datatel has provided the college with the data warehouse it can use to support planning efforts. Faculty members have been trained in its use, classrooms have been equipped, and additional staff is working in maintenance and support. The college has met this recommendation.

5) *Continue to integrate multiculturalism more broadly throughout programs and services.*

The college has integrated multiculturalism more broadly throughout its programs and services. The college has used student activities, college courses, special programs and course offerings, guest speakers, staff development programs and workshops, as well as gallery shows to highlight artistic multicultural items and programs. It is noteworthy that the college offers Hmong language courses. Faculty members are encouraged by the curriculum committee and the division to integrate multiculturalism into instructional courses and programs. However, that process is neither formalized nor consistent. Goal statements adopted in December 2004 by the Board of Trustees include a goal to reflect the diversity of the college population. Strategies include developing programs designed to meet the identified needs of the diverse groups within the community, actively recruiting among various constituencies, and ensuring that student support services respond to the identified needs of the college's diverse constituencies. The team believes the intent of this recommendation has been met.

6) Increase the number of ethnic minority faculty, staff, and management personnel by expanding and refining activities in such areas as mentoring, recruiting and retention.

The college has implemented several activities to address this recommendation. A mentoring program was established to assist new faculty in developing their skills and in meeting their new responsibilities. The area of recruitment and candidate diversity is being addressed through expanded recruitment on a nation-wide basis, as well as advertising positions in numerous publications targeting underrepresented groups. The district reviews the board goal related to diversity with all hiring committees and reviews applicant pools for diversity prior to starting the hiring process.

To fully meet this recommendation, the college needs to update Board Policies and the Faculty Diversity Plan regarding the commitment to a diverse faculty and staff. Additionally, discrimination and harassment procedures need to be published in student publications.

7) *Adopt policies and procedures for the regular assessment of the board and CEO that meets the accreditation standards.*

The last team found a lack of attention to accreditation standards regarding frequency and formality of CEO performance assessment and board self evaluation. Since that time, the superintendent/president has encouraged training, and the board has responded with new policies: one for CEO evaluation and one for board evaluation, both of which were implemented. The college is now fully compliant with the standards in this regard.

EVALUATION OF THE COLLEGE USING ACCJC STANDARDS

Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

GENERAL OBSEVATIONS

The mission statement of the college reads: "Students are our focus and we are known by their success." The team finds this statement very compelling and much in evidence in the quality of teaching and learning at Merced College. There is an observable consciousness of the student at the center of the institution's programs and services.

There was extensive faculty participation in the review of the mission statement, mainly through the Academic Senate and through the six-fold planning committee process. As the self study points out, staff participation in mission review and planning was less evident and student participation was minimal or missing entirely. There were no students active on the planning committees at the time of the self study report.

Regarding institutional effectiveness, the new Datatel information system has added value to the college operation and holds much promise to yield more information to support student and college personnel decision making in the future. Data is utilized in the college planning processes although it is not produced in a systematic and regular series of effectiveness reports and measures that would guide better decision making.

FINDINGS

Standard I.A: Mission. The self study indicates that three sub standards of 1A are met and that one standard is met at a minimum. There is one planning agenda for standard 1 A. The mission statement has been reviewed at regular three-year intervals although there is no formal process for reviewing the statement. The mission statement is found in the Catalog, the Schedule of Classes, and on the college web page and is widely available for viewing. The mission statement as approved by the board and broadcast by the college is: "Students are our focus and we are known by their success." Taken by itself this statement does not meet the standard as there is no statement of the educational purposes of the institution or the intended student population. There is perhaps reference to student learning in the words "their success." However, the Philosophy, Mission, Vision, Core Values and Beliefs statements in the Catalog, *all taken together*, can be judged to fulfill the Standard. Evidence shows that the mission statement with its consciousness of student-centeredness is central to institutional planning and decision making at the college. Student services have direct evidence of being aligned with the mission statement. As an example, there are very usable student pages in the Schedule of Classes. (Standard I.A.1, 2, 3)

Student participation in development of the mission statement was minimal, and the planning agenda recommends encouraging greater student involvement. The need for greater student participation is a theme that runs throughout the self study. (Standard I.A.1)

Standard I.B: Improving Institutional Effectiveness. There are no direct statements as

to whether each subsection of the standard is met or not. Each of the seven subsections of 1B contains a planning agenda. There is evidence that significant progress has been made in making data available, and there is evidence that the new Datatel information system has the potential to yield even more information in the future. Evidence shows that data is part of the institutional planning process although the data is not produced in a systematic and regular series of reports. There is evidence that extensive data is produced for enrollment management purposes, and extensive data is available from Datatel for FTES deliberations. But in the self study there is only one set of effectiveness data in the introductory pages, the table of degrees and certificates. This table indicates that the number of AA degrees has decreased since 1999. The self study has no transfer, persistence, success rate, or placement testing data tables although such tabulations can be found in publications from the research office or on the Intranet. (Standard I.B.1, 3, 4, 5)

Although there is now more data available than previously, it is not clear that the data is being used to maintain an ongoing dialogue about improvement of institutional effectiveness. There is evidence of data informing the six planning committees, but the data is produced mainly ad hoc and not in a yearly cycle of regular reports. There are brief data fact books available, but there is not one single, comprehensive source of data that could be used by forums, which discuss institutional effectiveness. A central source of common data will become more important as the college moves toward institutional outcomes and a complete cycle of analysis, evaluation, and improvement. (Standard I.B.1, 5, 6)

The team encourages the college to make a greater emphasis upon the user-friendly availability of institutional effectiveness data and to maintain an ongoing dialogue about improvement in serving students that is data-based. The team observes that all of the components of a full annual cycle of institutional assessment, planning, focused improvements, and evaluation are functioning. (Standard I.B.6)

Evidence Examined:

Board Goals
Five Year Plan Goals
College Catalog
College Planning Committees Membership List
College Planning Committees Reports
Faculty Senate Resolution 4-03 Program Review
College Planning Handbook
Board of Trustees Minutes April 2002, May 2002

CONCLUSIONS

The college meets Standard I A but does not fully meet Standard I B. To fulfill its mission statement the college needs to commit itself to a full cycle of evaluation and improvement. This is especially important in the area of implementing a program review process in fulfillment of Standard 1.B. The college is commended for improving

its planning structures through college-wide dialogue and especially broad-based faculty involvement. The college has achieved the means to produce the necessary data for informing a complete process of continuing improvement. But a full cycle of assessment --- including the important final steps of evaluation and recommendations for improvement --- still needs to be put into place and carried out.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) In order to meet the standards, the team recommends the college implement its new program review process in a focused and expeditious manner, including a published schedule as to when all college programs and services are committed to undergo the full process. Integration of program review with the institutional planning and budgeting process, the development of student learning outcomes and student achievement data is also recommended. This is imperative given that the program review process was cited in 1992 and 1999 as not meeting standards. (Standard I.B.1, B.3, B.6, B.7; Standard II.A.1.a, b, c, A.2.a, b, c, e, f; B.1, B.3.d, B.4, C.2; Standard III.A.1, A.4.a; B.1.a; Standard IV.A.1)

4) In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the college develop an assessment plan to provide ongoing and systematic evaluation and integration of all institution-wide planning processes. This assessment should include the current planning processes, program reviews, data-driven decision-making and resource allocation processes, and their interrelationships. (Standard I.A.4, B.1, B.2, B.3, B.5, B.6, B.7; Standard II.A.2.e, f; B.3.b; Standard III.A.6; B.2.a, b; C.1.a, C.2, D.1.a; Standard IV.B.2.b)

Standard II Student Learning Programs and Services

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

According to the self assessment, there is dialogue about evaluation, planning, and improvement, which the visit to the campus verified. There has been only limited progress, however, in establishing, assessing, and utilizing student learning outcomes.

The college addressed student learning outcomes in a formal way beginning with the creation of a Student Learning Outcomes Task Force in spring 2003. Since then, an Instructional Master Planning Committee was formed and charged, in part, with creating institutional learning outcomes. The Instructional Master Planning Committee has established "a set of twenty preliminary institutional SLOs." In addition, departments and divisions are now working to develop SLOs for the program and course level. The implementation of SLOs within student services programs has been started but is still in the early stages. The Student Services Master Planning Committee has embraced a step-by-step process that will assist programs to implement SLOs for student services. The guidance division completed a program review in the spring 2001 semester. However, the process was never taken through to conclusion, and as a result, no specific follow-up action was taken by the institution.

The student services section of the 2004 Accreditation Self Study presents an honest, straight forward evaluation of student personnel services at Merced College. The use of evaluation tools (student surveys and the ACT student opinion survey) and the expressed desire to review and implement the results is commended. The staff is aware that similar evaluations need to occur at the Los Banos campus, and there is a need to expand student services at each of the off-campus centers.

Anecdotal data supporting the need for additional resources for the print collection in the library as well as the technology infrastructure needed to support delivery of library and learning services were clearly articulated. A planning structure seems to be in place, yet plans reflected in the self study lack substance and specificity. Self-evaluations and plans were written in fall of 2003 but not updated in 2004. One critical planning agenda that is missing is how the library will deal with the withdrawal of Title 5 funds this July 2005. For ten years, this grant has provided the funding for 90% of equipment needs including the SIRSI system contract for the library's integrated system as well as 18 hours a week additional reference service.

FINDINGS

Standard II.A: Student Learning Programs. Courses taught at the college's off-campus centers were observed to meet the same rigor and criteria as those taught on the Merced and Los Banos campuses. A very limited number of E-learning (Web-based) courses are offered by the college. A sampling of those courses found that they are developed and offered in keeping with the Commission's Policy on Electronically Mediated Learning. The team found that the courses also met the same criteria as traditional campus courses. Given the large rural nature of the college district, it is suggested that development of additional E-learning courses and services might be well received by the constituents. (Standard II.A.1, 1.b, 2.d)

Merced College programs are developed following a standard protocol. Data are available on degree and certificate completion, but data on post graduation employment are not uniformly collected. Transfer rates for UC and CSU can be found in the Merced College Educational and Demographic Fact book; however, there is no information on transfers to private and out-of-state colleges and universities. The planning agenda reflects the institution's recognition of the need to improve in these areas. The six year program review cycle, which is in a state of flux, is relied on to maintain currency. (Standard II.A.2.a, b; 6.a)

The college offers transfer, vocational, developmental, pre-collegiate, and community service courses and programs. Course descriptions and program requirements are listed in the college catalog. The college ensures the quality of its courses and programs through the curriculum committee following guidelines established by the Chancellors Office, Title 5 regulations, the Education Code, and transfer institutions. Vocational programs have advisory committees and outside accreditation where appropriate. The curriculum committee also reviews recommendations from discipline faculty regarding

appropriate credit type and delivery mode before sending new courses and programs to the Board of Trustees for final local approval. New programs are submitted to the Chancellor's Office for its approval. (Standard II.A.2, 2.b, c, 5, 6)

A new program review process has been developed to evaluate and make recommend-dations for improvements. Three areas of the business division are piloting this new process. General Education requirements are established with faculty in-put. The breadth of courses required for graduation meet the state of California standards for the Associate Degree. The college requires demonstrated competency of all graduates in reading, writing, mathematics, and computer and information literacy, which is stated in its "Associate Degree Breadth Requirements". The college does not measure student learning outcomes in these courses, apart from the overall completion success rates of students.(Standard II.A.2.a, c, e, i, 3)

The Merced College requirements for Associate Degree breadth recognize that graduates "should be able to better understand themselves and function more effectively in the modern world." The requirements also demand of students an appreciation of their own and other cultures and an appreciation of ethical problems. Individual faculty members decide whether to include aesthetics, cultural diversity, ethics, and citizenship principles in their classes. The college has not yet established student learning outcomes for these principles. (Standard II.A.3.a, b, c)

The college has begun to address the standard on *student learning outcomes* (SLOs) with the appointment of a director of SLOs who is assisting the faculty, departments, and the Instructional Master Planning Committee in their efforts. A cadre of faculty has received training and is guiding the college process. The SLO director has developed and distributed to the faculty a "Division Student Learning Outcomes Report Handbook." The guidelines give faculty clear direction and examples for incorporating SLOs into their course outlines. A curriculum grid has been developed to correlate institutional, program, and course SLOs. The college has adopted a five-year plan for implementing its approach to SLOs. The board adopted the "Merced College Statement of Principles on Assessment" in December 2004. The Curriculum Committee has created policies related to development and assessment of SLOs at the course level. However, the current institutional emphasis is upon SLOs at the institution and program level, not courses. It does not appear that SLOs are at this time in course descriptions. Course objectives are in the course outlines and SLOs are in some course syllabi. At this juncture, college policy leaves solely to the discretion of the faculty whether or not to develop SLOs. (Standard II.A.1.a, c; 2.a, b, e, f, g, h, i, j; 3.a, b, c; 6.a, b)

The Merced College catalog lists information about educational courses and programs and transfer policies. The college web site provides the schedule of courses and course descriptions. The college provides transfer credit information on the college catalog website. Students can access information on articulation agreements with CSU and UC, as well as other colleges and universities in California, which is available through the ASSIST program. The college relies on CSU and UC articulation officers to review its transferable courses and determine whether they satisfy the required learning outcomes.

(Standard II.A.6, 6.a, c)

The college does not have a board-approved policy for program elimination although the college does protect students against discontinued courses or changes in course requirements through its "catalog rights." Merced College Board Policy 4030, "Academic Freedom," recognizes academic freedom for faculty and students. This policy does not appear in the college catalog, schedule of classes, or public website. Students may grieve or appeal any official action or incident that, in the student's judgment, is unfair or prevents the student from obtaining equal educational opportunities. "Standards of Conduct" specifically addresses cheating, plagiarism, dishonesty, forgery and other forms of academic dishonesty. (Standard II.A.6.b; 7.b, c)

The Faculty Senate, in May 2002, adopted the "Academic Honesty Procedure" to support Board Policy 5500. This procedure details faculty, student, and administrative responsibilities for encouraging academic honesty in their classrooms. Copies of the procedure have been provided to all faculty members and are available in the Faculty Handbook, in the office of the Vice President of Student Services, and on the college website. (Standard II.A.6.b)

Standard II.B: Student Support Services. The college demonstrates a strong commitment to the delivery of student services programs. The college expresses pride in the quality of the categorical programs, which receive high marks from student evaluation surveys. A problem seems to exist over evaluating services at off-campus centers, including problems with the delivery of technology-based services to the Los Banos campus. The DSP&S and EOP&S programs joined forces to hire a full-time special services counselor who has been assigned to the Los Banos campus. (Standard II.B.1, 3, 3.a)

The college provides numerous avenues for students to develop and demonstrate personal and civic responsibility outside of the classroom. It points to several student groups and campus clubs that encourage students to become involved in extra-curricular activities, including the Associated Students of Merced College and a Student Ambassador Program designed to assist the college with its outreach function. Student representation on governance committees has been noted as lacking, and there is a very limited commitment to a student government advisor (10 hours a week). (Standard IIB: 3b,d; 4)

The Guidance Division Program Review was an evaluation completed by students and faculty regarding the strengths and weaknesses of activities related to that unit. While the evaluation provides a review of needed counseling services, it also provides an excellent listing of current counseling services that benefit students. The evaluation of the need to maintain "counseling hours" to serve students and to train counselors to provide accurate and complete information regarding transfer requirements, has led the Guidance Division to recommend that bachelor-level paraprofessionals be hired to provide information sessions to groups of students at the high schools and on the Merced campus. The team supports implementation of this approach to improving quality and access to services. (Standard II.B.3.c; 4)

The college continues to maintain a commitment to diversity and has expanded the breadth of student activities and programs designed to enhance multiculturalism. There is a high level of participation and interest in these programs based on results of the most recent ACT Student Opinion Survey. The college's Special Programs have actively recruited underrepresented students and assisted them to become successful in the college environment. Student services programs are reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis, ensuring that these programs continue to meet student needs in a changing educational environment. The college is focused on improving student retention as well as providing in-service training to all staff on treatment of students in an academic environment. (Standard II.B.3.d)

Standard II.C: Library Services. Eight years ago, the library collection was evaluated based on depth, diversity, and currency to support the institution's educational offerings. This was a critical evaluation based primarily on anecdotal evidence from faculty and students. A Five Year Study was adopted by the Board of Trustees in spring of 1997 and revised in 1998. Although district funds have not been available to fund this plan, categorical funds were used to fill in some of the gaps. A part-time librarian at Los Banos was funded in this process. Saturday hours and extended hours during finals were never funded. Other funds were directed to support critical multimedia needs in the classrooms. (Standard IIC: 1a,b; 2)

The lack of sustainable library resource funding as well as inadequate remote access to online databases limits the library's ability to deliver resources to students. Two of the library's data bases are available remotely (Ebsco Host and E/Books). There are other databases, such as Lexis-Nexis and Ethnic News Watch, that are not available remotely. As the improving technology infrastructure supports remote access, extended services to students at off-campus sites can be enhanced, which the team strongly encourages. (Standard IIC-1c)

The college has used the "immersion model" to insert basic information competencies into existing courses. In addition, the library now offers a 3 unit Information Competency course that meets this graduation requirement. The library relies on interlibrary cooperatives (49-99 system) for interlibrary loan and Ask Now Reference services. Student use of the virtual reference service is approximately 4 questions a month and is insignificant when considering the reference services delivered in person at the Merced College Library. All of the library and learning services have strong liaisons with teaching faculty, and the team found solid anecdotal evidence that these programs are well integrated into the general education objectives of the college.(Standard II.C.1, b)

CONCLUSIONS

The overall quality of the college's instructional programs is evident. There are strong transfer and vocational components in support of the mission of the college. However, the college does not meet the standard for program review. Evaluation teams in 1992 and 1999 recommended improvement in program reviews, and that concern continued in this evaluation. The new process adopted two years ago is not yet a proven approach.

The college does not fully meet Standard II.A on student learning outcomes. As a first step, the necessary processes have been put in place, and the requisite training provided to the faculty. Additionally, there are pilot projects to incorporate SLOs at the course and program levels that other disciplines can build upon. Recognizing that full embodiment of SLOs at the institutional, program, and course levels is a multi-year endeavor; the faculty is commended for the initial phase of SLO adoption. The institution should further position itself for the expansion of distance learning. The college is commended for the many opportunities it provides for dialogue such as the multiple planning committees. The college is also to be commended for faculty leadership that resulted in the establishment of the Teaching and Learning Academy that supports fulltime faculty who are new to the college.

The college meets Standard II.B. It has presented an in-depth look at student personnel services at the college and has established a strong number of planning agendas for Standard II.B. The student personnel services programs are encouraged to commit to completing the work required on these planning agendas. The college is commended for improvements in student services that resulted from student surveys and program reviews.

The college does not meet Standard II.C as its library resources are insufficient in depth, diversity and currency to support the institution's educational goals. The lack of remote access to resources when the library is closed or when students are off campus severely limits the library's ability to deliver resources to students. In addition, the lack of accessibility to students at off campus centers confirms that distance education students are treated inequitably. Previous recommendations that were made regarding collections and equipment have not been fully implemented. Broader consultation with faculty regarding library purchases is encouraged.. Nevertheless, the college can be commended for its Instructional Academic Center in the library.

Evidence Examined:

College Catalog	Educational Facilities Master Plan
Academic Program Review 9/18/03	College Fact Book
Educational Facilities Master Plan	In Cadence with the Future, 2001
SLO Guidelines for Program Review and Course Outlines	Academic Honesty Procedure
	CSU Transfer Data
Curriculum Committee Minutes	Student Enrollment Analysis, 2002
Board of Trustees Minutes	Schedule of Classes Spring 2005
Regional Vocational Education Approval Letters	Library Web Page
Chancellor's Office Curriculum Approval Letters	LRC Five-Year Plans Minutes
Vocational Education Committees	Student Equity Plan
Faculty Handbook 2003-04	Curriculum Handbook
Class Visitations and Instructors' Course Syllabi	ACT Student Opinion Survey Report

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) In order to meet the standards, the team recommends the college implement its new program review process in a focused and expeditious manner, including a published schedule as to when all college programs and services are committed to undergo the full process. Integration of program review with the institutional planning and budgeting process, the development of student learning outcomes and student achievement data is also recommended. This is imperative given that the program review process was cited in 1992 and 1999 as not meeting standards. . (Standard I.B.1, B.3, B.6, B.7; Standard II.A.1.a, b, c, A.2.a, b, c, e, f; B.1, B.3.d, B.4, C.2; Standard III.A.1, A.4.a; B.1.a; Standard IV.A.1)

2) In order to meet the standard, the college needs to develop student learning outcomes for all courses and programs. Additionally, institutional student learning outcomes need to be integrated with General Education and Competency Requirements. Assessment of student learning outcomes needs to show how course credit and the awarding of degrees and certificates is based on student achievement of stated student learning outcomes and how outcome assessments are used to improve courses and programs, improve teaching and learning strategies, and promote student success. (Standard I.B, B.2; Standard II.A.1.a, c, A.2.a, b, e, f, g, h, i, A.3.a, b, c, 6.a; B, B.4, C, C.2)

3) In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the college fully embrace its stated commitment to a student-centered environment by structuring a leadership development program for student involvement in the college shared governance process. (Standard I.B.4; Standard II.B.4, Standard IV.A.1, A.2, A.3, A.5, B.2.a)

4) In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the college develop an assessment plan to provide ongoing and systematic evaluation and integration of all institution-wide planning processes. This assessment should include the current planning processes, program reviews, data-driven decision-making and resource allocation processes and their interrelationships. (Standard I.A.4, B.1, B.2, B.3, B.5, B.6, B.7; Standard II.A.2.e, f; B.3.b; Standard III.A.6, B.2.a, b; C.1.a, C.2; D.1.a; Standard IV.B.2.b)

Standard Three: Resources

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The evaluation team followed the Commission's protocol for evaluating the college's financial stability and whether its financial resources are sufficient to support student learning programs and services to improve institutional effectiveness. Each of the 18 items in the protocol guideline was examined, and the college was found to be financially stable and to have adequate accounting and business management systems in place according to accreditation standards. The college has presented a fair self evaluation concerning personnel policies and procedures and physical resource development

including technology planning and implementation. There are concerns with the management of fiscal contingencies due to unfunded liabilities and continuing uncertain financial times.

FINDINGS

Standard III.A: Human Resources. The college asserts that it makes provision for the security and confidentially of personnel records and that employees have a process to review their personnel records. The college has provided evidence that hiring committees are provided workshops or training on issues of hiring and diversity. Board Policy 7100 states, "The Board recognizes that diversity in the academic environment fosters cultural awareness, promotes mutual understanding and respect, and provides suitable role models for all students." (Standard III.A.3, 4)

The college does not have formal codes of ethics for faculty, staff, and administration, although there are policies addressing academic freedom and faculty responsibilities. The college has established procedures for assuring the proper criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel. Evidence indicates that the hiring procedures are consistently applied. Especially important is the presence of a minimum of three faculty members on hiring committees for fulltime faculty. Positions are announced through on-line and print sources in order to secure a broad pool of applicants. (Standard III.A.1.a, d)

The college has established a systematic evaluation process for all classes of employees, and in general the evaluation timelines are followed. The college has not consistently conducted staff evaluations, including managerial evaluations, according to established timelines. The college presently incorporates evaluation of teaching effectiveness in the assessment process, but the evaluation of learning results achieved by teaching is still to be developed. (Standard III.A.1.b)

The college has a Faculty and Staff Diversity Plan that should be updated. The college asserts that it reviews its employment equity and staff diversity through annual reports to the Federal Government and the State Chancellor's Office. Current data from 2003 to 2004 shows an increase in the diversity of all college employee groups. The college should continue to address this area. The college attempts to treat all groups with integrity, encouraging faculty and staff to learn about different student cultures and encourage them to treat all students with respect. The college has not regularly published information on the board approved grievance procedures for both students and employees. The college provides staff development activities on an annual basis. (Standard III.A.4.b, c)

Standard III.B: Physical Resources. In November 2002, Merced College passed two bond measures under the provisions of Proposition 39. The Merced Campus Bond, Measure H in the amount of $53,500,000, will provide for several capital outlay projects on the main campus. The Los Banos Campus is an educational center that currently operates in portable buildings. Bond Measure J in the amount of $11,930,000 will provide new permanent facilities on the Los Banos Campus. (Standard III.B.1, 1.a)

The Merced College Educational Facilities Master Plan, <u>In Cadence with the Future</u> completed in 2001, projects the growth of the college through 2040 and the facility and program requirements to meet the projected needs. In accordance with the Educational Facilities Master Plan, several projects have been completed or are in progress since the accreditation team's visit in 1999. The college completed construction of the Child Development Center in 2002 and construction of the Interdisciplinary Academic Center in 2004. (Standard III.B.2, 2.a)

It was confirmed that three new projects have received approval for state funding: remodel of the science building, construction of the learning resources center, and the Los Banos permanent site infrastructure which includes construction of the first building. A new allied health building project is in the planning stages. Significant ADA projects including the accessible stage in the theater and elevators in the science, vocational and library buildings, have been completed since the accreditation team's visit in 1999. (Standard III.B.1.a, b)

A review of the Educational Master Planning Committee and the Facilities Master Planning Committee documents confirmed that the college integrates physical resource planning with institutional planning. The master planning committees and the district's facilities consultant review the annual Five-Year Construction Plan information, determine which facilities are being over-utilized, and make recommendations for new building projects. There is faculty and staff involvement throughout the entire planning process for capital outlay projects. The college has identified the need to develop a staffing plan for the new facilities in the Educational Facilities Master Plan and to evaluate the total cost of ownership of new facilities. There is recognition that with its major facilities expansions, the college currently lacks sufficient resources to cover all custodial, maintenance and other service needs. (Standard III.B.2, 2.b)

Maintenance projects that meet the eligibility requirements for state scheduled maintenance funds are included in the annual Five-Year Maintenance Plan and submitted to the Chancellor's Office Facilities Planning unit for state funding. The Director of Maintenance and Transportation conducts routine preventative maintenance and safety inspections of buildings and grounds. In 2003, the district contracted with 3DI, a facilities assessment company, to conduct a facilities assessment. (Standard II.B.1.a)

The college participates in property, liability, and workers' compensation insurance programs organized by the Valley Insurance Program Joint Powers Agency (VIP). As a member of VIP, a safety consultant conducts a safety inspection of the entire district and reports all findings every two years. The most recent inspection occurred in 2003-04, and the team validated that corrective action was taken as appropriate. A tour of the Merced campus and the Los Banos campus confirmed that the district's facilities support a safe and healthy learning and working environment. (Standard II.B.1)

The college budgets for maintenance service agreements to service and repair specific equipment items. Since it is not cost effective to provide for maintenance service

agreements for all equipment, many divisions and departments have budgets for repair and maintenance. The college maintains an inventory of all equipment, and requests for new and replacement equipment are prioritized in the five-year plans and the master planning process. (Standard II.B.1.a, b)

Standard III.C: Technology Resources. The college has made significant progress on the coordination and planning of technology on campus as seen in the rewiring of the campus two years ago as well as the distribution of computers to faculty and staff and connecting them to the network. Faculty are now prepared for greater utilization of technology. Students now have increased access to open computer labs with the new IAC facility. Training of faculty is coordinated by the staff of the learning resources audio-visual center where faculty are supported one-on-one as well as by small group instruction. Staff development addresses the broader needs of campus training issues and surveys staff to determine needs. (Standard III.C.1.a; 2)

The implementation of Datatel has provided the college with data it can use to support planning efforts. The planning efforts of the campus-wide Technology Master Planning Committee (TMPC) have played a vital role in the development of technology standards, inventory of district-wide computer installations, and strategic planning initiatives. Decisions about technology services, hardware and software are well documented in minutes of the committee as well as in the Technology Master Plan. (Standard III.C.1.a, b, c)

The college has significant fiscal challenges with upgrade of existing equipment as well as planning agendas to address the future technology needs. There appears to be no ongoing district funding to address new technology needs. The Juno-based student email system, intended to solve information needs for students (e.g. progress reports, distance education communications, and other student services) is clearly not supporting the college's agenda in these areas. The agenda and interest in distance education is not supported by staffing or budgeting. Distance education initiatives are faculty-driven; technical support for faculty who teach distance education is available on a limited basis; specifically, for WebCT training. Part of a LRC education technician's responsibility is to help in this area; however, staff are not provided at night or on weekends when the server is often down and no one is available to provide assistance. As the college infrastructure evolves in the next year, the college will be positioned to explore greater opportunities for students through distance education including the option of accessing distance education via off-campus sites, and technical support will become essential. (Standard III.C.1.a, d)

Standard III.D: Financial Resources. The college's budget development is open, inclusive and integrated with the institutional goals and planning processes. The college master planning committees submit their goals and budget priorities to the Educational Master Planning Committee (EMPC). The Committee on Budget Review and Recommendations (CBRR) reviews budget planning assumptions, income projections, and expenditure requirements as developed by the Assumptions Committee and the Director of Business Services and informs the EMPC of the availability of funds. The

EMPC reviews budget requests and recommends to the Superintendent/President those institutional needs that are appropriate to fund on a one-time or on-going basis. During the development of planning assumptions, the Assumptions Committee reviews the previous year's planning assumptions and revises, as appropriate, and submits a recommendation to the CBRR committee. The budget development process, however, is not regularly reviewed to improve its effectiveness. (Standard III.D.1.a, b)

Based on the provisions of the Governor's January 2005-06 Budget for community colleges, current estimates project a base budget deficit for the college. The ending balances for the past three years have exceeded the Board of Trustees' policy to maintain reserves at 6% for emergencies. During the past three years, 2002 through 2004, the college increased the ending balance, which includes the 6% reserve, by over $1,500,000, to provide stability for the district during the most recent years of unstable state funding for community colleges. At the time of this report, the district had not settled its 2003-04 or its 2004-05 salary and benefits contracts with the faculty bargaining unit, and no reserve is shown to address this in the current budget or next year's preliminary budget. (Standard III.D.2.c, d)

Financial information is available on a regular basis through the integrated management information system, Datatel. The annual budget and audits are made available to the college community in the library. The college has identified the need to strengthen long-term budget planning in the area of staffing plans, maintenance and program expansion related to the projects included in the Educational Facilities Master Plan. (Standard III.D.1.c, 2.b)

The annual external audits for 2002, 2003, and 2004 cited no material concerns regarding the financial management practices of the college and included timely responses to audit findings from the college. The audits include all funds of the district including the Foundation. (Standard III.D.2.a, e)

As of June 2004, the ending balance for the Retiree Health Benefit Fund is just over $1 million. November of 2003, the college received an actuarial report that projected the long-term liability for retiree health benefits at $62 million. The college participates in property, liability, and workers' compensation insurance programs organized by the Valley Insurance Program Joint Powers. Contractual agreements exist for the food service program, vending and arcade games. These services provide a source of revenue for the college and the associated students. (Standard III.D.2.d, f)

Evidence Examined:

College Catalog	Board Policies Manual
Class Schedules	Board Procedures Manual
College Web Site Reports	Planning Handbook
Academic Honesty Procedure	Student Learning Outcomes Measurement
Minutes of Curriculum Committee	Academic departmental exams
VTEA Reports	Course syllabi

CSU Transfer Data Reports   Minutes of Instructional Master Planning
Committee   Minutes of Advisory Committees
Student Enrollment Reports   Faculty Handbook
Library Annual Data Survey   Curriculum Handbook
LRC Five-Year Plan   Student Equity Plan
LRC Core Collection Proposal   ACT Student Opinion Survey
EOPS/CARE Student Evaluation Survey   Staff Development Surveys
Minutes of Matriculation Advisory Committee
Financial Audits 2002-2004   Inventories of Equipment
Minutes of Technology Master Plan Committee
Minutes of Budget Review and Recommendations Committee
Reports on College Intranet   Budgets, 2002-2004
Actuarial studies Health Benefits   College bargaining agreements
Quarterly Financial Reports   Financial Audits Prop. 30 Bonds
Payroll documentation   IPEDs reports

CONCLUSIONS

The college has an appropriate understanding of and concern for issues of equity and diversity, provides all personnel with appropriate opportunities for continued professional development, and conducts human resource planning that is integrated with institutional planning. The college should continue and expand its efforts in this area, including a review of efforts to increase diversity in new hires. The college should carry out staff evaluations, including managerial evaluations, according to established timelines. The college should ensure that grievance procedures for both students and staff are adequately published and workshops concerning discrimination and sexual harassment continue to be presented on a regular basis.

The college has made significant progress in the development, distribution, and support of technology. Distance education remains an area where student and faculty needs are not yet addressed. Support for student email is a challenge. Fiscal planning for new technology is not evident. The college is commended for its accomplishments since the last accreditation report in acquiring technology infrastructure and systems as well as technology planning and coordination.

It is evident that the college has been very successful in obtaining community and state support to address facility needs. The college has developed a sound process for facility master planning, and the results are excellent.   The college has identified the need to develop a staffing plan for new facilities; the team encourages this effort. The college is commended for the successful passage of local bonds, Measures J and I, for securing the donation of 120 acres for the Los Banos campus, and for obtaining significant funding for capital projects. In order to deal effectively with continuing scarce state resources, the college should seriously consider developing a financial contingency management plan to support essential operations currently dependent upon external grants, to address unfunded liabilities, and to meet the needs of essential programs and services.

The college has worked toward integrated planning and budget development. Due to collaborative budget development and resource conservation during recent lean times, college ending balances have increased, and the college has adequate resources to support existing operations at the present time. The college meets Standard III, parts A, B, C, and D with the one exception of full integrated planning of each of these areas into college goals, program reviews, resource allocations and ongoing evaluation of institutional effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATION

4) In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the college develop an assessment plan to provide ongoing and systematic evaluation and integration of all institution-wide planning processes. This assessment should include the current planning processes, program reviews, data-driven decision-making and resource allocation processes and their interrelationships. (Standard I.A.4, B.1, B.2, B.3, B.5, B.6, B.7; Standard II.A.2.e, f; B.3.b; Standard III.A.6, B.2.a, b, C.1.a, C.2, D.1.a; Standard IV.B.2.b)

Standard IV Leadership and Governance

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The team found strong evidence at Merced College of a campus culture that embraces diversity of background and opinion, shared governance, mutual concern, respect and honesty. The institution recognizes and utilizes the contributions of leadership throughout the college, led by the president and the board, to create a cooperative and collaborative atmosphere focused on student success. The team observed that the self study understated the progress made by the board and CEO since the last accreditation.

FINDINGS

Standard IV.A: Decision-Making Roles and Processes. The college has published its committee structure, including membership for all constituencies and charges of each committee. The multi-committee planning and allocation system is well understood and generally supported, in part due to an orientation process that extends through the first year after hire and beyond. Although the published policy is somewhat vague as to how an individual might bring forward a proposal, the actual mechanisms are well understood by the constituencies, with the exception of the Associated Students of Merced College (ASMC). Periodic institutional assessment of the effectiveness of the decision-making process is not apparent from policy or minutes. Careful questioning did elicit examples of "course correction" undertaken by committees with the new program review model as a case in point. (Standard IV.A.2, 2.a)

The governing board, faculty and administration have substantive and clearly defined roles in institutional governance and exercise their roles through a clearly defined process. Faculty members frequently hold committee chair roles. Classified staff

participates on committees. Although the ASMC is the official organization for student input, as acknowledged in the self study, students do not participate in meaningful ways in planning or in most governance processes. At present, the institution does not appear to formally or regularly evaluate its decision-making processes. (Standard IV.A.2, 3, 5)

The faculty has the primary role in developing recommendations about student learning outcomes. Although the self study was written in the early stages of this process, progress has been made since the document was published, and several divisions have proceeded from division to program and discipline level, and some are now developing course-level SLOs. Program review and SLOs development have been dependent upon individual faculty members acquiring expertise and supplying leadership. (Standard IV.A.1, 2.a, b)

The team observed that there is generally free exchange of ideas as administrators, staff, faculty and students work together for the good of the college. Written policies regarding governance specify appropriate roles, allocating primacy to faculty in student educational programs and services. Recent tensions between ASCM and staff in student activities, as well as the general lack of student engagement in college governance, require attention. (Standard IV.A.3)

The college advocates and demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relations with external agencies, including its relations with the Commission and with the U.S. Department of Education. The college has responded to the concerns expressed by the commission, and although there are some on-going issues (e.g. program review), it appears that none are beyond the reach of the institution in meeting the standards. (Standard IVA: 4)

Standard IV.B: Board and Administrative Organization. The Board of Trustees is well aware of its role as the independent, elected voice of the public in setting the general direction of the college. The board has been through training to become more aware of their policy role and function. They appear to have been responsive to the expectations of their role and have been active in establishing and refining the mission statement, vision and goals for the college. Goal determination is (now) a formal and thoughtful process involving representatives of the college constituencies and data sources for board elucidation. (Standard IV.B.1.a)

The board recognizes its role as having the ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal liability, and financial integrity. Board policies and procedures are published and seats, duties, ethics, etc. are delineated. The board follows its own procedures and policies. It evaluates and revises its policies that govern board behavior on a recurrent basis and revises educational and fiduciary policies regularly and otherwise, as need dictates. As a result of the training it has received and its own developmental process, the board has published policy governing its self-evaluation. The board has implemented this policy in compliance with the standard. (Standard IV.B.1.b, c, g)

The current superintendent/president began his tenure as CEO in 1998 after being with the district in a vice-president position previously. The board delegates full operational authority and responsibility to the CEO, supports him and his leadership, and holds him accountable through a broad-based regular evaluation. The team observed that the CEO sets both the collegial tone and the expectation of steady improvement that characterize Merced College. Further, the CEO is actively involved in a wide variety of community organizations and boards and maintains a high public profile, interpreting the college to the communities served by the institution. (Standard IVB: 1j; 2a,b)

The CEO plans, oversees, and delegates authority to administrators and others as appropriate. Although his own evaluation is now a regular activity, the vice presidents reporting to him and certain other administrators are not receiving annual reviews. The CEO has played a major role in improving the planning processes of the college. Statutes, regulations, and policies are regularly reviewed, and the president oversees their implementation. Institutional research, program review and program improvement cycles, however, are still in the developmental process, especially with reference to the new context of student learning outcomes. (Standard IVB: 2a,c)

Evidence Examined:
Planning Handbook, 1998
Board Policies Manual
College Procedures Manual
Board Minutes
Minutes of Program Review Committee
Minutes of Committee on Budget Review and Recommendations
Minutes of Educational Master Planning Committee (MPC)
Minutes of the Administrative Services MPC
Minutes of the Student Services MPC
Minutes of the Technology MPC
Minutes of President's Staff Meetings
Web Site: Mission, vision and values statements
College Organizational Chart

CONCLUSIONS

The college is commended for the integrity and candor with which it deals with the Commission and other constituencies as evidenced by the self study report. Since the last accreditation visit, the college has developed a planning process that clearly connects the board to goal setting and implementation. The board has also instituted its own self-evaluation as well as a regular evaluation of the superintendent/president. The college does not fully meet Standard IVA due to the lack of student involvement in governance and the lack of a regular evaluation of decision-making structures. The college meets and in some areas exceeds Standard IVB as its board and administrative organization can be viewed as a model of best practices in higher education. The college is commended for improving its planning structures through college-wide dialogue and especially broad-based faculty involvement.

RECOMMENDATION

3) In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the college fully embrace its stated commitment to a student-centered environment by structuring a leadership development program for student involvement in the college shared governance process. (Standard I.B.4; Standard II.B.4, Standard IV.A.1, A.2, A.3, A.5, B.2.a)