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CERTIFICATION OF THE FOLLOW-UP REPORT

This Follow-up Report is submitted for the purpose of assisting in the determination of the institution's accreditation status.

We certify that there was broad participation by the campus community and that the Follow-up Report reflects the status of the recommendations the college has been asked to address.

Signed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Leo E. Chavez</td>
<td>Superintendent/President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Rachel Rosenthal</td>
<td>Vice President Instruction/</td>
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<td>Accreditation Liaison Officer</td>
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<td>Mr. Scott Leslie</td>
<td>Board President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Jay Hester</td>
<td>Academic Senate President</td>
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<td>Ms. Diane McKnight</td>
<td>Management Senate President</td>
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<td>Mr. Greg Brown</td>
<td>Classified Senate President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Zachariah Rutledge</td>
<td>Student Association President</td>
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STATEMENT ON REPORT PREPARATION

This report addresses the four recommendations noted in the January 31, 2008 letter from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) that placed Sierra College on Warning status. The report was prepared with input from individual faculty, managers, classified staff, as well as the college’s primary planning and budgeting shared governance committee, the Strategic Council, prior to submission to the Sierra College Board of Trustees. Strategic Council members include the presidents of the academic, management, student and classified senates and collective bargaining units. Strategic Council meets monthly, and more frequently as needed, and is chaired by the college president, with a total of five seats assigned to each constituent group.

Primary contributors to the preparation and review of the Follow-up Report include Rachel Rosenthal, Vice President Instruction and Accreditation Liaison Officer; Aimee Myers, History Professor and Student Learning Outcomes Coordinator; Kevin Bray, Research Coordinator; Leo E. Chavez, Superintendent/President; Jay Hester, Academic Senate President; Diane McKnight, Interim Dean Planning and Research; Doug Smith, Vice President Finance and Administration; Mandy Davies, Vice President Student Services; and Ron Martinez, Vice President Human Resources. These individuals have participated in addressing the specific deficiencies noted in the Warning and have established the validity of the responses contained within this report.

Since last January the Sierra College faculty, staff, managers and students have completed an enormous amount of work re-examining the college’s processes and procedures and implementing new structures and protocols which address the deficiencies noted by the Commission.

In September 2008, a draft of the Follow-up Report was distributed to the entire college. Feedback regarding the report was collected from individuals, governance committees, governing board, and constituency groups. The final report was approved by President Leo E. Chavez and was submitted to the Board of Trustees for review and acknowledgement of receipt at their meeting on October 14, 2008.

Signed: ___________________________  Date: ____________

Dr. Leo E. Chavez
Superintendent/President, Sierra College
ACCREDITING COMMISSION’S FOLLOW-UP REPORT REQUEST

The Commission asks that a Follow-up Report be submitted by October 15, 2008 that provides information, evidence, and analysis regarding the resolution of the four issues noted in the Commission’s Action Letter dated January 31, 2008. These issues are noted below.

**Recommendation 1: Mission Statement**
To ensure services and programs offered by Sierra College are meeting its stated purpose, the team recommends that the college amend the mission statement to specifically identify its intended student population and its commitment to achieving student learning. (Standard I.A.1, IV.B.1.b)

In order for the college to ensure an ongoing, systemic, and cyclical process that includes evaluation, planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation, the team recommends the following plan development, implementation, evaluation and improvement steps:

2a Develop a comprehensive, integrated, long-range Strategic Plan including goals that can be used to influence resource allocation decisions. The Strategic Plan should incorporate the priorities established in all of the college’s major plans to include its:
   a. Technology Plan
   b. Facilities Plan
   c. Educational Master Plan
   d. Human Resources Staffing Plan
   (I.A.4, I.B.2, I.B.3, 4, III.A.2, III.B.2,b, III.C.2, III.C.1.d)

2b Modify the budget development process in a manner that will place the college’s strategic plan priorities at the center of its resource allocation decisions (III.D.1, 1.c.)

2c Develop and work to implement as appropriate a Human Resources Staffing Plan that will satisfy the college’s long standing expression of need for additional full-time faculty and support personnel to improve student learning. (III.A.2, II.C.1, II.C.1.a, II.C.1.d.)

2d Develop mechanisms to regularly evaluate all of the college’s planning and resource allocation processes as the basis for improvement (I.B.6, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, III.D.3, IV.A.5)
**Recommendation 3: Student Learning Outcomes**
The team recommends that the college identify assessment methods and establish dates for completing student learning outcomes assessments at the institutional level and for all of its courses, programs, and services. This process should also include the development of performance measures to assess and improve institutional effectiveness of all programs and services. The college should disseminate the outcomes widely and use these results in the strategic planning and resource allocation process. It is further recommended that the college include effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes as part of its faculty evaluation process. (II.A.1.a, II.A.2.a, h, II.B.4, II.C.2, III.A.1.c)

**Recommendation 6: Governing Board Evaluation**
The team recommends that the Board complete an annual board self evaluation to ensure that its policies promote quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services. (IV.B.1)
Recommendation 1: Mission Statement
To ensure services and programs offered by Sierra College are meeting its stated purpose, the team recommends that the college amend the mission statement to specifically identify its intended student population and its commitment to achieving student learning. (Standard I.A.1, IV.B.1.b)

PROGRESS AND ANALYSIS

In February 2007, the college’s primary shared governance committee, Strategic Council, formed a subcommittee to review the mission statement and the Guiding Principles that were scheduled to expire in December 2007. At the time of the Evaluation Team’s visit in October 2007, the team found the working draft still did not “…specifically identify its intended student population and its commitment to achieving student learning.”

The new mission statement, shown below, was approved by the Board of Trustees on June 24, 2008, and fulfills the recommendation of the visiting team. Our intended student population is identified as “…students having diverse goals, abilities, and needs interested in transfer, career and technical training, and lifelong learning.” Our commitment to student learning is reflected by the statement that the college will “…encourage students to identify and expand their potential” and to “…develop the knowledge, skills and abilities to become engaged and contributing members of the community.” In addition to the mission statement, eight new core values were established to reflect our commitment to student learning, specifically Core Value 1, “Sierra College will support and model excellence in teaching, learning, scholarship, and creativity” and Core Value 7, “Sierra College will recognize that students are active participants in their education.”

Sierra College Mission Statement (adopted June 24, 2008)
Sierra College provides a challenging and supportive learning environment for students having diverse goals, abilities, and needs interested in transfer, career and technical training, and lifelong learning. The College’s programs and services encourage students to identify and to expand their potential. Sierra College students will develop the knowledge, skills and abilities to become engaged and contributing members of the community.

Sierra College Vision Statement
We will challenge ourselves and our community to become fulfilled citizens in a global environment by contributing to and engaging in the thoughtful application of knowledge guided by respect for others and the world in which we live.

Core Values
The following core values will establish our ethical principles and will guide our institutional decision-making. Sierra College will:

1. Support and model excellence in teaching, learning, scholarship, and creativity.
2. Provide the tools for continuing success in an ever-changing world.
3. Provide, and demonstrate the value of, an inclusive community.
4. Demonstrate collaboration in decision making.
5. Foster active citizenship in our community, our nation, and our world.
6. Create and nurture meaningful connections to our community.
7. Recognize that students are active participants in their education.
8. Support and demonstrate the sustainable use of all resources.

The process for reviewing and revising the mission statement, vision statement and core values was comprehensive and inclusive. As stated previously, the subcommittee was formed by Strategic Council in February 2007 and was comprised of two representatives from each of the senates (Academic, Classified, Management, and Student), the Superintendent/President, and the President’s Office Executive Assistant. The members are listed below.

- Academic Senate Representatives: Joe Medeiros, Jane Haproff
- Management Senate Representatives: Rebecca Bocchicchio, Sue Michaels
- Classified Senate Representatives: Ruth Echavarria, Anna Tivol, Anthony Maki-Gill
- Student Senate Representatives: Sandra Gallo, Justin Walker, Enrique Manjarrez
- Superintendent/President: Dr. Leo E. Chavez
- President’s Office: Jeannette Bischoff

The subcommittee met throughout the summer of 2007 and presented the first draft of the mission statement, the new vision statement, and the new set of core values to Strategic Council in August 2007. From August 2007 to June 2008, the subcommittee received and compiled input from the senates and the Board of Trustees, and created subsequent drafts based on that input. Additionally, the mission statement (as part of the new Strategic Master Plan) was presented to a Business and Community Roundtable in May 2008 for feedback with the final version approved by the Board of Trustees on June 24, 2008.

The mission statement, vision statement, and the core values also serve as the guiding principles for the District’s new Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan goals and strategies align with and support the mission, vision and core values as shown below.

Example:

**Goal I – Educational Effectiveness**

*Strategy 1 –* Offer a strategically-focused range of high-quality transfer, certificate and degree programs at the Rocklin campus based upon demographic, social, and economic trends in Placer and Nevada Counties.

This strategy directly supports the section of the mission statement that states:

*Sierra College provides a challenging and supportive learning environment for students having diverse goals, abilities, and needs interested in transfer, career and technical training, and lifelong learning.*

*Sierra College students will develop the knowledge, skills and abilities to become engaged and contributing members of the community.*

Additionally, it supports the following core values:

- 1. Sierra College will support and model excellence in teaching, learning, scholarship, and creativity.
2. Sierra College will provide the tools for continuing success in an ever-changing world.
3. Sierra College will provide, and demonstrate the value of, an inclusive community.
6. Create and nurture meaningful connections to our community.

FUTURE PLANS

In 2011, the Strategic Council will review the college’s mission, vision and core value statements as part of the regular three-year review cycle.

In order for the college to ensure an ongoing, systemic, and cyclical process that includes evaluation, planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation, the team recommends the following plan development, implementation, evaluation and improvement steps:

Sierra College has made considerable progress towards addressing Recommendation 2. The college is currently defining, refining, and implementing practices and procedures that will more fully align institutional planning processes and resource allocation decisions with a newly developed three-year District-wide Strategic Plan. These efforts were facilitated by the college’s Strategic Council, which oversees institutional planning activities and is charged with providing communication to various constituencies on major District issues. Strategic Council is comprised of all participatory governance presidents, collective bargaining representatives, student representatives, senior administrators, and the college president.

Prior to outlining the progress on each of the four sub-sections of Recommendation 2, two key events that directly affect and support all aspects of the college’s response to Recommendation 2 are described below.

- Establishment of new Dean, Planning and Research position
  In August 2008, a new Dean, Planning and Research position was created and staffed following an assessment, prioritization, and realignment of existing management roles and responsibilities. This position reports directly to the Vice President of Instruction and has primary responsibility for directing, managing, supervising, and coordinating a comprehensive and integrated institutional research program and evidence-based institutional planning process which will facilitate institutional effectiveness and continuous improvement. This position will serve as the focal point and central hub for the continued development and integration of the District’s planning, evaluation, and resource allocation processes.

  The new interim Dean of Planning and Research, Diane McKnight, provides direct supervision of the District research office, coordinates assigned activities with other departments, divisions, and outside agencies; and provides highly responsible and complex administrative support to the Vice President of Instruction. The Dean also administers the annual planning and resource request process, ePAR (electronic Program Assessment and Review), facilitates the inclusion of student learning outcomes assessment results into the planning process, and ensures full integration of all of the District’s master planning documents, processes and procedures.

- Purchase and installation of District-wide assessment management tool
  In May 2008, the District’s Strategic Plan Steering Committee evaluated multiple web-based solutions that had the potential to enhance the District’s existing paper-based PAR (Program Assessment and Review) process. Although the college received commendation for the PAR process, the college was committed to establishing a more
user-friendly process which could readily produce longitudinal reports, planning
documents, and resource requests that demonstrate alignment of student learning
outcomes assessments with Strategic Plan and provide a feedback mechanism. The web-
based enterprise-wide assessment management solution selected and purchased was
TracDat, which provides the following features:

- Documentation of departmental, divisional and District-level strategic goals
- Repository for evidence of student learning outcomes assessment
- Confirmation of how assessment results were utilized to request resources to
  improve programs and learning
- Alignment of departmental resource requests with division and Strategic Plan
  goals
- Feedback following the final resource allocations
- Robust real-time reporting and documentation

The responsibility for designing and implementing the new ePAR process is assigned to
the college’s research office staff members: Diane McKnight, interim Dean Planning and
Research, Kevin Bray, Research Coordinator, and Laurie Thiers, Research Analyst.
Kevin and Laurie received training on the TracDat program in July 2008 and are
currently working with key shared governance committee members, college vice
presidents, and the college’s Strategic Council to design, develop and implement the new
web-based ePAR process. The new ePAR timeline will shift from fall to spring and will
be utilized for the next annual planning cycle beginning in February 2009.
Recommendation 2a:

Develop a comprehensive, integrated, long-range Strategic Plan including goals that can be used to influence resource allocation decisions. The Strategic Plan should incorporate the priorities established in all of the college’s major plans to include its:

a. Technology Plan
b. Facilities Plan
c. Educational Master Plan
d. Human Resources Staffing Plan

(I.A.4, I.B.2, I.B.3, 4, III.A.2, III.B.2,b, III.C.2, III.C.1.d)

PROGRESS AND ANALYSIS

In February 2008, a Strategic Plan 2008-2011 steering committee was established comprised of the Vice President of Instruction, Vice President of Student Services, Director of Finance and Administration, presidents of academic, classified and management senates, research coordinator, and the president of the student association. This committee was responsible for the creation, development, and ongoing dissemination of information to their various constituency groups, Board of Trustees, and the college’s Strategic Council.

The steering committee met frequently during the spring 2008, analyzing and discussing the staff and student data provided by the research office, identifying data from environmental scans of Placer and Nevada Counties, and determining the framework of the plan and strategic priorities for the District. During this period, committee members also made numerous presentations and obtained feedback related to the Strategic Plan from the Executive Council (President and Vice Presidents), Deans’ Council, Administrative Assistants’ group, Strategic Council, and Board of Trustees.

The steering committee held an all-day retreat focused upon refining the Strategic Plan goals and strategies on May 14, 2008, followed by a sharing of the draft plan at a Community Forum on May 29, 2008. The Community Forum was attended by over 25 business and community leaders and was designed to communicate the key tenets of the Strategic Plan to the participants and obtain their feedback regarding the workforce and economic development needs of our service area. An all-day Executive Team planning retreat followed on July 14, 2008, with the first complete draft of the District Strategic Plan presented to the Board of Trustees on July 19 and to Strategic Council on August 29, 2008.

The Strategic Plan includes the following.

- Four District goals
  - Educational Effectiveness
  - Organizational Effectiveness
  - Focused Access
  - Resource Development
- Strategies for achieving each goal
- Selected District-wide key performance metrics with corresponding 2011 targets
- Revised annual planning and budgeting cycle
Identification of alignment between and among the Strategic Plan and all other master planning documents

In September 2008, the Strategic Council discussed a revised annual planning and budgeting cycle and the potential role and responsibilities of Strategic Council members in that cycle. The members were directed to vet the draft plan through each of their respective shared governance groups and bring comments and feedback back to Strategic Council in October. Final review and recommendation of the Strategic Plan by Strategic Council to the college president for his approval is targeted for December 2008.

In addition to creating the Strategic Master Plan, the college has completed or is currently developing, the following planning documents:

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<tr>
<th>Planning Document</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology Master Plan</td>
<td>Completed 05/13/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities Master Plan</td>
<td>Completed 05/13/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Master Plan</td>
<td>In progress, targeted for completion spring 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources Master Plan</td>
<td>In progress, scheduled for approval at a future Board meeting</td>
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To ensure that Strategic Plan priorities are placed at the center of decisions and resource allocations, the new ePAR process will require alignment of resource requests with District goals and strategies and the president has been working with the Board of Trustees and Strategic Council to organize the agendas by the goals established in the Strategic Master Plan. Beginning in October 2008, Board of Trustee and Strategic Council agendas will be structured around the District goals identified in the Strategic Master Plan as Educational Effectiveness, Organizational Effectiveness, Resource Development, and Focused Access.

**FUTURE PLANS**

The Strategic Plan continues to be vetted through the shared governance process during the fall 2008 semester, with final plan approval expected in December 2008. Following Strategic Plan approval by the president and affirmation by the Board of Trustees, the plan will become the responsibility of the District’s Research Office for continued monitoring and reporting of progress toward the goals. The Strategic Plan is designed with a three-year review cycle with annual opportunities for revision as needed.
**Recommendation 2b:**

*Modify the budget development process in a manner that will place the college’s strategic plan priorities at the center of its resource allocation decisions (III.D.1, 1.c.)*

**PROGRESS AND ANALYSIS**

The previous paper-based PAR (Program Assessment and Review) process included a section for budget development but did not require alignment with the college’s Strategic Plan priorities. The purchase and implementation of the new web-based assessment management software program, TracDat, will provide this functionality as part of the new ePAR (electronic Program Assessment and Review) process. This new software program, in combination with a significant redesign of the ePAR process, will make possible a new planning process that requires alignment of resource allocation requests with District strategic plan priorities.

Currently, the Dean, Planning and Research, faculty research coordinator, and research analyst are designing the new ePAR program and annual District-wide planning process. All three are working in concert with the Student Learning Outcomes Coordinator, previous PAR coordinator, Vice Presidents of Instruction and Student Services, and the Director of Finance and Administration to determine the appropriate timelines and structures that will provide for a fully aligned planning and budgeting process. The role of the Strategic Council in the new planning and budgeting process is currently being discussed in depth by Strategic Council. The plan is for Strategic Council to take on a much more active, formal, and participatory role in the college’s planning and budgeting process.

**FUTURE PLANS**

The new annual ePAR departmental/program planning and budgeting process will be enhanced to include not only short-term, but long-term departmental, divisional, and site-specific objectives as well. It will allow for the identification of needed resources such as staffing, facilities, equipment, technology, capital outlay, and budget reallocations required to achieve those objectives. In ePAR, however, the proposed protocol will require the initiator to link resource requests to objectives and to at least one of the four District goals and corresponding strategies. The goal is that every budget decision has representation in the budget development process and is tied to the District goals and strategies as expressed in the Strategic Plan.

The new annual ePAR planning and budgeting cycle will be deployed in February 2009 and the first cycle will be completed by the end of the spring semester. Department chairs will update their ePARs annually by reviewing departmental goals and identifying needed resources. In addition, they will simultaneously submit any necessary budget revisions and/or augmentations necessary to achieve those goals. The appropriate educational administrator and vice president, will then review the ePARs and provide feedback regarding all resource requests. Following approval of the final District budget by the Board of Trustees, Strategic Council will consider and recommend resource allocations based upon their alignment with strategic directions. Beginning with the second year of implementation, both future resource requests and evaluation of the prior year’s resource allocation and budget decisions will be requested as part of the annual ePAR process.
In addition to supporting an enhanced and revised budget development cycle, the reporting capabilities of ePAR will allow a clearer link between resource requests, departmental objectives, and District goals. The reporting feature will inform not only budget development and resource allocations, but also strategy discussions throughout the year. As an example, these reports will establish alignment of departmental and divisional objectives with strategic directions, inform the annual planning and budget development process, indicate progress towards specific District goals, and create meaningful participation for faculty, classified and management in all resource allocations. The reports will also provide critical data and information for subsequent revisions of the facilities, technology, and educational master plans.

The proposed ePAR process will have two levels, an annual planning and resource request cycle and a second, more intensive, Program Review level, tentatively entitled ePAR-Plus. Both levels will require clear linkages between program outcomes assessment results and resource requests. It is recommended that ePAR-Plus be a three-year in-depth analysis of programmatic health for the District’s instructional, student services, library and learning resources’ departments/programs and that the process include a short presentation of results to Strategic Council. Such presentations will allow for a wider dissemination of trends and inform the council in preparation for future planning and budgeting allocation decisions.

This proposed cycle of annual and three-year intensive reviews has been devised to allow the Strategic Plan goals to guide and influence budget and resource allocation decisions while feedback and information is received to inform future Strategic Plan and all master planning directions.
Recommendation 2c:

Develop and work to implement as appropriate a Human Resources Staffing Plan that will satisfy the college’s long-standing expression of need for additional full-time faculty and support personnel to improve student learning. (III.A.2, II.C.1, II.C.1.a, II.C.1.d.)

PROGRESS AND ANALYSIS

The Board of Trustees, at their September 9, 2008 meeting, approved the three-Year Human Resources Staffing Plan that identified potential new faculty, classified and management positions. Included in this plan was a proposal to increase the number of full-time faculty by shifting the funding distribution from part-time to full-time faculty budgets. By moderately limiting the number of sections taught by part-time faculty and using efficient enrollment management techniques, ongoing funds can be redirected for additional full-time faculty positions. It has been estimated that this strategy will improve the District’s full-time/part-time faculty ratio, one of the lowest in the state, from 44% to 50% over the next four years. This initial strategy will allow the college time for a more formal process to identify additional strategies to increase the ratio. The intent is to utilize Strategic Council and an interest-based training approach to agree on a satisfactory ratio and the strategies necessary to achieve that ratio over the next several years.

FUTURE PLANS

The full-time faculty position augmentation discussion will be vetted through Strategic Council using an interest-based discussion with the hopes of outlining additional strategies before the end of the academic year. Attendees at Strategic Council include representatives from all bargaining units and the academic, classified, and management senates as well as the president and vice presidents. The goal is to identify and analyze the relative merits other potential strategies which may serve to satisfy the college’s long-standing need for additional full-time faculty and support personnel.
**Recommendation 2d:**

*Develop mechanisms to regularly evaluate all of the college’s planning and resource allocation processes as the basis for improvement (I.B.6, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, III.D.3, IV.A.5)*

**PROGRESS, ANALYSIS, and FUTURE PLANS**

A plan for regular evaluation of all District planning and allocation processes is being developed as an integral part of the new ePAR and ePAR-Plus processes. The Research Office has met with managers and department chairs, as well as made presentations at Dean’s Council and Strategic Council to solicit ideas for the evaluation portion of the ePAR process. The Research Office has met with managers and department chairs, as well as made presentations at Dean’s Council and Strategic Council to solicit ideas for the evaluation portion of the ePAR process. The new web-based assessment management software program, TracDat, will provide functionality for the evaluative piece of the planning process. At present, the ePAR and ePAR-Plus tentative designs include a closing survey to solicit specific feedback on the forms, timelines, and as an open invitation for comment. The ePAR design team is suggesting that a subcommittee of the Strategic Council conduct an annual review of the survey results and report the outcome to the Council.

As stated previously, a new Dean, Planning and Research position was created to oversee the complete cycle of the PARs and program review, including the compilation and dissemination of the PAR information, the mechanisms to evaluate the resources allocated through the PAR process and the effect on institutional effectiveness.
Recommendation 3: Student Learning Outcomes
The team recommends that the college identify assessment methods and establish dates for completing student learning outcomes assessments at the institutional level and for all of its courses, programs, and services. This process should also include the development of performance measures to assess and improve institutional effectiveness of all programs and services. The college should disseminate the outcomes widely and use these results in the strategic planning and resource allocation process. It is further recommended that the college include effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes as part of its faculty evaluation process. (II.A.1.a, II.A.2.a, h, II.B.4, II.C.2, III.A.1.c)

PROGRESS AND ANALYSIS

In February 2008, members of the recently-formed Program Outcomes Committee, a sub-committee of Academic Senate representing the college’s two student learning outcomes (SLO) institutes, Learning Outcomes Institute (LOI) and Program Outcomes Institute (POI), met with the Vice President of Instruction to examine the college’s progress in identifying student learning outcomes (SLO) assessment methods for all courses, programs, and services. The group determined that although significant progress had been made in establishing course level SLOs (84% of all courses had SLOs in spring 2008), the identification and implementation of course assessment strategies was at a much earlier stage in development, as noted in this recommendation.

Accordingly, the group spent the spring semester outlining strategies and the key resources needed in 2008-2009 to address this recommendation. The group created a plan for the implementation and assessment of SLOs at Sierra College that outlined the need for additional faculty reassigned time, new committee structures, and staff resources as noted below. In response to the identified resources, by aligning resources with our priorities the District is now funding one full time Student Learning Outcomes Coordinator (reassigned at 100%) and six SLO ambassadors (reassigned at 20% each). The 2.2 FTE total of reassigned time required a significant reallocation of faculty resources and the cooperation of many faculty members.

- Student Learning Outcomes Faculty Coordinator, with 100% reassigned time for the 2008-2009 academic year
  - SLO Coordinator
    - Aimee Myers, History Professor
    - Primary responsibilities are facilitating the development and assessment of course, program and institutional outcomes for all instructional, student services, library and learning resources areas.
- Six Student Learning Outcomes Faculty Ambassadors, each with 20% reassigned time for the 2008-2009 academic year
  - Ambassadors
    - Business and Technology: Sonja Lolland
    - Liberal Arts: Robin Persiani
    - Liberal Arts: Jennifer Molina-Stidger
    - Health and Physical Education: Darci Brownell/Roz Goldenberg
    - Science/Math: Charles Buchwald
Student Services  Sandy Muraki

- Primary responsibilities are to help shape the planning and implementation of SLOs and Assessment, write course and program SLO handbooks, SLO website design and support, and work with faculty on developing course, program, and institutional outcomes and assessments

- New Student Learning Committee (SLC), a standing committee of the Academic Senate
  - Approved by Academic Senate in September 2008, replacing the previous Program Outcomes Committee
  - A primary responsibility of the SLC committee is to support the institutionalization of the assessment process. The SLC committee also has primary responsibility for implementing student learning outcomes at the course, program and institutional levels.

- Administrative support for SLC
  - Joyce Hansen, Instruction Office member and Curriculum Committee Administrative Assistant, has been assigned to provide administrative support for the SLC Committee.

The SLO Coordinator and ambassadors worked over the summer 2008 to determine the assessment strategies and the implementation plan for course, program and institutional outcomes. This group identified resource materials, began the draft of an SLO Workbook to provide a sense of philosophy, timeline, and practical implementation steps, and created the structure for a Sierra College Student Learning Outcomes website. On August 13, the SLO Coordinator and six ambassadors hosted a daylong District-wide Forum on Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment to share “knowledge, ignorance, hopes and fears” related to assessment. Over 60 faculty, managers and staff attended.

In addition to the forum, during Flex week Dr. Myers presented at multiple departmental meetings, the department chair meeting and facilitated a workshop on Student Learning Outcomes. A presentation including SLOs was also on the agenda at convocation; however, the event was cancelled due to the death of a long-time faculty member who was to be the master of ceremonies. Other activities during the fall semester include ambassadors presenting a series of meetings to department chairs to introduce the SLO Workbook and address concerns, and the SLC committee holding and faculty participating in workshops on outcomes assessments through departments.

Institutional Student Learning Outcomes

In spring 2008, the Academic Senate addressed institutional level student learning outcomes, often referred to as core competencies or the broad learning outcomes that students will achieve by the time they leave the college. Institutional Outcomes include the skills, knowledge and abilities that encompass, cross, and transcend disciplines. The Program Outcomes committee, the precursor to the SLC committee facilitated the initial determination of Institutional Outcomes. The Program Outcomes committee strived to reflect the philosophical tenets of general education as well as the college’s own core values in these District’s institutional outcomes.

The Academic Senate approved the following Institutional Outcomes (Core Competencies) as developed and recommended by the Program Outcome Committee in May 2008:

- Communication
- Critical and Creative Thinking
FUTURE PLANS

The Plan for Implementation of the Student Learning Outcomes includes a three-semester approach. The focus during the fall 2008 semester is upon the process at the class and course level, with all instructors asked to identify and assess one outcome in one course and report the results through their department chair by November 1. This approach is designed to begin at the class level, as the majority of course outcomes, developed through a well-established curriculum process, already identify goals for student learning. In addition, instructors will be able to consider the degree to which their current practices can be used to assess student learning.

As instructors focus upon class and course outcomes, department chairs will guide the development of program-level outcomes and the Student Learning Committee (SLC) will focus on refining institutional outcomes and developing strategies for their assessment. While attempting three SLO-related efforts in parallel is an enormous undertaking, the campus recognizes the urgency of the process and the recently purchased assessment program, TracDat, which will greatly facilitate this process. TracDat, used in conjunction with our new ePAR planning process, will ultimately allow for the storage and dissemination of the varied assessment strategies and results, linking those assessments at the course, program and institutional levels to strategic goals, and providing reports of assessment information. Progress of course, program, and institutional outcomes will be monitored by the SLC with reporting responsibilities to the Academic Senate.

The plan for the fall semester 2008 is to strengthen the assessment process by collecting and disseminating formative and summative assessment results for all courses. Spring 2009 semester will include the refinement and analysis of course-level SLOs, as well as having at least one SLO identified for each program by the end of the semester. Department meetings throughout the year will include a conversation on the assessments utilized and results generated during the fall semester at the course level. Departments will also consider how to converge the assessment information at the course level to a focused and limited set of course-based outcomes. The focus will then shift to program outcomes, utilizing individual or course-level assessment projects to increase the evidence at the program level. And finally, late in the 2008-2009 year, a pilot project for institutional learning outcomes assessment will be launched.

The plan for the fall semester of 2009 is to continue to strengthen the assessment and implementation process by continuing to collect anonymous course- and program-level assessment results. By the end of the fall semester departments will have available at least two sets of assessment results, both course and program, collected during the 2008-2009 year. Faculty can then analyze the assessments and determine whether any curriculum and/or pedagogical changes are needed. Resources to implement any needed changes will be requested each year in the new ePAR process.

By the spring of 2010, it is anticipated that outcomes will be defined for the vast majority of all courses and programs and that the college will utilize the assessments of those outcomes to improve student learning. We will be able to clearly define what we expect our students to learn, provide assessment results to gauge student learning, analyze those results, and determine any
actions or resources needed to improve student learning, and align institutional wide practices as needed through the TracDat ePAR system.

The final portion of this recommendation describes the need for the college to include effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes as part of its faculty evaluation process. At present, the president has requested a meeting with representatives of the Academic Senate, faculty bargaining unit, and the Vice President of Instruction to discuss strategies for addressing this specific topic. Although the accreditation standard III.A.1.c. notes, “Faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated student learning outcomes have, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes”, the college believes that assessment is an on-going faculty-driven process to demonstrate and improve student learning. As such, the goal of implementing student learning outcomes is to inform an analysis of the strengths and limitations of academic and student services programs based upon a review and reflection by the faculty. The results function as a “multiple measure” for programmatic health and, as such, they provide indications of student learning at the course and program level rather than gauges of the performance of individual class sections or instructors.
**Recommendation 6: Governing Board Evaluation**

The team recommends that the Board complete an annual board self evaluation to ensure that its policies promote quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services. (IV.B.1)

**PROGRESS AND ANALYSIS**

A Governing Board evaluation was completed by the members of the Board of Trustees and a summary was presented at the Board meeting, March 11, 2008. The Trustees revisited the evaluation for further discussion at the Board meeting on August 12, 2008. As part of the discussion at the August meeting, the Board developed a set of annual goals that were presented for ratification at the Board meeting, October 14, 2008. The goals, which support and promote the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the institution’s programs and services, are as follows.

1. Oversee and support development of the College’s Strategic Plan and the goals identified in that plan.
   a. Annually review the College’s master planning documents.
2. Oversee and support the Superintendent/President in the goals given him by the Board.
   a. Develop a strong evaluation tool/instrument to support the Superintendent/President.
   b. Establish a community report.
   c. Develop an annual calendar of Board tasks.
      i. Include meetings/retreat
      ii. Include review of planning documents
3. Oversee and support a timely and effective accreditation response.
4. Review the Board’s goals and complete a Board evaluation annually.
   a. Address the six items of the 2008 Board Self-evaluation receiving a grade of C.
      i. Part I, Item 4. In conjunction with the Superintendent/President, all Board members have studied and understand their roles.
      ii. Part I, Item 9. The Board requires that the college have annual goals, objectives, and work plans which are succinctly stated and which carry clear statements indicating how it will be known that any goals have been reached and what issues need further attention.
      iii. Part I, Item 10. The Board annually sets specific goals for itself as a Board. What are they this year? What should they be next year?
      iv. Part I, Item 12. The Board is involved in state and federal legislative matters.
      v. Part I, Item 15. The Board periodically requires a review of educational programs and services in order to assess their relevancy and timeliness.
      vi. Part I, Item 16. The Board ensures that the physical plant is adequate and well maintained.
5. Clarify processes for trustees to place items on the agenda of future Board meetings.
6. Refrain from allowing electoral politics or campaign enthusiasm to intrude on Board meetings or College business.
FUTURE PLANS

The board has scheduled an annual review of progress toward board goals.
Update on Recommendations 4 and 5

Although not specifically requested in the January 31, 2008 Action Letter, the college has made substantial progress on both of the two remaining recommendations, Recommendation 4: On-line Student Support Services and Recommendation 5: Plan for Long-Term Debt Financing. The details are provided below.

**Recommendation 4: On-line Support Services for Students**

*The team recommends that a more robust set of on-line support services be developed for students at Sierra College to effectively serve students in distance education classes as well as students enrolled in traditional classes at developing Sierra College campus sites. These services might include but are not limited to tutoring, financial aid advisement, and library services. (II.B.3.a. II.C.1IIC.1.c)*

Purchase and Installation of Banner Administrative Software

Shortly after the evaluation team’s visit to Sierra College in October 2007, the college organized and implemented a two-year plan to convert to the integrated Banner administrative software it had recently selected and purchased through SunGard Higher Education Systems. Several of the modules and products purchased will specifically allow the college to meet this recommendation. These modules include Finance, Student/Instruction, HR/Payroll, and Luminis portal modules which will allow students to access their financial aid application status, eligibility, awards, and account balances, and progress towards degrees and certificate requirements real time on the web.

The Luminis web portal will allow the college to provide students with a single point of entry and access to all services available to them. The student web portal is designed to provide organizational information, links, and assistance relevant and specific to their interests and goals. In addition, portals are being designed for faculty and staff. These three portals will have channels tailored so that, for example, important dates may be sent to those affected, such as financial aid recipients; or helpful hints on to how to be successful in on-line courses for those students enrolled in distance learning courses. The student portal is being designed to provide every student with tabs to access support services, campus life information, and other information pertinent to their successful engagement in the college.

Another product that was also purchased is "Degree Works," a program that will automatically assess a student’s progress towards their stated educational objective. Although this program will not be available when the college first goes live with the other modules in spring 2009, it will be immediately implemented once the other modules are functioning satisfactorily.

**Banner Implementation Timeline**

- Finance: Implemented June 1, 2008
- Luminis Web Portal: Scheduled to go live November 2008
- HR/Payroll: Scheduled to go live January, 2009
- Financial Aid: Scheduled to go live February 2009
- Student/Instruction: Scheduled to go live March 2009
- Degree Works: Scheduled to go live March 2010
Financial Aid Phase 1, the initial implementation phase, will provide the following new services and information to students:

- Estimated cost of attendance  
- Amount of financial aid award  
- Satisfactory academic progress status  
- Financial aid history  
- Financial aid holds  
- Documents still required for verification purposes  
- Statement of account, what is owed and what has been paid  
- Award by year totals  
- Payment schedule of future financial aid payments  
- Loan application history, basic information on loan status  
- Return to Title 4 calculation and its effect on their aid

Student/Instruction Phase 1 will provide the following new services and information to students:

- Schedule of Classes and search by Course, Title, Location, Instructor Name, Instructional Method, Dates and Times, GE Attribute, On-line, or Short-Term or Full-Term Courses  
- Registration appointment times  
- Register and pay fees on-line  
- Course information such as syllabus and course learning objectives  
- Course deadline dates such as add deadline, refund deadline, etc.  
- Assessment test results  
- Fees

Sierra College Student email
Another key development related to support services for students is the District’s recent decision to provide all students with Sierra College email accounts and to use those accounts as the official mode of communication. Not only will these accounts ensure that the student is the recipient of private and confidential information, but as with the web portal, recipients of targeted emails may be selected based on a wide variety of attributes, such as enrollment in an on-line class, in a class at an offsite campus, or having completed a certain number of units towards a defined major and/or educational objective. When students log on to the web portal, their emails will be automatically displayed from the home page, along with other important announcements to help encourage and direct them to the appropriate services.

Sierra College iTunesU
Another indicator of the District’s effort to extend on-line services is the recent development of the Sierra College iTunesU site. This portal provides an institutional resource for access to multimedia experiences in the form of audio and video podcasts to students and the public at large. Podcast training is offered to all staff on campus in the iTech Lab and, although the site is newly launched, many podcasts have already been posted. Without any marketing of the site, there have been over 2,700 downloads in the first three weeks of the fall 2008 semester. Most of the episodes that have been downloaded are lectures from televised and on-line courses. The college plans to continue to develop and post more podcasts on the site that can be used to
welcome and orient new students, offer podcasts of student success workshops, as well as a variety of presentations and messages.

On-Line Student Support Services for Writing Center
The District has agreed to pilot an on-line support service, now under development, by the Writing Center beginning January 2009. A new Instructional Assistant position necessary to meet the additional workload in supporting distance learners is on the District’s three-year staffing list and is scheduled to be hired in 2009-10. The District wishes to ensure the success and effectiveness of this initial pilot effort before adding additional support services in other on-line instructional areas.

On-Line Counseling Services
In 2005-06 a counselor was assigned to provide on-line counseling services. Trend data indicates a steady increase in usage of the on-line counseling services. The number of students receiving counseling services on-line in 2005-06 was 836, in 2006-07 grew to 1821, and in 2007-08 grew to 2553. The expectation is that the demand will continue to grow as the service becomes more heavily marketed through the new web portent and Sierra College iTunesU.

“Are you Ready for On-Line?” Student Readiness Course
Another advance has been added in the creation of an on-line class to assist students’ awareness and understanding of the on-line learning environment. The class entitled “How to be a Successful On-line Student” was first offered in August 2008 and had 66 students enrolled. A new section of the one unit, three week course is scheduled to be offered every six weeks throughout the year.

Distance Learning and Instructional Technology Plan
The District recently completed a Distance Learning and Instructional Technology Plan. One action item called for in that plan was the creation of a lab dedicated to the training of all staff in the use of emerging technologies for teaching, learning and communication needs of the 21st century. The location and equipping of that lab was completed in February 2008. Additionally, a faculty member has been given 40% reassigned time, funded by the District and another faculty member has been given 20% reassigned time, funded by the Career and Technical Education Program to conduct training classes in both MAC and PC environments. Additionally, an Instructional Support Specialist has been hired full time to provide one-on-one support. A few samples of emerging tools currently being introduced to faculty and staff in the iTech Lab and integrated in both on-ground and on-line instruction include:

- Blackboard Course Management System
- Voice Threads
- Pod Casts
- Vod Casts
- Sierra College iTunesU
- Elluminate
- CCC Confer
- Social Networking
- Second Life
Recommendation # 5: Plan for Long-Term Debt Financing
The team recommends that the college develop a long term debt financing plan to address the costs associated with implementation of GASB 45 requirements.

The District has long identified the actuarial requirements needed to meet the long-term health and benefit needs of the District employees and retirees. In 1994, the District and the collective bargaining units negotiated the discontinuance of life-time benefits for subsequent hires resulting in a closed-end liability. The first actuarial study was completed in 2001, prior to notification of the mandated reporting requirement.

In June 2005, after an update of the actuarial study, the District and the Omniparty (the joint negotiation group which represents all of the bargaining units) agreed to invest the post-retirement medical funds (PRMF) in an irrevocable trust. In November 2005, the GASB (Governmental Accounting Standards Board) obligation was directly addressed by funding parameters included in the Compensation Formula; a 5-year contractual agreement between the District and the Omniparty.

In June 2007, the plan administrator for the irrevocable trust was approved by the Board of Trustees. A Board of Authority was established to include designees from the District and each of the bargaining units. The Board of Authority meets quarterly and abides by the Brown Act provisions. In January 2008, the Omniparty agreed to transfer PRMF funds to the irrevocable trust.

During this period the District also embarked on an endeavor to educate and inform the faculty, staff, and the Board of Trustees as to the actuarial liability and the responsibility of the organization to address the GASB requirement. A significant effort was made to make information available to the bargaining units, Strategic Council and the Board of Trustees, with multiple presentations and educational sessions. As a result, there is an environment of awareness that supports a collaborative approach to developing additional strategies.

The District continues to use the collaborative interest-based process to identify the interests of the bargaining units and the Board of Trustees for evaluation within the context of the competing demands of the institution. As the Visiting Team reported, the college’s Annual Required Contribution (ARC) is $5.5 million. The District is currently paying $3 million in pay-as-you-go. The Omniparty Compensation Formula automatically sets aside the annual increased cost of retiree benefits off the top of new COLA revenue. This will contribute a minimum of $200,000 each year. The current balance in the irrevocable trust has the capacity to cover three years toward GASB compliance with no financial effect.

The District has identified several additional options, some unilateral and others that require negotiation, that have been shared with the Omniparty and the Board of Trustees (GASB 45 Issues Interests and Options, August 12, 2008). These options will augment the long-term strategies already in place; the irrevocable trust and the pay-as-you-go formula agreed upon in 2005.
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Barbara Vineyard ................................................................. Area 1
Dave Ferrari ................................................................. Area 2
Scott Leslie ................................................................. Area 3
Jerry Simmons ................................................................. Area 4
Bill Martin ................................................................. Area 5
Nancy Palmer ................................................................. Area 6
Aaron Klein ................................................................. Area 7
Zach Rutledge ........................................................... Student Trustee ‘08–‘09
LIST OF SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Recommendation 1
- Board of Trustees:
  - September 11, 2007 – Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Core Values discussed and requested information from senates
  - November 13, 2007 – Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Core Values
  - January 8, 2008 – Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Core Values discussion/revisions
  - June 24, 2008 – Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Core Values approved
- Constituent Groups and Board of Trustees, October 15, 2007 – input on Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Core Values
- Roundtable Forum, May 29, 2008 - input from the community on the new mission statement
- Strategic Council Subcommittee on Mission Statement:
  - April 13, 2007
  - April 30, 2007
  - May 18, 2007
  - June 5, 2007
  - June 28, 2007
  - July 25, 2007
  - August 14, 2007
  - December 11, 2007
  - March 10, 2008
- Strategic Council:
  - February 23, 2007 – Mission Subcommittee formed/approved
  - December 14, 2007 – Mission Statement update
  - January 18, 2008 – Mission Statement update
  - March 28, 2008 – Mission Statement update
  - April 18, 2008 – Mission Statement update

Recommendation 2
- Dean, Planning and Research:
  - Board of Trustees Meeting, September 9, 2008
  - Job Description
  - Institutional Organization Chart
- Strategic Council:
  - September 19, 2008 - ePAR process and Strategic Plan Annual Planning Timeline

Recommendation 2a
- Academic Senate:
  - February 20, 2008 – Draft of Strategic Plan
- Board of Trustees:
  - May 13, 2008 – Discussion of Facilities Master Plan and Technology Master Plan
  - July 19, 2008 – Update on Strategic Plan
  - September, 9, 2008 – Dean, Planning and Research
- Dean, Planning and Research Job Description and Institutional Organization Chart
- Deans’ Council:
- April 24, 2008 - Three-Year Staffing Plan
- May 15, 2008 – Strategic Plan
- July 17, 2008 – Strategic Plan

  EP&S Support Council
  - March 13, 2008 – Strategic Plan
  - April 10, 2008 – Strategic Plan
  - May 8, 2008 – Strategic Plan

  Executive Council
  - July 14, 2008 – Planning for Board Retreat
  - August 26, 2008 – ePAR, Staffing Plan, Strategic Plan
  - September 15, 2008 – ePAR process and Strategic Plan

  Facilities Plan
  - HR Staffing Plan, August 29, 2008 and Three-Year Expenditure projection

  Roundtable Forum:
  - May 29, 2008 agenda and list of participants - input from the community on the new mission statement

  Strategic Council:
  - December 14, 2007 – Staffing Plan
  - February 29, 2008 – Accreditation update, Strategic Plan update, PAR process
  - March 28, 2008 – Strategic Plan updated
  - April 18, 2008 – Accreditation progress report
  - May 16, 2008 – Accreditation progress report, Strategic Plan update
  - August 29, 2008 – Accreditation progress report, Strategic Plan update, Three-Year staffing plan
  - September 19, 2008 – ePAR Process, Strategic Plan Annual Planning Timeline

  Technology Master Plan

**Recommendation 2b**

  Executive Council
  - August 26, 2008 – ePAR, Staffing Plan, Strategic Plan
  - September 15, 2008 – ePAR process and Strategic Plan

  Sample TracDat Department PAR Summary (ePAR)

  Strategic Council:
  - February 29, 2008 – PAR Process
  - September 29, 2008 – ePAR Process

  Strategic Plan:
  - Planning Timeline
  - Planning Framework

**Recommendation 2c**

  HR Staffing Plan, August 29, 2008 and Three-Year Expenditure projection
  - Board of Trustees, September 9, 2008
  - Deans’ Council – April 24, 2008
  - Strategic Council – August 29, 2008

**Recommendation 2d**

  Deans’ Council:
  - May 15, 2008 – Strategic Plan Review
July 17, 2008 – Update on Strategic Plan
August 14, 2008 – ePAR
September 19, 2008 – Flowchart of draft Evaluation of Planning and Budgeting Process
  - Executive Council
    - August 26, 2008 – ePAR, Staffing Plan, Strategic Plan
    - September 15, 2008 – ePAR process and Strategic Plan
  - Sample TracDat Department PAR Summary (ePAR)
  - Strategic Council:
    - February 29, 2008 – PAR Process
    - September 19, 2008 – ePAR Process

Recommendation 3
- Academic Senate, September 24, 2008 – Student Learning Committee approved
- Ambassadors’ Meetings, September 4 and 5, 2008 – ePARs and SLOs
- Forum on “Creative Opportunities for Outcomes and Assessment,” August 13, 2008
- Institutional Organization Chart
- SLC Ambassadors’ Timeline – Fall 2008
- SLC Workbook (Draft)
- SLO Coordinator Position Description and interest memo
- Student Learning Committee – September 19, 2008
- Student Learning Website

Recommendation 6
- Board of Trustees
  - March 11, 2008 - Trustee Evaluation Instrument
  - August 12, 2008
  - September 9, 2008

UPDATE on Recommendation 4
- Banner Steering Committee – September 8, 2008
- Board of Trustees – June 24, 2008
- Distance Learning and Instructional Technology Strategic Plan 2007-2008
- iTunesU
- Sierra College Website (Counseling) – On-line Advising
- Skill Development 010 – Fall 2008
  - Class Schedule
  - WebCMS

UPDATE on Recommendation 5
- Actuarial Valuation of Postemployment Health Benefits – July 1, 2005
- Actuarial Valuation of Postemployment Health Benefits (Draft) – July 1, 2007
- Board of Trustees, June 12, 2007 – Contract with Keenan & Associates
- Board of Trustees Retreat, August 12, 2008 – GASB 45
- Keenan & Associates – Futuris Agreements and agenda, July 2, 2007