

# **EVALUATION REPORT**

Bakersfield College

1801 Panorama Drive  
Bakersfield, CA 93305-1299

A Confidential Report Prepared for the Accrediting Commission  
for Community and Junior Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited  
Bakersfield College on October 23-26, 2006.

Jerome Hunter, Ed.D., Team Chair

## TEAM MEMBERS

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## SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INSTITUTION: Bakersfield College

DATE OF VISIT: October 23-26, 2006

TEAM CHAIR: Jerome Hunter, Ed.D.  
Chancellor, North Orange County CCD

A ten-member accreditation team visited Bakersfield College from October 23-26, 2006, for the purposes of determining whether the institution continues to meet accreditation standards, evaluating how well the college is achieving its stated purposes, analyzing how the college is meeting the commission standards, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement, and submitting recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) regarding the accredited status of the college.

In preparation for the visit, team members attended an all-day team training session on September 7, 2006, conducted by the ACCJC, studied the Commission Handbook for Evaluators, and were divided into four sub-groups according to the accreditation standards. Team members also carefully read the college's self study (including the recommendations from the 2000 accreditation team) and related documents provided by Bakersfield College.

A pre-visit meeting on September 29, 2006, was held with the college president and district chancellor to finalize the scheduled team visit. Three weeks prior to arriving on campus, each team member prepared written reactions to the Bakersfield College self study and also identified additional materials to be reviewed, inquiries to be made, and college and district staff to be interviewed during the visit.

During the three-day visit, the team reviewed additional documentation and met either individually or in groups with college faculty, classified staff, students, administrators, and governing board members. In addition, team members held two widely publicized sessions open to all members of the college community. The team appreciated the hospitality and responsiveness to requests demonstrated throughout the visit.

In general, the self study report contained most of the elements required by the commission. However, the team found the depth of information provided in the self study varied between the standards. Also, documentation in the team room in some areas was minimal, requiring the team to request additional information.

The geographic size of the Kern Community College District, the distance between its campuses, and the differences in size and demographics of the campuses, present major challenges for Bakersfield and its sister colleges (Cerro Coso and Porterville) in the areas of communication, resource allocation, and coordinated planning. The accompanying report from the ten-member accreditation team provides an overview of how Bakersfield College is meeting its unique

challenges, with a focus on areas leading to commendations for significant accomplishment as well as to recommendations to fulfill the standards of accreditation.

### **Commendations**

The team commends the college for its broad-based efforts to implement course student learning outcomes assessment (Standard I and Standard II).

The team commends the college for providing extensive data for program review and assessment (Standard I).

The team commends the college for its partnership with the new high school located next to the Delano Center (Standard II).

The team commends the college for maintaining an attractive, safe, clean, and secure learning and working environment, especially given the trying circumstances of an aging physical plant and infrastructure system (Standard III).

The team commends the college and its faculty, administration, and staff for their continuous efforts to implement and refine a plan-driven budget process leading to better-informed financial management of college resources (Standard III).

The team commends the college and district leadership for a strong commitment to the inclusion of student learning outcomes in educational programs as well as recent assessment and evaluation efforts (Standard IV).

The team commends the district's Board of Trustees for its commitment and service as well as its fulfillment of board-specific recommendations from the previous accreditation team (Standard IV).

### **Recommendations**

1. In order to meet the standard and fully implement the planning processes that the college has put into place, the team recommends that the college provide training on the various planning processes, including use of data in unit planning and program review, and set an implementation timeline that ensures completion of a full cycle of planning and broad-based evaluation (Standards I.B.6 and I.B.7).
2. In order to meet the standard and to maintain quality and implement program and service improvements, the team recommends the college expand its efforts to implement, and assess student learning outcomes at the program and institutional levels (Standards II.A.1, II.A.3, II.B, II.B.4, and II.C).
3. In order to meet the standard and ensure a coordinated and integrated approach to achieving the goals and priorities adopted by the governing board, the team recommends the District Strategic Plan be used to direct the college's strategic focus and Educational Master Plan (Standards II.A, II.B, & II.C). [This is a districtwide recommendation.]

4. In order to meet the standards, the team recommends the college develop and articulate an institutional strategic planning framework with links between campus planning, assessment, program review, curriculum, and budget processes. In addition, the college should develop a system to provide information on programs, finances, and these processes on a continuous basis to planning participants (Standards II.A, II.B, II.B.1, II.B.3, II.C, II.C.1.c, and Standard III.D).
5. In order to meet the standard and ensure equitable student access and support at all locations and for all delivery methods, the team recommends the college evaluate student and learning support services and distance education staffing (Standards II.B.1, II.B.3.a,c, II.B.4, II.C.1, and II.C.1.c).
6. In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the college develop a planning agenda that will respond to anticipated staffing needs and reflect the changing demographics of the service area (Standard III.A, III.A.4.b).
7. In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the college provide adequate resources to ensure the institution meets the professional development activities needs of its personnel, including activities addressing diversity issues (Standard III.A, III.A.4.b, III.A.4.c, and Standard II.B.3.d).
8. In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the colleges follow the Kern Community College District Policy 7D by evaluating adjunct faculty in a consistent, timely manner with procedures that assess current performance and promote improvement (Standard III.A.1.b). [This is a districtwide recommendation.]
9. In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the colleges, with appropriate districtwide input, develop a written code of ethics for all employees (Standard III.A.1.d). [This is a districtwide recommendation.]
10. In order to meet the standard, the team recommends the college, with district assistance, develop an effective facilities repair scheduling system with emphasis on rapid and clear response to repair and maintenance work order requests (Standard III.B.1.b).
11. In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the colleges, working with appropriate districtwide leadership and in consideration of the special conditions of the individual colleges within the district, complete the development, implementation, and assessment of the budget allocation model (Standards III.D.1.a-d, and III.D.3). [This is a districtwide recommendation.]
12. In order to meet the standard, the team recommends the College Council develop and adopt a formal document that contains by-laws, purpose of body, and membership; delineates function in regards to other participatory governance bodies; and includes other procedural guidelines (Standard IV.A.2).

13. In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the district Board of Trustees adopt and implement the self-evaluation process being developed and routinely administer the process. In addition, the Board should revise the current ethics policy to include a procedure for dealing with violations of the policy (Standards IV.B.1.g & IV.B.1.h). [This is a districtwide recommendation.]
  
14. In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the colleges, in conjunction with districtwide leaders, complete an organizational map that clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities between the entities and identifies an evaluation process that will provide for ongoing improvement (Standard IV.B.3). [This is a districtwide recommendation.]

# INTRODUCTION

## **History and Distinguishing Features**

Founded in 1913, Bakersfield College today is the largest of three colleges in the Kern Community College District with about 15,000 students and 240 contract faculty. The Kern District encompasses approximately 24,800 square miles in the Southern San Joaquin Valley of Central California, making it the largest geographic community college district in the state. While Bakersfield College's service area totals approximately 5,000 square miles, 84 percent of its enrollment comes from within a 20-mile radius of the college's main campus.

Bakersfield College's main campus features 22 major buildings, a 10-acre agriculture lab, and athletic facilities. The college also operates a satellite center in Delano and offers classes at four other sites as well as a variety of online, TV, and interactive delivery modes. In 2001, the college began a 10-year facilities improvement program funded by state and local bond dollars.

Bakersfield College offers over 70 associate in arts and associate in science degrees and more than 30 certificate programs in 25 general education disciplines and 18 career and technical areas. At the main campus, comprehensive student services are offered along with opportunities to participate in 20 men's and women's intercollegiate athletic teams.

## **Service Area Demographics and Economy**

Kern County, which represents 75 percent of Bakersfield College's service area, is growing dramatically and also is becoming more ethnically diverse. Hispanics are projected to become the majority group in 12 years in the county where the population has grown 39 percent since the 1990 census. For the past 30 years, Kern County has ranked in the top ten among counties with the highest proportion of children under the age of 18.

Bakersfield College serves diverse local economies with unemployment rates that range from a low of 3.6 percent up to a high of 27 percent in agriculture-based communities. Kern County ranks high nationwide as one of the most productive in agriculture as well as petroleum.

## **Responses to Previous Accreditation Recommendations**

A comprehensive accreditation site visit was conducted at Bakersfield College in October 2000. Seven recommendations were presented and followed by the college's submission of an Interim Report in April 2002, a Progress Report in April 2003, and a Midterm Report in October 2003.

The recommendations addressed the college's mission statement; institutional outcomes; data for decision making; pathways to student success; timely and accurate financial information; and board training, especially in the area of fiscal soundness. In its 2006 self study for re-accreditation, Bakersfield College reported continued progress on all of the seven earlier recommendations.

## **RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREVIOUS EVALUATION TEAM**

Bakersfield College has made a committed effort to respond to the previous accreditation team's recommendations for improvement. This effort has yielded some significant progress during the past six years, particularly in the development of student learning outcomes at both the program and course levels at the college.

Progress addressing the recommendations is summarized here, with recommendations two and four paired by the college, based on the belief that they deal with comparable concerns. This review reveals a need for Bakersfield College to continue its focus on the major themes of previous recommendations. Later in this report, new recommendations will be presented for doing this within the framework of the new standards for accreditation.

### **Recommendation 1:**

**While the existing mission of the college has been revised numerous times and is prominently displayed in each building, the college mission should be inclusive of its broad-based educational programs and articulate the diversity of students to be served by the institution. The vocational education and economic development elements of the mission should be specifically addressed. (Standards 1.1, 1.2, 2.6, 4A.1)**

The college's mission statement was revised during a multi-year process that involved governance constituents and today is displayed throughout the campus and in various communications of the college. Because the mission statement is broad in nature, there are questions about whether it addresses the intent of the recommendation to be "inclusive" and to "articulate the diversity of students." In addition, there is no apparent connection between the mission statements and the strategic plans of the college and the Kern County Community College District. The college has responded to this recommendation and it is anticipated that recommendations 1, 3, and 4 from the current team will assist in providing connection between the college and district mission statements and strategic plans.

### **Recommendation 2:**

**Evidence exists that the college has attempted to establish good planning processes; however, the college should document achievements for its intended institutional outcomes. The final college authority in the decision making process should be identified and methods for tracking progress and completion be developed. To assist the college in accomplishing this recommendation, district leadership should provide a response to the recommendations made by the college within a well-defined timeline. (See Standard 7, Response to Recommendations of the Previous Team, and Standards 3C.1, 10B.5, 10B.6, 10B.9, 10B.10)**

### **Recommendation 4:**

**Although the Strategic Action Plan identified specific measurable objectives related to the mission and purpose of the college, the institutional outcomes assessments section of the Institutional Effectiveness standards is weak. Considerable improvements can be made. It is recommended that the college systematically implement its plans and evaluate the**

**outcomes of its current plans prior to embarking upon a new planning process. (Standards 3C.1, 3C.2, 3C.3, 6.5)**

Two new committees have been formed from the former Budget and Program Review Committee at Bakersfield College: the College Council and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC). The College Council serves as one of the president's consultative councils, provides a forum for college issues, promotes communication, and facilitates decision-making. The faculty-led Institutional Effectiveness Committee improves program review and provides leadership for the college's student learning outcomes assessment movement. During the 2006 fall semester, the Bakersfield College Council will begin to formulate a strategic plan. It will be important for the college to relate its plan to the district strategic plan recently approved by the Kern Community College District Board of Trustees. The college has responded to this recommendation and it is anticipated that recommendations 1, 3, and 4 from the current team will assist in providing connection between the college and district mission statements and strategic plans.

**Recommendation 3:**

**To obtain data to be used in the various planning and evaluation processes, the college depends on data retrieved from the State Chancellor's Office. Significant improvements can be achieved if the district works cooperatively with the college to make data accessible and understandable. In order to meet the accreditation standard, the recommendation is that the college and the district develop processes and methods to access timely and accurate data from the district Management Information System. (Standards 3A.1, 3A.3, 10C.4)**

A director of institutional research and planning has been hired to report directly to the president. A Bakersfield College research website also has been developed to provide access to student demographic and outcomes data. In addition, the Kern Community College District has hired an institutional researcher to serve all three of the district's colleges from a district perspective. The effectiveness of activities in this area needs to be monitored on an ongoing basis for continued improvement in the accuracy and accessibility of data that is vital to decisions regarding instruction, operations, and budgeting for both. The college has responded appropriately to this recommendation from the previous team.

**Recommendation 5:**

**To strengthen educational programs and counseling services, the team recommends that the college develop measurable pathways to student success for vocational students and other specific populations of students that promote access, monitor progress, and track goal attainment. (Standards 4B.3, 4B.6, 5.3)**

Access to vocational, career, and technical information has increased through program descriptions and certificate and degree requirements, which are available in the college catalog and website. Student Services and Learning Services have been redesigned at Bakersfield College, and both online and in-person orientation to the college are among the many offerings of Counseling Services. The college also is participating in the regional and national Career Pathways initiatives as well as economic and workforce development initiatives through the California Community Colleges System Office. Additionally, Bakersfield College recently became the first community college in the state to be accepted into the Foundations of

Excellence Program, which provides the means for studying the first-year college student experience and using findings to shape student services programs. Measures of effectiveness, or at least the results of such measures, were not apparent and will be valuable for future decision-making in this area. The college has responded appropriately to this recommendation from the previous team.

**Recommendation 6:**

**The college and the district office should produce timely and accurate financial information that:**

- **drives financial decisions**
- **clarifies all essential functions at the district office and the level of financial support for each function**
- **outlines the required level of financial support for all essential functions at the college and is tied to its strategic plan**
- **is promulgated throughout the district in a manner that is clear, consistent and understandable to the Kern Community College District community**

**(Standards 9A.1, 9A.4, 9A.5, 9B.1, 9B.6, 9C.4, and 10C.2, 10C.3, 10C.5, 10C.6)**

The district chancellor directed the formation of a Budget Allocation Task Force to review the budget allocation model and make modifications to achieve an equitable distribution of resources based on full-time equivalent students. In response to its recommendations, a model was developed. However, it did not respond to reductions in funding nor was it related to a strategic plan. The Budget Allocation Task Force continues analysis of the district funding model and has been directed to provide a new or revised model by the end of the 2006 calendar year. The college has responded to this recommendation. Recommendations 4 and 11 from the current team should assist the college in continuing its focus on financial concerns within the framework of the new standards.

**Recommendation 7:**

**It is recommended that the trustees systematically engage in board training as a continuous, ongoing process and focus on their roles of setting policy and serving the best interests of the entire district and all its students. Of particular concern is the need for the trustees to address their role of keeping the district fiscally sound. (Standards 10A.1, 10A.2, 10A.3, 10A.5, 10C.4, 10C.5, 10C.6)**

Members of the Kern Community College District Board of Trustees have participated in training retreats facilitated by the Association of Community College Trustees and Community College League of California. They also continue to participate in many state and national conferences to gain a better understanding of their role as policy setters. The trustees additionally have established a minimum five percent reserve requirement for the annual budget. The college has responded appropriately to this recommendation from the previous team.

## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. AUTHORITY**

Bakersfield College is a public, two-year community college operating under the authority of the State of California, the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, and the Kern Community College District Board of Trustees.

### **2. MISSION**

A new mission statement for the college was adopted by the Kern Community College District Board of Trustees in 2005 after a two-year process involving district-wide input. The mission statement appears in college publications and on the college website, and is displayed throughout the campus.

### **3. GOVERNING BOARD**

Bakersfield College is one of three colleges in the Kern Community College District that is governed by an elected Board of Trustees. The eight-member board, which includes one non-voting student member, is a policy-making body in accordance with the California Education Code.

### **4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

The president of Bakersfield College is primarily responsible for providing leadership to the college in the areas of accreditation, budget, enrollment management, and bond-supported construction projects. The college president reports directly to the chancellor of the Kern Community College District, who manages the district according to policies and rules established by the Board of Trustees.

### **5. ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY**

The Bakersfield College administration includes the president, vice presidents, deans, and administrative directors. This administrative staff is responsible for matters related to student success and fulfillment of the college's mission.

### **6. OPERATIONAL STATUS**

Bakersfield College is a fully operational institution, currently enrolling over 15,000 students, at the main campus in Bakersfield, California, and several other sites: Delano Center, Weill Institute, Olive Drive Training Facility, Stockdale High School, and Arin High School.

### **7. DEGREES**

Bakersfield College offers associate in arts degrees, associate in science degrees, and certificates of achievement approved by the State Chancellor's Office.

### **8. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

The college variety of educational and vocational programs on both a credit basis and non-credit basis.

#### 9. ACADEMIC CREDIT

Bakersfield College awards credit based on the Carnegie formula of one unit of credit per 18 hours of lecture or 54 hours of lab work per semester.

#### 10. STUDENT LEARNING & ACHIEVEMENT

The college has developed program-level student learning outcomes and is integrating those outcomes into the college's program review process.

#### 11. GENERAL EDUCATION

Bakersfield College has a general education component in its degree programs, including courses in the areas of: English, speech, social science, behavioral science, natural science, humanities, mathematics, health education, physical education, and multi-cultural studies. Students must earn a "C" grade (2.0 grade point) average or better within their general education requirements.

#### 12. ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The college maintains an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom and the freedom to test and examine existing knowledge are supported both by board policy and campus culture.

#### 13. FACULTY

The college employs 251 full-time faculty members. The college's faculty must meet the minimum qualifications for service established by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges.

#### 14. STUDENT SERVICES

Bakersfield College offers a variety of student services at its main campus and satellite sites.

#### 15. ADMISSIONS

The mission of the college's Office of Admissions and Records is to provide information and service regarding admissions, registration, academic policies, and student records.

#### 16. INFORMATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES

Library materials at the main campus of Bakersfield College include a reference and circulating book collection, a print and electronic periodical collection, and a reserve collection. Access to library materials currently is limited at the college's Delano Center, for which new facilities are being planned with proceeds from a recent local bond referendum.

#### 17. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The college's annual budget consists of state funding that is based largely on student enrollment. Bakersfield College also seeks state and federal grants to support programs and services identified in its Educational Master Plan. The governing Kern County Community College District Board of Trustees has established the goal of a 5% budget reserve for Bakersfield College and the district's other two colleges.

#### 18. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The Kern County Community College District annually contracts with a certified public accountant firm to conduct an external financial audit of the district and its colleges, including Bakersfield College. The district also has an active audit committee and employs an internal auditor.

19. INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND EVALUATION

The college's Educational Master Plan has been developed to direct decisions at all levels of the college. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee has been empowered to ensure that the college's operating units are fulfilling the goals of the master plan.

20. PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Bakersfield College annual catalog contains required information and is available in print and on the college's website.

21. RELATIONS WITH THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION

The self study contained a statement, assuring that the college continues to be in compliance with the terms and conditions of accreditation. This statement was signed by the college president, district chancellor, and board president.

# EVALUATION BY STANDARD OF THE COLLEGE USING ACCJC STANDARDS AND MAKING TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

## Standard I Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

### General Observations

The Bakersfield College Self Study for Standard I provides ample evidence that the college has put many new processes into place to address the accreditation standards. In particular, the self study documents the numerous activities and accomplishments involved in implementing student learning outcomes (SLOs).

The self study thoroughly describes how the current mission statement was developed and its role in college planning. The college recently adopted this mission statement with language reflecting its diverse community and commitment to student learning. The college also recently initiated an annual review of the mission statement. New processes and committees additionally have been created to connect SLOs, unit plans, program review, and resource allocation. Much new groundwork is in place to move the college forward in demonstrating institutional effectiveness. However, these new planning processes, along with turnover in middle and upper-middle management positions, have created some confusion about decision-making responsibilities.

While the self study includes details about the mission statement development, including revision and board approval, at times the connection between self evaluation and planning agendas is not clear. For example, the planning agendas on page 73 of the study do not directly result from the self evaluation. Some sections under I.B. (Institutional Effectiveness) would have benefited from more detailed analysis and supporting evidence to substantiate claims. Another example is on page 75, stating that by including each program's goal in the Educational Master Plan (EMP), all campus goals interconnect with other goals. However, no explanation or evidence is provided that goals are connected. The self study also suffers from overuse of acronyms for committee names and documents.

### Findings and Evidence: I.A Mission

The mission statement describes the institution's purpose, community served, and commitment to student learning (I.A.1). This recently adopted mission statement was approved by the board and is published on the college's web site, in the college catalogue, and appears throughout college facilities (I.A.2). The mission statement is the result of a review process that culminated in a final draft in 2004. When the new college president arrived in 2005, the mission statement was further reviewed and eventually adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2005. A planning agenda identified the need to establish a process of annual review, and recently a subcommittee of the College Council reviewed the mission statement for compliance with accreditation standards (I.A.3). Bakersfield College has taken steps to ensure that the mission statement is central to institutional planning and decision making; this linkage purportedly is facilitated through the requirement that unit-level planning include a program-specific mission statement. Unit plans feed into resource prioritization through review by the Faculty Chairs and Directors Council (page 76). There is a clear link between unit plans and some resource allocation

processes. However, evidence that the college mission statement is central to institutional planning is a bit weak (I.A.4).

### **Findings and Evidence: I.B Improving Institutional Effectiveness**

As described in the self study, over the past five years, Bakersfield College has engaged in a college-wide dialogue about student learning outcomes and their relationship to planning, budgeting, and overall institutional effectiveness. Student learning has assumed a higher priority among the faculty and staff with numerous training activities, many funded by grants. The Academic Senate Assessment Committee was revitalized in 2004, and an assessment coordinator was hired. Through efforts of the Assessment Committee, a few faculty leaders have been working diligently to develop SLOs at the course levels and in several program levels. To motivate work on SLOs, departments must include student learning data as part of annual unit-level planning (I.B.1). However, the college's work identifying student learning outcomes at the unit level has yet to impact the planning and budgeting processes. The dialogue needs to progress onto the application of assessment results and eventual program improvement.

Along with commendable dialogue about SLOs, the college also has made great strides and is to be commended for providing data for program planning and assessment. Additionally, the college's Research Office makes college and program data available on its website for review by the college community (I.B.5). Despite this progress, conversations with various campus users of data for unit planning and program review indicate that the newness of the process and data has created some confusion and uncertainty. Not all department chairs are equally adept at using the research data for program review, suggesting that additional training is needed to ensure a collective understanding of the meaning of data and research in evaluation of student learning and evaluation (I.B.1).

Bakersfield College developed a Strategic Action Plan several years ago that identified college-wide goals, each with measurable outcomes. Since then, however, there is no evidence of follow-up evaluation, including whether or not the goals have been achieved. Apparently, the institution now relies primarily upon its Educational Master Plan to set goals for achieving institutional effectiveness. Further, the college has identified four strategic initiatives that provide the operational framework for short-term and long-term action-oriented outcomes. It is unclear how the institution proposes to achieve these initiatives, and there are no related measurable outcomes stated (I.B.2, I.B.3). The self study fails to make the connection with the previously mentioned Strategic Action Plan, and the 2006-07 Educational Master Plan makes only a passing mention of the college goals in the Matrix of Office of Student Learning Goals to College Goals (p.25). The college, thus, appears to have derailed its previous planning efforts, only to begin again under the rubric of the new accreditation standards. These circumstances are inconsistent with the previous team's Recommendation 4, which states, "It is recommended that the college systematically implement its plans and evaluate the outcomes of its current plans prior to embarking upon a new planning process."

The self study indicates that many of the current processes related to budget and planning are new or significantly modified, and as such need refinement and monitoring. Recent structural changes include the creation of new (and more) committees. The Budget Program Review Committee is now two entities – College Council and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee

(IEC) (Self Study page 75). As noted earlier, the Academic Senate Assessment Committee recently was revitalized. These committees, along with the Enrollment Management Committee, apparently form the foundation for planning at Bakersfield. With new committees and new processes, there appears to be some confusion and uncertainty as to how decisions are made. The Self Study team recognized that communication is a problem, especially as it relates to decision making. As the self evaluation states on page 81, "How information and recommendations move through the various committee processes and how the final decisions are reported back to the campus are processes in flux . . . The practice needs improvement." (I.B.2). Conversations with college personnel and recent agenda topics for the IEC and Budget Subcommittee of the College Council indicate the link between planning and budget is not clear to the college community at large. It is critical that communication be addressed to foster a culture of evidence with a cycle of evaluation that connects planning and resource allocation (I.B.6).

The college's new program review process and unit-level planning are broad based and inclusive. The IEC is responsible for oversight of program review, and its committee structure includes faculty, staff, and administrators (I.B.4). The audit process in 2003 became the foundation for the new program review process/format that was piloted in 2004-05 (Self Study page 72). The revised program review process mandates unit planning and analysis from every academic, student services, and administrative department. These departments are scheduled for program review on a six-year cycle except for vocational-technical programs, which are on a two-year cycle. Program review then becomes the underpinning to the Educational Master Plan that is published annually. This new process has had limited exposure and, as such, has not been through a cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation, and re-evaluation. The IEC is also in the process of identifying the committee's role in recommending resource allocation in response to program review (I.B.6, I.B.7)

While college planning appears to include broad-based participation at the unit level, it is not clear that college planning for strategic initiatives and goals included representation from all constituencies. Furthermore, it is not clear exactly how unit plans relate to and are integrated with institutional plans. Some units reference college strategic initiatives in their unit plans, but this practice is not uniform (I.B.4).

## **Conclusions**

Bakersfield College has put a great deal of time and effort into developing a mission statement that defines its programs and the students it serves. Review of the mission statement is inclusive and addresses necessary changes. The primary link between the mission statement and planning is through the Educational Master Plan. The college's program review process also is integrated with the Educational Master Plan through unit-level planning, which drives prioritization and resource allocation. Furthermore, there has been considerable progress on the development of SLOs at the course level. Student learning has become part of the culture at Bakersfield College.

There are some areas that the college needs to address. The new committees and processes have created a concern with regard to communicating decisions. The process by which information and recommendations flow through the various committees and ultimately result in resource

allocations needs to be reviewed and reassessed. Furthermore, the college needs to embrace a planning process that works in both good and bad budget years.

The college is creating more of a culture of evidence through expanded availability and use of data, yet the means by which data are used in decision making needs to be clearly articulated. The college should be careful not to be driven by process only and ensure, through periodic evaluation, that planning is effective.

### **Commendations**

The team commends the college for its broad-based efforts to implement course student learning outcomes assessment (Standard I and Standard II).

The team commends the college for providing extensive data for program review and assessment (Standard I).

### **Recommendation**

1. In order to meet the standard and fully implement the planning processes that the college has put into place, the team recommends that the college provide training on the various planning processes, including use of data in unit planning and program review, and set an implementation timeline that ensures completion of a full cycle of planning and broad-based evaluation (Standards I.B.6 and I.B.7).

## **Standard II Student Learning Programs and Services**

### **General Observations**

Bakersfield College has done extensive work in student learning outcomes (SLOs), positioning itself as a leader of this movement in the state. SLOs are in place for a majority of courses, and the college has moved to the next level, beginning development of SLOs for programs, general education, and the institution as a whole. Research on student success, persistence, and retention also is made available as part of the program review process.

The college's Curriculum Committee is hard working. Course and program quality and effectiveness are assessed, and a clear curriculum review process is evident. Courses also are evaluated, and attention is paid to issues of articulation to ensure that correct units of credit are assigned and degrees and certificates are awarded in appropriately constructed programs. The Curriculum Committee's General Education Subcommittee also has begun a reform process of the General Education Program.

In addition to the traditional classroom, the college has a growing Distance Education (DE) program in which courses are delivered in four modes: telecourses as one-way video, telecourses as two-way video/audio, online courses via the Internet, and hybrid courses. The college's Media Services and Information Services departments support DE activities, training, and planning. However, reduced staffing levels and vacant positions in these areas are hampering this growing program.

The college offers a variety of career and technical programs. Examples and interviews show that programs strive to meet employment standards and fulfill competency objectives with successful certification and licensure outcomes. The vocational programs have advisory committee and community support. A strong commitment to economic and workforce development projects in the community additionally is evident through participation in the Career Pathways Initiative.

The college library, which rated high in a student satisfaction survey, is challenged in its efforts to adequately support the Delano Center. Beyond requests for research instruction, there currently is no process in place to deliver library materials or provide in-person library services to students attending classes at this satellite center. Fortunately, library facilities are in the planning stage for the Delano Center with the opening scheduled for the fall of 2008. These services will be innovatively co-administered by a new high school located next to the center.

### **Findings and Evidence: II.A Instructional Programs**

Although institutional outcomes are being developed for Bakersfield College, the lack of these outcomes at the present time hinders the college's integrated planning, budget, and assessment (II.A.1). The college is much more advanced in the area of student learning outcomes (SLOs) for courses. As cited in the self study, over 85 percent of the college's courses have outcomes. Faculty and advisory committee members have been involved in the development of course and program outcomes, and SLOs are embedded in course outlines and syllabi. The development of Career Pathways for vocational programs is a good example of this involvement (II.A.1.a.-c and

II.A.2.b). Even though considerable progress has been made, the college has not yet adopted comprehensive learning outcomes for degrees, certificates, and programs (II.A.3).

The college uses various delivery systems, including the DE modes of instructional television and online courses (II.1.b). The catalog and schedule clearly indicate the use of these systems, and the curriculum process includes a separate review of DE delivery systems. The college self study includes a planning agenda to address staffing levels in the DE Program, Information Services Department, Media Services Department, Professional Growth Center, and Delano Center. In discussion with DE staff, the need for additional staff was reiterated as a result of previous reductions coupled with program growth.

There are many participatory committees at the college with various plans. However, there is no institutional strategic plan connecting the various plans (II.A, II.A.1.a.-c and II.A.2.b).

The college catalog indicates the degree programs include focused study in at least one area of inquiry (II.A.4). Vocational programs were some of the first programs to go through the revised program review process, according to the schedule of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. Information on the college website and in the college catalog as well as brochures effectively describes the career pathways available to students enrolled in these programs (II.A.5).

The college also has a variety of information sources for other educational programs and degrees that, again, include the college catalog, class schedule, and website. While the catalog and class schedule contain much important student information, and the website is user friendly, the latter contains little information about academic programs outside of Career and Technical Programs (II.A.6.c).

Codes of conduct are published in the college's student handbook as well as the District Board Policy Manual. Grievance and due process information is available to students in the catalog and the print and online versions of the student handbook, although this information is not provided in the class schedule (II.A.7.a.-c).

### **Findings and Evidence: II.B Student Support Services**

In visits to Bakersfield College's Delano Center, support services appeared as they are described in the college self study. Although the support services are limited at this satellite center, they seem adequate for the time being. As the Center's enrollment grows, additional services will be needed here (II.B.1).

The college publishes a catalog that meets the list of accreditation standard requirements in the areas of general information, requirements, and major policies affecting students. However, it is implied that there is no current assessment of the catalog to determine if it is meeting the needs of students, employees, and the community. Additionally, in the future, as program-level SLOs are developed, their inclusion in the catalog may help to enhance student success at the college (II.B.2).

Programs such as the Bakersfield College Kern Shakespeare Festival and The Renegade Rip student newspaper encourage students to engage in personal and civic activities. A schedule for

regular presentations and workshops focusing on diversity issues is under development by the Diversity Task Force. Significantly, the college also is supportive of its student government, hosting the Student Leadership Conference earlier in the year (II.B.3.a.,b., and d).

Dissatisfaction in counseling services has been expressed in multiple surveys of faculty, staff, and students. These concerns indicate there is a lack of defined roles for counselors and advisors, which is impacting consistent service to first-time students. Analysis of these survey results are recorded in the Counseling Department Unit Plan. In the near future, the Counseling Department also will undergo program review, providing an opportunity for a comprehensive assessment (II.B.3.c).

The college partners with other institutions of higher education. As an example, the Bakersfield College/California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB) Satellite Transfer Center provides students with the opportunity to meet with university counselors to discuss transfer details such as financial aid and registration. The college also was responsive to student satisfaction surveys in 2003 and 2005 that indicated students would like more assistance with the registration process; additional registration computers subsequently were provided for student use.

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee oversees the program review process at Bakersfield College and has a schedule for reviewing all programs within a six-year cycle. The Disabled Students Programs and Services and Assessment/Placement have completed comprehensive program reviews, based on data, to pilot new guidelines for student services programs. Review of all other student services programs is scheduled over the next few years (II.B.4).

### **Findings and Evidence: II.C Library and Learning Support Services**

Although the Bakersfield College Library collection is old, student satisfaction with library services has rated high in surveys. During a visit to the library, it appeared well organized and effective for meeting the needs of students and instruction (II.C.1.a., b, and c). Library services at the college's Delano Center, however, are not equitable at this time.

All library and learning resource areas at the college participate in the Educational Master Plan process. This academic year, the library will begin its six-year program review cycle, which includes program-level learning outcomes. The development of these learning outcomes and completion of the program review will be important to the maintenance and improvement of the college's library services in view of the increasing use of technology, changes in student demographics, and needs for additional resources (II.C.2).

### **Conclusions**

Bakersfield College is positioning itself as a leader in SLOs, as evidenced by its work at the course level and its entry into development of SLOs for programs, general education, and the institution. Course and program quality and effectiveness also are assessed, and a clear curriculum review process is in place.

However, connections do not formally exist between these major efforts and a strategic planning-budgeting process for the college. The District Strategic Plan is ready to provide guidance for new work in this direction.

Among the college's many healthy and diverse programs is a growing DE program (the value of which is emphasized in Standard III.C of this report). However, the growth of this program, which provides innovative opportunities for the college, is hampered by staffing challenges.

The college's library has repeatedly received high ratings from students. Yet students attending the satellite Delano Center are not able to benefit from the services of this successful program at the current time.

### **Commendations**

The team commends the college for its broad-based efforts to implement course student learning outcomes assessment.

The team commends the college for its partnership with the new high school located next to the Delano Center.

### **Recommendations**

2. In order to meet the standard and to maintain quality and implement program and service improvements, the team recommends the college expand its efforts to implement, and assess student learning outcomes at the program and institutional levels (Standards II.A.1, II.A.3, II.B, II.B.4, and II.C).
3. In order to meet the standard and ensure a coordinated and integrated approach to achieving the goals and priorities adopted by the governing board, the team recommends the District Strategic Plan be used to direct the college's strategic focus and Educational Master Plan (Standards II.A, II.B, & II.C). [This is a districtwide recommendation.]
4. In order to meet the standards, the team recommends the college develop and articulate an institutional strategic planning framework with links between campus planning, assessment, program review, curriculum, and budget processes. In addition, the college should develop a system to provide information on programs, finances, and these processes on a continuous basis to planning participants (Standards II.A, II.B, II.B.1, II.B.3, II.C, II.C.1.c, and Standard III.D).
5. In order to meet the standard and ensure equitable student access and support at all locations and for all delivery methods, the team recommends the college evaluate student and learning support services and distance education staffing (Standards II.B.1, II.B.3.a,c II.B.4.b, II.C.1, and II.C.1.c).

## **Standard III Resources**

### **General Observations**

Human Resources – Bakersfield College hiring procedures are clearly stated in the district policy manual, and the district’s Human Resources Office works with administration and faculty members to ensure uniformity throughout these procedures. The college’s new faculty evaluation process will be evaluated next year by faculty and management as they also discuss ways to include progress with learning outcomes in the process. On the other hand, the college and district currently do not have a written code of professional ethics for all personnel, and there are no apparent plans for the college to ensure that steps will be taken to hire a workforce that more appropriately reflects the service population of Bakersfield College. Because of inadequate resources allocated to staff development, it additionally is questionable whether the college’s professional development activities are adequately meeting needs (III.A).

Physical Resources – Given that the Bakersfield College campus consists of facilities and infrastructure systems that are mostly over 50 years old, it appears to be a well-maintained and safe environment. The college’s Delano Center and Weill Center are more modern facilities, which also reflect thoughtful care. The college maintains a facilities master plan and its Five Year Capital Outlay Plan is updated on an annual basis. All instructional and student support facilities appear to be sufficient for current and projected capacities (III.B).

Technology Resources – It is evident that technology is important to managing Bakersfield College, to delivering instruction to students, and even to attracting students to enroll. The college’s Educational Master Plan incorporates unit plans of the Information Services Department, which focuses on ways that technology helps the college function, and of Media Services, which assist with instruction and student learning. Specifically on the instructional side, the college’s technology-based Distance Education (DE) Program is experiencing healthy growth. In college course evaluations, students also have reported that they would not have been able to enroll if not for the delivery of instruction via television or computer (III.C).

Financial Resources – Despite the financially trying times of recent years, Bakersfield College has been able to overcome major short falls in the state community college allocation process and has effectively improved its financial status and planning-budgeting systems. It has met the challenge of revenue reductions by tailoring its programs to changed circumstances and successfully positioned for an enrollment rebound. By its own choice, it has encouraged more accountability and opened up its college financial planning process for substantially increased shared governance participation (III.D.1). Additionally, the college’s financial management system is linked to the district’s system within which generally accepted accounting practices are used, thereby “opening up” financial management and budgeting operations. The college has a business services operation that handles day-to-day college transactions except for the district’s centralized purchasing and human resources functions. The move to a planning-driven budget and allocation process at the college has generated a need for more current and factual financial and fiscal information (III.D.2).

### **Findings and Evidence: III.A Human Resources**

The Kern Community College District Board of Trustees has adopted hiring criteria for faculty, classified staff, and administrators. Faculty applicants must meet qualifications listed in the district's policy manual or equivalent requirements developed by the academic senate. Job descriptions for classified and confidential/management positions are defined and regulated by district board policy (III.A.1.a, II.A.3.a,b).

All full-time faculty, classified, and confidential/management employees are evaluated on a regular basis. Although board policy provides an evaluation schedule for adjunct faculty, evaluations have not been completed on a consistent basis for this employee group (III.A.1.b).

An updated district faculty evaluation process is in its first year. The following areas are included for consideration and discussion in the evaluation process: learning styles, managing the learning environment, scoring rubrics, learning outcomes, measuring student outcomes and active learning strategies. Although various documents throughout the district and campus cite general and/or specific ethical (or unethical) behaviors, no one document directly mentions a code of ethics for all employees (III.A.1.c and III.A.1.d).

The college met its district-allocated, full-time faculty obligation (FTFO) in 2005-2006 and expects to exceed the allocated FTFO for 2006-2007. Administrative and classified vacancies have been left unfilled and additional hiring of new positions has been delayed as a result of financial considerations. Administration in various departments has been reorganized, requiring personnel to take on additional responsibilities. Although personnel, particularly classified and administrative staff, have assumed a greater volume of work, indications are that critical functions of the college are being performed (III.A.2).

While official personnel files are maintained in the district's Human Resources Office, all indications are that the college provides adequate security and confidentiality of the personnel records (III.A.3.b). Though the college provides a variety of cultural activities, including cultural awareness days and disability awareness month, there exists no planning agenda to ensure the hiring of a more diverse population of full-time faculty to reflect the student population (III.A.4 and III.A.4.b). Although there was some concern expressed regarding communication on the campus, there was no concern shared regarding the integrity of treatment of any of the college constituents (III.A.4.c).

The college provides flex days and classified and faculty professional development programs. However, minimal funding for staff development activities is provided for employees. As identified in the planning agenda, during the budget planning process for 2007-08, the college will consider including a line item for staff development to fund conferences, courses, and other professional growth opportunities for its employees (III.A.4, III.A.4.a, and III.A.5). The college uses the outcomes of the Educational Master Plan and program review processes to integrate human resources and institutional planning (III.A.6).

### **Findings and Evidence: III.B Physical Resources**

Bakersfield College provides safe and sufficient physical resources at its primary campus, at the Weill Institute (downtown Bakersfield), and at its Delano Center. Though its main campus is

aging and needs modernization and infrastructure improvements, the facilities appear to be adequate in support of the instructional and student services programs. Structures and systems have been built and installed to rigorous state standards (III.B.1). Overall, the instructional facilities capacity-to-load seems sufficient with adequate capacity to handle increased enrollments. Future facility plans include modernization and system upgrades on the Bakersfield campus and an increase in laboratory classroom capacity at the Delano Center (III.B.1.a)

Within limits of a combination of aging infrastructure and facilities, Bakersfield College appears to be reasonably well maintained, clean, and secure. The campus security system, which functions continually 24-hours-per-day, contributes to this positive learning environment. (III.B.1.b)

The facilities planning process, including the development of a Bakersfield College facilities master plan in 2004, has honored input by faculty, administration, and staff. The inclusive master plan development involved constituent-group representation at both the college and district levels. Due to a lack of financial resources, the college was unable to either modernize its instructional facilities or upgrade its infrastructure systems for a number of years. With the recent passage of Measure G, the college and district now are in a better position to improve instructional and support facilities (III.B.1).

As one of the older California community colleges, Bakersfield College maintains a number of facilities that are over 50 years old and, therefore, simply out-of-date. Since the last accreditation visit, the district passed Measure G, a major construction general obligation bond that will provide \$153 million to help maintain and upgrade facilities to modern, high technology-driven structures. To this end, the district and college engaged professional, educational facilities consultants to assist in identifying short-term scheduled maintenance needs and in developing a long-term facilities master plan (III.B.2).

Along with this progress, however, there is a recurring concern over the apparent slowness or non-responsiveness to both major and minor repair matters at the college. While the college currently is striving to develop a more effective scheduled maintenance repair schedule that communicates back to facilities occupants and program users in a timely fashion, it has been slow in development (III.B.2).

Because the Bakersfield Campus has sufficient classroom capacity at this time, the emphasis for the future there is on modernization and rehabilitation projects, including expansion of instructional and support technology systems and equipment. On the other hand, a new laboratory classroom facility will be constructed at the college's Delano Center to accommodate the more specialized nature of its enrollments (III.B.2.a).

As part of the college's planning agenda, it has been suggested that facilities and operations personnel be involved in the initial planning of all campus building remodels and equipment installations. This is a prudent and worthwhile suggestion as it supports both the total cost of ownership of new facilities and equipment and it aids in the proper knowledge-based maintenance of new and/or upgraded facilities and infrastructure (III.B.2.a). It is further suggested, as part of the college's plan-driven budgeting process, that the facilities support

budgets be increased to properly provide additional supplies, equipment, and materials in for the maintenance and operation of college facilities.

Physical resource needs are integrated with institutional planning through annual division plans. The Facilities and Operations Department includes the needs identified in the division plans into its plan for staffing, supplies, and equipment (III.B.2.b).

### **Findings and Evidence: III.C Technology**

Much is being done in technology at Bakersfield College with the intent of contributing to efficient operations and effective instruction. The college's Educational Master Plan 2006-07 includes the Information Services Department Unit Plan, with a mission statement that includes the following: "The Information Services Department's goal is to provide a reliable technological environment that allows students, faculty and staff to carry out the mission of the college more efficiently . . ." The Educational Master Plan also features the Media Services Department Unit Plan, with a mission statement that includes: "Media Services provides media technology, resources and support to assist with student learning, instruction, video production, videoconferencing and instructional television for faculty, staff and students to more effectively enhance the Bakersfield College mission of student success . . ." (III.C.1).

Technology clearly plays a valuable role in instruction at the college as further demonstrated by other evidence as well. The college's Distance Education Annual Report for 2004-05 reports a nine percent increase in student enrollment (duplicated head count) from the previous year in distance education classes that depend on technology. College course evaluations during the fall of 2005 additionally show large percentages of students would not have been able to enroll in their instructional television or online courses if not for the modality. The value of technology for learning additionally is cited in the college self study that reports Distance Education (DE) courses positively impact enrollment at nominal costs. Significantly, the study goes on to state that these non-traditional courses will continue to grow faster than courses in the rest of the college's programs (III.c.1.a).

The college's technology services also received high ratings in 2005 from students responding to surveys about their DE classes provided on television and online. Fifty percent of the instructional television students gave technology services a rating of excellent or above average. Seventy-five percent of the online students gave the same excellent or above-average ratings. Among these groups, 59% of the instructional television students also said they would not have been able to take their courses if they had not been offered on television. Forty-five percent of the online students either agreed strongly or just agreed that the technical delivery system made the difference for them too (III.C.1.a).

The college self study states that insufficient campus funding has limited the ability to provide effective training. Minimal details about staff development opportunities in the area of technology tend to support this. Interestingly, however, the college has not chosen to pursue any further action in this regard, as also relayed in the self study (III.C.1.b).

Because of budgetary constraints, the college has not been able to sustain its computer replacement schedule that is part of the college Educational Master Plan. The self study also

notes that, although the technology support staff are meeting campus needs, they are “stretched to the limit,” with each staff member supporting over five times the number of students that are supported on average by community college technology staff in the state. Additional measures also are being researched to maintain data and network security (III.C.1.c).

The self study goes on to characterize the working relationship between campus and district technology staff as “strained” when it comes to distance education in particular. Consequently, when a consulting firm suggested re-centralization of technology services in 2005, there was concern among campus personnel (III.C.1.d).

The Kern County Community College District Information Technology Plan, which was completed in 1996, easily could be considered dated in the rapidly changing arena of technology. Three years after the completion of this plan, technology services were decentralized from the district office, with responsibilities divided between the district and campuses. The Districtwide Information Technology Committee and Bakersfield College Information Services and Instructional Technology Committee currently play roles in plan implementation. While there may be satisfaction with the change to this structure, as stated in the college self study, no substantial supporting evidence was presented by the college. These and other technology staff working relationships are worthy of consideration as the college works on new campus-based technology planning in the near future (III.C.2).

Technology planning is integrated with institutional planning through the Learning Resource and Information Technology (LRIT) Master Plan. The LRIT Master Plan is part of the college Educational Master Plan (III.C.2).

#### **Findings and Evidence: III.D.1 Financial Resources – Integrated Financial Planning**

Bakersfield College has moved towards an integrated planning-budgeting process that is guided by the district and college mission and goals. This process is driven primarily by the Bakersfield College Educational Master Plan (EMP) and the District’s Strategic Initiatives and Action Plans (III.D.1.a).

For the past three years, the district and its colleges have been restructuring budget-allocation models to include program input based on accurate data and realistic planning assumptions. This restructuring is ongoing as the college and the district continue to work on model elements that create an open, informative financial accountability system. Meanwhile, the college also has begun to use its EMP, annually updated through participatory governance, as the primary source to drive both short-term and long-term programmatic budget decisions and resource distribution. Included in the college planning-budgeting process is an analysis of actual and projected enrollment, revenues, and expenditures (III.D.1.b).

Progress has been uneven and slow towards satisfying a recommendation from the last accreditation visit in 2000 (Recommendation 6), calling for improved and timely financial information that clarifies the required level of support for all essential functions at the college. For example, since 2000, the district has moved on and off the state “Watch List” because of its low budget reserve balance, retrenching to less than 1 percent in 2001-2002, incurring operating deficits in 2001 and 2002, and reducing \$4 million in expenditures in 2003. These events,

coupled with some audit concerns, stimulated the district and the college to restructure their financial planning process (III.D.1.c).

More recently, it was decided that the college and district needed to “open up” and restructure planning and budgeting processes to link programmatic needs to financial decisions. In its 2004 Midterm Report, the college reported that financial information and collegial consultation had improved greatly. This was linked to development of the Budget Allocation Task Force that uses budget assumptions and priorities. Since then, and with a revised board policy requiring a 5 percent reserve margin, the college has stabilized its finances and assisted the district in attaining a 2005-2006 reserve level of 5.89 percent.

These efforts have helped to better inform both the budget decision-making process as well as the college community about that process (III.D.1.d).

Yet concerns remain. As noted in the self study, Senate meeting minutes, and College Council surveys, general dissatisfaction continues with the existing budget allocation. This allocation model has been problematic for college faculty, administrators, and staff because it fixes general allocation support at an earlier percentage of the district budget without considering the impact of changed environmental factors such as enrollment growth, program development, as well as the impact of earlier, inaccurate full-time equivalent student accounting data (III.D.1). Hence, there is a desire to revise the allocation model to reflect more accurate data inputs and provide for better informed planning-budget decisions. It is noteworthy that the redefinition of the budget allocation model is on the college’s planning agenda and is supported universally by various college constituent groups. Various college planning and budgeting committees, in their documents and minutes, also acknowledge that the shift to a planning-driven budget process is a large and complex undertaking for the college.

### **Findings and Evidence: III.D.2 – Financial Resources (Financial Management System)**

Since the 2000 accreditation, the college and district have generally improved their fund management and financial record keeping. After appointing a permanent internal auditor, audit exceptions and findings appear to be on the decline. Upon reviewing the past several years of independent external audits, it appears that financial controls have improved; the most recent audit also found the college in general compliance with federal and state reporting requirements. A summary review of prior audits indicates a clear trend of the college’s and district’s intent to continually strengthen financial management controls. There appear to be no significant material weaknesses in reporting structures. However, due to workload issues, it has been noted that more timely financial records are needed and the year-end accounting function needs be properly completed to allow for a timely and efficient audit (III.D.2.a).

This evaluation affirms that the college has made a concerted effort to distribute financial information through various core planning-budgeting committees. Institutional committees, including the College Council and Institutional Effectiveness Committee, frequently receive current financial and fiscal data. Financial information also is provided to instructional, student service, and support units as they prepare planning activity reports and projections. An interesting by-product of this increased reporting of financial data is the nearly universal college-wide expressed desire for continuous education about financial statements and financial management procedures. This is a case of more information leading to more interest (III.D.2.b).

Cash management and flow are current and reflect sound financial management practices. As noted earlier, the college has moved off the state's "Watch List," and has returned to a policy of maintaining a minimum 5 percent unrestricted general fund balance. The college has stabilized its financial condition and has audited risk management procedures, indicating sound fiscal practices. It is anticipated that with a well-defined planning and budgetary process and a refined budget allocation model, the college will be better positioned to anticipate changed state and local financial conditions and their related impacts (III.D.2.c).

Bakersfield College provides oversight control and management of categorical and other restricted funds, including grants, financial aid, contractual agreements, and other sources of external funding. Federal and state requirements are both stringent and complex. Though no material weaknesses have been identified in the oversight control and management of these funds, the college has had to occasionally review and strengthen its internal controls in order to maintain compliance. Again, with the advent of an experienced internal auditor, the processes have been strengthened and the college continues to work on grant implementation processes. District and college business service personnel have acknowledged the need to better inform the planning and budgeting committees as well as end users. The college's practices generally conform to suitable accounting and fund management practices (III.D.2.d).

The strengthening of internal auditing and controlling functions has assisted the district and college in reducing risk and improving the accounting for auxiliary activities such as the Student Health Center, Child Care Center, parking funds, cafeteria operation, and bookstore operation. Again, no general material weaknesses in these procedures are apparent. As indicated earlier, however, workload issues may reduce the desired timeliness of these and other reporting functions (III.D.2.e).

Board Fiscal Policy 3A9 addresses the need for contractual agreements that benefit the college and district in the pursuit of educational mission and purpose. Contractual agreements conform to recognized accounting and reporting procedures and are acted upon by the district board in a public manner. External contracts, leases, and acquisition arrangements are subject to audit and the implementation of internal financial management controls (III.D.2.f).

Consistent with the planning-budgeting processes and use of the existing budget allocation model, the college is continuously evaluating its financial management processes, with evaluative results used to refine and improve practices and systems. The move to a plan-based budget allocation system has necessitated the need for more accurate data and revenue and expenditure forecasts. This quest for distribution of detailed financial reports, enrollment trends, and forecasts is burdensome yet necessary in monitoring the progress of a large, complex public higher education institution (III.D.2.g).

All parties involved in the current review of the budget allocation model acknowledge a degree of frustration with its base planning assumptions and recognize the need for redesigning the model. However, through its experience with the model and the implementation of a plan-driven budget process, the college increasingly assesses its use of financial resources. Review of the

model and attendant processes increases the opportunity for financial resource management review and improvement (III.D.3).

### **Conclusions**

**Human Resources** – Human Resources is an important function in any organization and particularly in an educational organization such as Bakersfield College. Policies and plans also are vital for keeping this function on target in such areas as employee equity, diversity, and evaluation. The district policy manual provides one level of guidance at the college, and development of special procedures in areas such as faculty evaluation provides another level. More is necessary, however. Currently, there is no plan for attaining a more diverse staff at the college, there is little budgeted for professional staff development, and adjunct faculty are not evaluated on a regular schedule. Additionally, the standard in this area calls for a written code of ethics for all employees, which does not exist at the college at this time.

**Physical Resources** – Despite the age of many campus buildings, Bakersfield College facilities and grounds have been maintained at a commendable level. Contradicting this external appearance, however, are internal concerns about the slowness or non-responsiveness regarding both minor and major repairs throughout the campus. As the college begins to invest the proceeds of a recently approved local bond measure in facility and infrastructure system upgrades, it is especially important that the issue of regular maintenance be addressed. Both the internal college community and community at-large need to experience the reassurance that campus facilities are being maintained efficiently and expeditiously, given the infusion of new facility funding.

**Technology Resources** – Distance education is important to the population Bakersfield College serves in a vast service area. This also means that technology is important to that population and the college. The college has more reasons than most to make this type of instructional delivery mode work and even take it to new heights. The college therefore is encouraged to keep its special circumstance at the forefront when developing a new technology plan and when addressing responsibilities at the campus and district levels. The Technology Services and Media Services departments at Bakersfield College face the challenges of adequate staffing and equipment like many other colleges. Inversely, the two departments at the college also possess instructional programming opportunities like few others. This provides a natural incentive to proactively and collaboratively problem solve and create.

**Financial Resources** – Bakersfield College is the oldest and largest college among three in Kern County Community College District. College-wide, there has been a considerable investment of time and energy to undertake an open plan-based budget process. As a result of this effort and improved decision making, the college has corrected its financial direction and stabilized its funding. While not perfect nor fully implemented, the college's planning process has helped distribute much-needed financial information, led to refined enrollment management practices, and identified the need for continuous education about the intricacies of public community college finance.

## **Commendations**

The team commends the college for maintaining an attractive, safe, clean, and secure learning and working environment, especially given the trying circumstances of an aging physical plant and infrastructure system (Standard III).

The team commends the college and its faculty, administration, and staff for their continuous efforts to implement and refine a plan-driven budget process leading to better-informed financial management of college resources (Standard III).

## **Recommendations**

6. In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the college develop a planning agenda that will respond to anticipated staffing needs and reflect the changing demographics of the service area (Standard III.A, III.A.4.b).
7. In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the college provide adequate resources to ensure the institution meets the professional development activities needs of its personnel, including activities addressing diversity issues (Standard III.A, III.A.4.b, III.A.4.c, and Standard II.B.3.d).
8. In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the colleges evaluate adjunct faculty in a consistent, timely manner with procedures that assess current performance and promote improvement (Standard III.A.1.b). [This is a districtwide recommendation.]
9. In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the colleges, with appropriate districtwide input, develop a written code of ethics for all employees (Standard III.A.1.d). [This is a districtwide recommendation.]
10. In order to meet the standard, the team recommends the college, with district assistance, develop an effective facilities repair scheduling system with emphasis on rapid and clear response to repair and maintenance work order requests (Standard III.B.1.b).
11. In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the colleges, working with appropriate districtwide leadership and in consideration of the special conditions of the individual colleges within the district, complete the development, implementation, and assessment of the budget allocation model (Standards III.D.1.a-d, and III.D.3). [This is a districtwide recommendation.]

## **Standard IV Leadership and Governance**

### **General Comments**

Adequate information was not provided in the Bakersfield College Self Study to determine if all of Standard IV was met. The college president confirmed that the co-chairs of the self study had changed, disrupting the process. After extensive onsite research, it was determined that much of the evidence and processes regarding leadership and governance existed but had not been included in the study. The college has had several administrative changes in the past two years, including the president. In spite of these changes the overall morale at the college is extremely high and there is general satisfaction with the current status of the college. During the accreditation visit, the college staff was very helpful and a pleasure to work with.

### **Findings and Evidence: IV.A Decision-Making Rules and Processes**

Review of the systematic participative processes revealed that several instruments for empowerment and inclusion are in place. As an example, the Kern Community College District Governance Process has been adopted by the Chancellor's Executive Council and distributed to all colleges. The plan outlines the procedures to be followed for proposals to reach final disposition.

The Bakersfield College president and Academic Senate president co-chair the College Council, designed to oversee institutional planning and budget development. The Faculty Chairs/Directors Council is composed of all educational administrators, directors, department chairs, and faculty managers from Student Services and the Office of Student Learning. This Council prioritizes as well as recommends to the president a list of new and replacement faculty positions each budget year.

Although there are participatory governance systems in place at the college, the study revealed dissatisfaction with the process. It was mentioned repeatedly that there is a lack of consultation with the appropriate constituencies and that decision making is unilateral. (IV.A.2.a)

The planning agenda outlines the procedure for an evaluation of the College Council and its methods of communication in order to strive for continuous improvement of the institution's governance and decision-making structures and processes. In addition, a document will be prepared to clarify and formalize the role of the College Council. (IV.A.5)

Students are included on all of the governance committees. Their participation varies from year to year, based on the strength of their leadership.

The strategic plan was a good example of all constituencies working together to produce a planning document. The District Strategic Plan was developed with input from over 150 participants representing faculty, classified staff, administration, students, and board members. The process yielded specific Strategic Planning Initiatives. These were based on the results of surveys and other assessment instruments. The plan is also in line with the California Community College System Strategic Initiatives. The next step will be to revise college strategic plans using the district plan as a guide (IV.A.3, IV.A.5).

Bakersfield College complies with accrediting commission standards, policies, and guidelines. The college has responded to the previous recommendation from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (IV.A.4).

### **Findings and Evidence: IV.B Board and Administrative Organization**

The Kern Community College District Board of Trustees clearly has developed policies and procedures to maintain financial stability of the district and has demonstrated its commitment to student learning through its actions. The board also conducts an effective evaluation process for the chancellor who, in turn, develops objectives in conjunction with the strategic plan. The board reviews these objectives and evaluates the chancellor's performance annually. The board considers this process to be effective (IV.B.1).

The board members interviewed conveyed that they had unabridged access to the chancellor and that she is extremely open and willing to share information regarding the important decisions regarding the district.

Evidence revealed that the board is an independent policy-making body that, at times, must make decisions that are not popular in the area they represent. There was clear evidence of this at a recent board meeting dealing with the relocation of faculty from one college to another. It also was noted that, even if a board decision is made with a split vote, members function as a united Board of Trustees (IV.B.1.a).

The board currently relies on the administration through the participatory governance policy to evaluate and bring policy revisions to the board. One board member commented that she would like to see the board policy book revised and streamlined. A review of this book revealed numerous outdated items. As an example, one policy gave the college president the authority to approve all college textbooks and instructional materials. There is not a mechanism for regular policy review. Currently, the administration plans to respond to local, state, or federal legal issues to begin the revision process (IV.B.1.e).

Board members discussed the various methods of orientation and in-service training. A review of the board members' schedule revealed they have attended numerous conferences, workshops, work-study sessions, and board retreats as well as the Community College League of California trustee orientation. Board members interviewed demonstrated knowledge of their role. They also demonstrated clear understanding of the operation of a very complex organization. Board committees have been formed in the major areas of institutional organization. In addition to the board committees, individual board members serve on various districtwide committees. As an example, one of the Board members serves on the audit committee. Also worth recognition is that one of the district's board members serves on the California Community College System Board of Governors (IV.B.1.f).

It was noted in the college self study that the board did not have a self-evaluation process. A proposed district board policy has been drafted and will be presented to the board for first reading in the near future. The evaluation instrument to be used in the evaluation process covered by this policy draft is still under review. The chancellor provided models from several organizations, including the Community College League of California and Association of

California Community College Administrators for consideration. The board's current code of ethics will be expanded to include a process for dealing with violations. This also is expected to be completed in the near future (IV.B.1.g. and h).

Board members indicated they had been involved in several levels of the accreditation process. One member chaired a subcommittee of the Board during the study process, and all members reviewed and approved the final drafts of the study (IV.B.1.i).

The college president indicated he has considerable autonomy in making decisions that directly affect his college, especially given the fact that Bakersfield College is part of a large and complex community college district. The president has final authority over the budget process after the allocation is received from the district and recommends to the board personnel and organizational decisions (IV.B.2)

The president, although fairly new in this position, has been with the district for some time. He demonstrated a clear understanding of the needs of his college community while acknowledging the issues of operating a large district with small rural centers and very low student headcount.

There was no evidence to indicate that the district/system clearly delineates and communicates the operational responsibilities and functions of the district/system from those of the colleges and consistently adheres to this delineation. Although the chancellor has an understanding of the delineation of roles, it is not articulated in a formal or informal document and has not been disseminated to the district or college communities (IV.B.3).

Under the leadership of the current chancellor, the district is redesigning the services it provides for its three colleges. As an example, the Human Resources Department is in the process of reorganization with the cost-saving goal of providing leadership at each college while also maintaining a centralized function. The same can be said for the Information Technology and Financial Services areas. The organization map alluded to above will aid this process (IV.B.3.b).

The budget allocation model (addressed in the Standard III section of this report) reportedly will be revised by December 2006. It is imperative to note that the district has made great strides in obtaining financial stability (IV.B.3.c).

### **Conclusions**

Standard IV of the study lacked a thorough analysis, description, and evidence. However, after on-site review, it was determined that the majority of the sub-standards comprising this standard were met.

As noted, the Kern Community College District is a complex organization. It is imperative that processes and mapping be documented to ensure continuity. This organizational mapping also will help each college articulate its distinctive role along with the district's collaborative role.

The board has made great strides in improving the training of board members. An evaluation process is under development and should be ready for approval by the end of the 2006 calendar year.

Evidence exists that the college has attempted to improve the communications process through the use of the College Council. However, lack of communication still remains a concern.

The College Council provides a relatively new process for dealing with participative governance. The council is evaluated through a college-wide survey annually. An executive report is generated, and the council determines if the needs of the college are being met. Ultimately, a decision is made if processes should be modified or if elimination should be recommended.

### **Commendations**

The team commends the college and district leadership for a strong commitment to the inclusion of student learning outcomes in educational programs as well as recent assessment and evaluation efforts (Standard IV).

The team commends the district's Board of Trustees for its commitment and service as well as its fulfillment of board-specific recommendations from the previous accreditation team (Standard IV).

### **Recommendations**

12. In order to meet the standard, the team recommends the College Council develop and adopt a formal document that contains by-laws, purpose of body, and membership; delineates function in regards to other participatory governance bodies; and includes other procedural guidelines (Standard IV.A.2).
13. In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the district Board of Trustees adopt and implement the self-evaluation process being developed and routinely administer the process. In addition, the Board should revise the current ethics policy to include a procedure for dealing with violations of the policy (Standards IV.B.1.g & IV.B.1.h). [This is a districtwide recommendation.]
14. In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the colleges, in conjunction with districtwide leaders, complete an organizational map that clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities between the entities and identifies an evaluation process that will provide for ongoing improvement (Standard IV.B.3). [This is a districtwide recommendation.]