

Victor Valley Community College District

**Accreditation Project:
Gap Analysis, Report, and
Recommendations**

November 14, 2011

**Matthew C. Lee, Ph.D.
PPL, Inc.**

Table of Contents

Preamble	3
Thematic Summary of Major Consultant Recommendations	5
Background: Accreditation Sanctions	6
Review and Analysis Process	7
College Responses to Team Recommendations	9
General Observations.....	9
General Consultant Recommendations.....	13
Team Recommendation 1: Mission and Educational Master Plan.....	16
Team Recommendation 2: Integrated Planning and Continuous Improvement	18
Team Recommendation 3: Student Learning Outcomes.....	31
Team Recommendation 4: Campus Climate.....	40
Team Recommendation 5: Distance Education.....	46
Team Recommendation 6: Fiscal Plans and Information	49
Team Recommendation 7: Leadership and Participation in Governance.....	54
Team Recommendation 8: Board Practices and Evaluation	59
Accrediting Commission Action Probabilities	62
Summary of Recommended Actions by Priority Category	63
Other Accrediting Commission Recommendations for Victor Valley College.....	64

**Victor Valley Community College District
Accreditation Project
Gap Analysis, Report, and Recommendations
Matthew C. Lee, Ph.D.
PPL, Inc.
November 14, 2011**

Preamble

Victor Valley College provides excellent educational opportunities to a significant population in the High Desert Region of San Bernardino County. It is also a major player in the economic vitality of the area. Based on the information gathered for this report, it is clear that College employees are deeply interested and invested in serving their students effectively.

In response to the recommendations issued by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) over the last two accreditation cycles, the College took steps on many fronts to improve its effectiveness in preparation for the March 2011 visit. Members of the campus community, judging from the Self-Study, clearly believed that the College was in compliance with ACCJC Standards, and were unpleasantly surprised and extremely disappointed when the Commission placed Victor Valley on Probation, especially after having removed it from Warning in January 2009.

Since learning of the ACCJC evaluation team's concerns, the College and its constituency groups have taken some significant steps to address them. For example, the Board of Trustees has adopted a revised ethics policy that fully resolves Commission Recommendation 1. Many faculty, staff, and management are gaining a fuller understanding of what needs to be done to respond to the other Recommendations, and have come together in groups to help move forward toward resolution of the problems. However, much remains to be done, and it is unlikely that the College can fully resolve all the Recommendations, which are numerous and complex, by March 15, 2012.

Taking Action to Close the Gap

The main purpose of the *Gap Analysis, Report, and Recommendations* is to identify actions that the College can take to close the gap between where it is now and where it needs to be, in terms that are more concrete and detailed than the Commission's Recommendations. The aim is not just to resolve those Recommendations and gain reaffirmation of accreditation—to “get out of trouble”—but more importantly, to improve the effectiveness of Victor Valley College permanently. The consultant recommendations listed in each section are designed to facilitate planning and implementation of lasting, positive change. If the College follows them, it will be in a position to demonstrate resolution of many issues in the March 2012 Follow-Up Report, and to provide specific plans and timelines for resolving the rest.

Most of the report is organized under the Recommendations as shown in the Commission's Action Letter of June 30, 2011. Beneath each Recommendation, I have reproduced the ACCJC Standards to which it refers. To formulate and execute the most productive responses to each Recommendation, the College needs to understand those Standards as well as the language of the Recommendation itself.

Even a casual reader will see that the number and scope of consultant recommendations in the report are considerable. In my professional judgment, all are important, and the College should follow all of them as best it can, or take equivalent actions that will produce the same effects. However, I recognize that not all that needs to be done can be done all at once. Therefore, to help the College in developing specific action plans and timelines for the next 17 months, I have suggested a priority category for each the actions under my recommendations as follows:

- **Priority 1:** The recommended action is required as soon as possible to reach full resolution of the associated team Recommendation(s), or to demonstrate significant progress toward it, in time for the March 15, 2012 Follow-Up Report. This category may also apply to actions that are relatively straightforward to carry out, and can thus produce meaningful progress with minimal effort. Priority 1 actions comprise 41 percent of the total.
- **Priority 2:** The recommended action, though just as important, is not quite as urgent for a variety of reasons. It might take a bit longer to get started, or it might be more complex, or it should follow a Priority 1 action. It might also be needed before a Priority 3 action can be undertaken. In any case, work still must be substantially complete in time to demonstrate full resolution of the associated team Recommendation(s) by March 2013. Priority 2 actions comprise 43 percent of the total.
- **Priority 3:** The need for the recommended action is not as pressing as it is for Priority 1 and Priority 2 items. If necessary or appropriate, work may begin later—perhaps even after the evaluation team visit—but it must still be substantially complete in time to demonstrate full resolution of the associated team Recommendation(s) by March 2013. Priority 3 actions comprise 16 percent of the total.

To assist the College further, I have listed by number all the actions under my recommendations by priority category in a table at the end of the report.

Finally, it is the nature of a report such as this to focus more on the specific steps that still need to be taken than on what is already in good shape or well underway. Consequently, readers will not see as much coverage of all the many positive aspects of the College as might appear in, say, a history of the institution. I urge readers to view the report not as a source of discouragement, but rather as a call to action, to move toward a brighter future for the College, its personnel, and most importantly, its students.

Thematic Summary of Major Consultant Recommendations

This report contains a large number of consultant recommendations aimed at helping Victor Valley College fully resolve the evaluation team's Recommendations and, more importantly, improve institutional effectiveness in the long term. The following list, which highlights the principal themes that characterize those consultant recommendations, is intended to help the reader understand, from the first, the scope of the issues facing the College, and the breadth and depth of actions that will be necessary to address them.

- **Systematize**
 - Formalize and document all processes and structures for assessment, planning, and decision-making at the College.
 - Base plans and decisions on sound qualitative or quantitative evidence.
- **Execute**
 - Follow through consistently on all documented processes. If changes prove necessary, then follow the formal process for making those changes.
- **Evaluate and Improve**
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of all major College functions, using concrete evidence and sound analysis and interpretation. Improve them if the results demonstrate the need for improvement, and begin the cycle again.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of all processes and structures for assessment, planning, and decision-making at the College, using concrete evidence and sound analysis and interpretation. Improve them if the results demonstrate the need for improvement; and begin the cycle again.
- **Engage in Dialogue**
 - Communicate, share information, and address issues directly and in the open.
 - In all evaluation and improvement processes, engage in meaningful dialogue about the issues among the appropriate groups, organizational units, and individuals, and seriously consider the results of that dialogue in formulating recommendations.
- **Move On**
 - Recognize the destructive capacity of holding onto old grudges and nursing old wounds, and move beyond them.
- **Get Together**
 - Understand that the severity of the problems confronting the College require that everyone work in concert toward the solutions. Participate.
 - Communicate. Share ideas and share burdens. Give praise where praise is due. Celebrate good work and successes.
 - Find common cause in the long-term welfare of the College and its students.

Background: Accreditation Sanctions

At its June 2011 meeting, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges placed Victor Valley College on Probation. The Commission made its decision in part because of certain issues that it found the College had failed to address adequately in response to past evaluation team recommendations.

As noted in the Commission's *Accreditation Reference Handbook*, Probation is a stronger sanction than Warning. It indicates that the institution actually "deviates significantly from the Commission's Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or Commission policies, but not to such an extent as to warrant a Show Cause order or the termination of accreditation." Show Cause, the strongest sanction short of termination, is a Commission order to the institution to "show cause why its accreditation should be continued." A college under any of these three sanctions does retain its accreditation.

The final sanction, in the absence of sufficient corrective action, is termination of accreditation. U.S. Department of Education rules require termination if an institution fails to come into compliance with Accreditation Standards within a two-year period, though the Commission may grant additional time for good cause.

It is important to note that the Commission does not have to follow the sequence of steps set forth above. It has the ability to terminate accreditation at any time if it concludes that the institution is significantly out of compliance with the Standards or the Eligibility Requirements.

I want to be very clear about all these Commission sanctions, not to frighten anyone, but to highlight the severe consequences of inadequate action, to call attention to the fact that the clock is ticking, and to convey a sense of urgency to the College community. As the reader will see below, Victor Valley has made some progress since the team's visit, but much more work is needed in numerous areas before the College is back in the Commission's good graces.

Review and Analysis Process

In this first phase of the larger accreditation project, my task was to evaluate the College's progress to date and make concrete recommendations on the direction of work needed to resolve all eight evaluation team Recommendations, seven of which the Commission cited in its Action Letter of June 30, 2011.

This report is based in part on my review and analysis of over 350 documents, including the following:

- The 2010 Accreditation Self-Study, Evaluation Report, Commission Action Letter, the College President's response, and selected other documentation of the accreditation process and results
- Documentation of VVC's state of readiness to resolve the Recommendations: Existing plans, schedules, responsibilities, and actions already taken
- District foundational statements, including the mission, vision, and values
- Selected minutes of College Council meetings
- The educational master plan, facilities master plan, technology master plan, and selected other plans as needed
- Samples of documents related to planning and program review at each organizational level
- Documentation of selected course, program, GE, and institutional student learning outcomes (SLOs), and of service outcomes and objectives
- Documentation of 17 course SLO assessments from four departments regarded by the evaluation team as most advanced in the SLO assessment and improvement cycle
- Documentation of selected resource allocation requests, actual allocations from the most recent available period, and dissemination and discussion mechanisms
- Documentation of campus climate and efforts to improve it, including survey findings, studies, and applicable meeting, forum, and discussion notes
- Documentation of College governance structures, processes, and evaluations thereof
- Collective bargaining contracts
- Documentation of distance education programs and services, along with draft advisory committee recommendations
- Existing plans for leadership development and succession, and for addressing current leadership needs
- Documentation of Board development activities and plans, Board members' participation in participatory governance committees, and Board evaluation practices
- Documentation of policies, structures, and processes associated with all the items listed above

In addition, I conducted structured interviews, some in multiple sessions and some in group sessions, with the following people:

Peter Allan	Cheryl Elsmore	Virginia Moran
Frederick Board	Lisa Harvey	Chris O’Hearn
Michael Butros	G.H. Javaheripour	Rolando Regino
Mark Clair	Tim Johnston	Frank Smith
Christopher Dustin	Lori Kildal	Fusako Yokotobi
Lisa Ellis		

I also interviewed the five members of the management meet-and-confer team as a group. I participated in one department chairs’ meeting, and held two 90-minute open forums attended by some 30-40 people in total (including full-time faculty, part-time faculty, classified staff, students, and managers), to answer questions and solicit broader input. (Please note that I use “managers,” “management,” “administrators,” and “administration” interchangeably in this report to refer to both certificated and classified management personnel, unless I indicate otherwise.) I also received emails from and/or met on campus with several faculty and staff members who wished to share their observations about issues related to the evaluation team’s recommendations. Finally, I met with the College President and members of the Cabinet as a group.

The findings in this report thus rest on a substantial amount of evidence, and I am confident that they accurately reflect that evidence. However, I have not read every possible document, nor have I interviewed every employee and student. To the extent that the information I have analyzed is not sufficiently comprehensive, or not entirely representative of the College’s structures, processes, and issues, it is possible that my findings in some particulars might be subject to revision. Of course, it is up to the President and the College to decide what weight to give them, and how best to respond to my recommendations.

College Responses to Team Recommendations

The following two sections contain observations and consultant recommendations that apply to resolving multiple Commission Recommendations and improving institutional effectiveness overall.

General Observations

1. Probation is a very serious Commission sanction that requires immediate and sustained corrective action involving the entire campus community. Gaining full reaffirmation of accreditation is the business of everyone at the College, not just the relatively small subset of people who, as at every community college, typically perform most committee service. All employees need to recognize the gravity of this situation, and a greater proportion need to step up and offer constructive engagement and active assistance in moving the College forward.
2. Many of the Commission's Recommendations involve the establishment, documentation, and effective execution of formal processes related to institutional improvement, assessment, planning, implementation, governance, communication, climate, and decision-making in resource allocation and other areas. Several years ago, to the institution's credit, Victor Valley College began investing significant energy and resources in the establishment of such processes and associated structures, including the College Council, the PRAISE system, and SLO identification at the course and GE levels. However, the College has had difficulty making meaningful progress in sustaining these and other processes in systematic fashion, for several reasons.
 - a. **Informal Planning and Decision-Making:** Like many California community colleges, Victor Valley College, for its first several decades, evidently based its planning and decision-making mostly on informal, seat-of-the-pants, often hidden processes. That approach can work very well for a long time. But first-rate colleges no longer have the luxury of working informally any more, in part because they are increasingly constrained by external forces, from funding limitations to tightening regulations to accreditation standards. They must systematically adopt transparent best practices in institutional effectiveness in order to serve their students well and remain viable in the future. When they seek to do so, the change can be wrenching, and progress, when it occurs, is often in fits and starts, as it has been at Victor Valley over the last few years. One has only to compare the promising picture painted in the introduction to the final Focused Midterm Report of October 15, 2008 with the campus climate that prevails today to realize both the difficulty and the importance of sustaining progress over the long haul.
 - b. **Leadership Turnover:** The high rate of turnover among College leaders in recent years, as cited by the evaluation team and many interviewees, has made sustained progress that much more difficult. Inspired, inspiring, invested, stable leadership can help build and then apply the formal processes and structures necessary to move a college forward. On the other hand, a succession of leaders at multiple levels, especially in the absence of such formal processes and structures, often

- brings with it a succession of back-and-forth procedural changes that can leave middle managers, faculty, and staff feeling whipsawed, confused, and frustrated.
- c. Resistance to Improvement Processes: The College has also encountered some resistance to the implementation of some assessment and improvement processes. Part of that resistance is no doubt due to the changes I have just noted. And some is evidently related to the desire for additional compensation for the work necessarily involved in improving student learning and institutional effectiveness. The collective bargaining representatives of the full-time faculty, in fact, issued a demand to bargain on October 12, 2011, which has effectively halted progress on Recommendation 3, and potentially halted progress on some portions of Recommendation 2 as well.
 - d. Decline in the Feeling of Common Interest: Reportedly, individuals within departments work well together, but in recent years the feeling of being part of a College-wide community of common interest has declined. Each department focuses on its own needs and issues, as one would expect, but reportedly pays little attention to the needs and issues of other areas or of the College as a whole. Such “silos” are not uncommon at community colleges, but left untended they can easily undermine collective efforts to improve institution-wide performance and address institution-wide concerns—such as an accreditation sanction. Unless the problem is faced squarely and overcome, it can eventually lead to cross-departmental antagonisms that are poisonous to employees, students, and the long-term health of the institution.
3. Four of the Commission’s Recommendations relate to processes that are cyclical, and the Commission is seeking essentially the same end result in every context: Actual, documented implementation of institutional improvements based on the results of formal evaluation processes. As the Commission President said in the Action Letter, “The Follow-Up Report of March 15, 2012 should demonstrate that the institution has addressed the recommendations..., resolved the deficiencies, and now meets Accreditation Standards.” In other words, the Commission wants to see not just intentions or merely progress, but demonstrable implementation of improvements and completion of cycles. It wants to see processes institutionalized. Fully resolving the Commission’s urgent Recommendations in this fashion by March 2012 is a tall order for Victor Valley College that is virtually impossible to meet, in my judgment. However, it *is* possible, for each Recommendation that cannot be fully resolved by March 2012, for the College to develop a plan of action and a firm deadline for resolution.
 4. College employees often need concrete guidance in how each of them can help the institution respond to the Recommendations and move forward in the proper direction. Indeed, several people expressed that very idea in comments after my flex day presentation on September 9, 2011.
 5. The College Council functions as the top-level shared-governance body at the College. Its membership includes the College President, the three vice presidents, five other administrators, three classified managers, one department chair, and representatives of the Academic Senate (3), CSEA (3), Associated Students Board (ASB) (3), CTA (1), and AFT (1). It makes decisions on a consensus basis, though reportedly there is sometimes a lack of clarity about the nature of consensus.

6. Policies, Procedures, and Processes
 - a. **Aligning Policies, Procedures, and Practices:** Several policies and procedures related to the components of integrated planning do not appear to reflect actual practice at the College. For example, Administrative Procedure (AP) 3250 refers to a Staffing and Diversity Plan that does not exist, at least by that name. Board Policy (BP) 3250 requires annual review of the College's mission and goals, which has not occurred, although such a review is now underway. AP 4000, approved over two years ago, describes practices related to outcomes assessment and program review that still have not been implemented in systematic fashion. AP 1201 includes some committees that reportedly are no longer active. AP 1202 calls for closing the loop on overall institutional effectiveness with an annual analysis and dissemination of performance indicators, which does not appear to have occurred since 2009. The review and approval record contained in each of these documents is in some cases incomplete or unclear. The College Council is reportedly undertaking a review of some of these policies and procedures, but the scope of that review is unclear.
 - b. **Clarifying Responsibilities:** AP 1201 specifies that the College-wide shared-governance committees make their policy recommendations to the College Council and their recommendations on operational improvements to the President, and that the College Council in turn makes its recommendations on policy to the Board, and on operations and policy implementation to the President. This procedure also specifies that the Academic Senate make its recommendations on policy to the Board and on operations to the President. Nevertheless, the delineation between the shared-governance responsibilities of these bodies and the responsibilities of the President and his administration is reportedly unclear to many on campus.
 - c. **Sound Practice in Governance:** Exactly how decisions are actually made in relation to shared-governance processes at the College is similarly unclear, to many interviewees and others. The evaluation team found inconsistency in and a lack of clarity and transparency about shared-governance committee functions and their relationship to planning and decision-making, including resource allocation priorities. Documenting these governance structures and processes, adhering to documented practices in committee operations, evaluating the structures and processes on a regular basis, and making modifications as needed to make them more efficient and less burdensome, represent good practice and also meet ACCJC Standard IV.A.5.
 - d. The College Council has reportedly begun a process of review and revision of AP 1201 and possibly other policies and procedures related to governance.
7. Accreditation Coordination and Monitoring
 - a. **Standing Accreditation Committee:** There is no standing Accreditation Committee per se at Victor Valley. For the last self-study, the co-chairs of the standards subcommittees reportedly came together periodically to review progress, and the College Council reportedly reviewed drafts of sections and suggested changes. Once the Self-Study was submitted, the co-chairs group ceased its function. Accreditation issues, however, do not go away after the Self-Study is done;

- attention to them ought to be ongoing, and integrated with collegial planning processes.
- b. Service on Accreditation Visiting Teams for Other Colleges: The President, two of the Vice Presidents, one administrator, and a few faculty members have reportedly served on one or more accreditation evaluation teams at other colleges within the last three to five years. The extent to which other administrators, faculty, and staff have done so is unclear. Service on an accreditation team is an excellent way to gain perspective on one's own programs, services, and operations, and to gather ideas on best practices. It also provides invaluable insight on the evaluation process itself. I have no hard data to support the assertion, but in my view, colleges with a significant number of people who have served on teams in the recent past are almost inevitably more effective in their own accreditation self-studies and more successful in demonstrating to visiting teams their adherence to the Standards than colleges that lack such experience.
 - c. Providing Evidence: The evaluation team complained that in some cases, evidence was not as readily available to them as it should have been.
8. Information and Documentation
- a. Documenting Structures, Processes, and Progress: Documentation is a crucial step in formalizing structures, processes, plans, and implementation, and in demonstrating the institution's progress to the Commission. In essence, if it's not documented, it didn't happen and doesn't exist.
 - b. Sharing Information: People at the College are hungry for information about issues and decisions, judging from the interviews and forums, and would very much appreciate, for instance, learning at a staff meeting about what happened at the latest Board, Deans, Council, or other major meeting or conference from the supervisor or colleague who attended. However, such systematic, open, active communication about issues and decisions reportedly has been more the exception than the rule in recent years. Moreover, my own experience over the last few weeks, compared to my experience at other institutions, indicates that it is unusually difficult at this College to lay hands on consistent, authoritative information on issues and procedures. That difficulty, in my judgment, is attributable at least in part to several interrelated factors, some of which are addressed by consultant recommendations in this report: a relative lack of formal procedures, a dearth of systematic communication, and the effects of silos, all of which are noted above; the scattering of information across numerous locations, some of which are not easily accessible (at least to me); the fact that processes change frequently; a paucity of documentation in most areas; and the loss of institutional memory in some offices that have experienced frequent or recent turnover. It is possible that, because of these issues, I have not had access to one or more significant troves of information that would have answered some of the questions and concerns raised in this report.
9. See the Observations and Consultant Recommendations under Team Recommendation 7 regarding effective participation in governance activities.
10. See the Observations and Consultant Recommendations under Team Recommendation 4 regarding factionalism at the College.

General Consultant Recommendations: Actions to Close the Gap

1. Leadership and Responsibility

- a. It is crucial for the President, the Vice Presidents, and constituency leadership to set aside the differences they may have, overcome the factionalism that has characterized the College for the last several years, unify their efforts, employ their skills to help all members of the campus community recognize the urgency of the problems the Commission has identified, and inspire and lead them to contribute actively to the solutions. Moreover, every group and every individual at the College should take responsibility for making meaningful contributions toward the common cause, or share responsibility for the College's failure to gain full reaffirmation, and more importantly, to improve its effectiveness in the long run. **(Priority 1)**
- b. It is especially crucial for the President, among all the leaders at the College, to be active, productive, and visible at the forefront of the institution's drive to move forward. He should acknowledge the reality and importance of the issues raised by the evaluation team and ensure that he himself, the Cabinet, management team, faculty, staff, and students are all actively engaged in resolving those issues. **(Priority 1)**
- c. The President, in conjunction with constituency group leadership, should facilitate development of a community of dialogue on campus, in which all constituent groups receive information on College progress in improving student learning and other crucial tasks, discuss the effectiveness of the institution in those efforts, and, through appropriate structures, processes, and plans, contribute to a culture of continuous improvement. **(Priority 2)**
- d. The College Council, with assistance from PPL under the provisions of its existing contract, should develop and distribute campus-wide a one-sheet "What Can I Do?" handout and/or electronic publication as soon as possible, with concrete suggestions on what individual employees and students can do to help resolve the Recommendations and move the College forward. Updates, excerpts, tips-of-the-day, or similar suggestions should be disseminated regularly, as the College progresses toward full reaffirmation. **(Priority 1)**

2. **Formal Structures and Processes:** To remain viable in the future, the College should move with all deliberate speed to adopt well-defined, formal, documented structures and processes designed to improve and maintain institutional effectiveness, including assessment, planning, resource allocation, and communication—and then follow through with proper execution in all areas. That does not mean that personal relationships should be forsaken, only that those relationships cannot be allowed to drive planning, resource allocation, and decision-making processes. Formal structures and processes, well communicated and consistently executed, should not only make the College a better place for learning, they should also produce measurable improvements in campus climate (see Team Recommendation 4). **(Priority 1)**

3. Governance

- a. The College Council should coordinate development, publication, and maintenance of an authoritative governance handbook for VVC, to clarify

committee functions, relationships, and roles in collegial consultation and decision-making processes, and to help educate the campus community about them. Such a handbook, properly organized and written, would be a very important and useful resource for everyone at the College, but especially for those serving in leadership positions or serving on shared-governance committees.

(Priority 2)

- b. The College Council should go beyond review and revision of AP 1201, and accomplish the following tasks during 2011-12 (All **Priority 1**):
 - (1) Coordinate a systematic evaluation of the governance structures and processes on campus (including all shared-governance committees).
 - (2) Recommend revisions as needed of all Board policies and administrative procedures related to governance, to ensure that they reflect both sound practice and College reality. Policies and procedures should incorporate the governance handbook by reference.
 - (3) Analyze participation rates and practices in all constituencies.
 - (4) Make recommendations for improvement, including some aimed at realizing the following objectives:
 - a) Improve campus-wide communication about and documentation of governance and decision-making processes and their results.
 - b) Break down organizational silos.
 - c) Broaden meaningful participation within each constituency.
 - d) Improve efficiency, perhaps through consolidation of functions into a smaller number of bodies.
 - e) Both reduce and spread the burden that now falls on a relatively small proportion of people.
 - (5) Establish a method and schedule for periodic reevaluation of governance effectiveness going forward, and document the ongoing process in the governance handbook.

4. **Accreditation**

- a. The College Council, in consultation with the Interim Executive Vice President for Instruction and Student Services as Accreditation Liaison Officer, should establish a permanent, standing Accreditation Committee. The Council should ensure that the new committee's defined responsibilities are properly coordinated with those of existing committees and decision-making processes, to avoid any duplication of effort. A formal procedure should specify member eligibility and the selection process. **(Priority 2)**

I suggest that the College consider the following model for Committee functions:

- (1) The Committee and its members will receive appropriate training to become the expert campus resources on accreditation processes and requirements.
- (2) The Committee will guide and monitor the accreditation process for the entire college, including:
 - a) Develop timelines and recommend policies and procedures for accreditation, consistent with the guidelines provided by ACCJC.
 - b) Coordinate training for faculty, staff, and management with regard to accreditation requirements and related College policies and procedures.

- c) Monitor progress on preparing reports, resolving recommendations, and other accreditation-related processes, and initiate corrective action where appropriate.
 - d) Provide assistance for or, if necessary according to established criteria, replace Committee or subcommittee chairs or members, if work is found inadequate at specified milestones.
- (3) The Committee will provide a forum for ongoing campus dialogue on accreditation issues and practices.
 - (4) In consultation with the appropriate governance structures and processes, the Committee will recommend a pool of candidates to the President for editing the self-study under the supervision of the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO), and will recommend faculty and staff to the President for subcommittees as needed.
 - (5) Members will serve as co-chairs on subcommittees.
 - (6) The Committee will review and provide input on midterm, follow-up, and other special reports to the Commission. If requested by the ALO, it will help draft such reports.
 - (7) The Committee will report to the College Council.
 - (8) Members and conveners will fulfill their responsibilities as described in an appropriately constructed Committee Responsibilities document.
 - (9) Members will volunteer to serve on accreditation teams.
- b. The President and vice presidents should encourage all managers, faculty members, and classified staff members, for the good of the institution and their own professional development, to volunteer for service on a Commission accreditation team, and to participate in formal accreditation training. The President should distribute a request for volunteers, with appropriate explanatory information, at least annually. **(Priority 3)**
5. **Evidence Files:** The Accreditation Liaison Officer should ensure that all evidence referred to in the Follow-Up Report is compiled in accessible form for the visiting team, so that nothing is missing, forgotten, or rushed into place. **(Priority 1)**
 6. **Communication and Documentation (All Priority 1)**
 - a. People who attend meetings and conferences should make a regular practice of sharing what they have learned with their supervisors, colleagues, and direct reports at the next available opportunity, to help facilitate all employees' understanding of the issues and to promote an atmosphere of openness and transparency.
 - b. The College should document properly every process, structure, plan, and action it chooses to implement in response to the Team Recommendations and to the consultant recommendations in this report. The documentation should be readily accessible to the visiting team, and more importantly to the College community that will rely on it to move the institution in the right direction, both now and in future years.
 7. **Dissemination of Report:** The College should make at least the Executive Summary of this report available to all College personnel. **(Priority 1)**

Team Recommendation 1: Mission and Educational Master Plan

In order to meet the Standards, the College should revise its planning documents to reflect the current mission so that the mission is central to institutional planning and decision making. Furthermore, the College should adhere to its policy of annually reviewing its mission statement and update its Educational Master Plan using its current mission statement. (I.A.3, I.A.4)

- I.A.3. Using the institution's governance and decision-making processes, the institution reviews its mission statement on a regular basis and revises it as necessary.
- I.A.4. The institution's mission is central to institutional planning and decision making.

Observations: Progress to Date

1. The College began a review of the mission, vision, values, and goals with a Special Meeting of the Board devoted in part to that subject on September 28, 2011. The nature and content of the discussion at that meeting are unknown to me; production of the minutes has been delayed due to a technical problem. To my knowledge, no other steps have been taken to date in the review and revision of the mission.

Observations: Issues Requiring Action

1. The evaluation team pointed out that the institutional mission statement had not been reviewed since 2007, despite the fact that BP 3250 and AP 1200 both require annual review and update. The team also noted with disapproval that some planning documents had not been updated to reflect even that three-year-old mission. The Educational Master Plan and the Facilities Master Plan, both of which were published in 2007, are in that category. The Matriculation Plan and Student Equity Plan, both of which were published in 2008, do contain the 2007 mission statement. The Technology Master Plan, the Library Information Technology Plan, the Equal Employment Opportunity Plan, and the Five-Year Construction Plan contain no mention of the College mission.

Consultant Recommendations: Actions to Close the Gap

1. **Mission Review, Revision, and Consistency**
 - a. The College, with the assistance of the PPL consultant under the provisions of PPL's existing contract if desired, should fully implement the mission review process set forth in AP 1200, confirm or revise the mission statement, and publish it if at all possible in time to include it in the evidence files for the March 15, 2012 Follow-Up Report. **(Priority 1)**
 - b. To the extent feasible, the committees responsible for the College's major planning documents should incorporate the confirmed or revised mission statement in those documents in time to include documentation of those actions in the evidence files for the March 15, 2012 Follow-Up Report. **(Priority 1)**
 - c. The College Council, in consultation with the responsible committees, should develop and publish a schedule for incorporating the confirmed or revised mission

statement in the next updates of the remaining major planning documents, adhere closely to that schedule, and document the results. (**Priority 3**)

Team Recommendation 2: Integrated Planning and Continuous Improvement

As noted in recommendations 1 and 6 of the 2005 Accreditation Evaluation Report, and in recommendations from the reports of 1993 and 1999, and in order to meet the Standards and the Eligibility Requirements, the College should establish and maintain an ongoing, collegial, self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes. (I.B.1, E.R. 19) This process should include:

- *Goals to improve effectiveness that are stated in measurable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be determined and widely discussed. (I.B.2)*
- *An evaluation of all programs throughout the College so that it assesses progress toward those goals and ensures that participation is broad-based throughout the College. (I.B.3, I.B.4)*
- *Documented assessment results for all courses, programs, and the institution. (I.B.5, II.A.1.a, II.B.4)*
- *Formal processes to evaluate the effectiveness of its ongoing planning and resource allocation processes. (I.B.6, I.B.7)*
- *Integration of planning with decision-making and budgeting processes to ensure that decisions to allocate staff, equipment, resources, and facilities throughout the College are based on identified strategic priorities and to ensure a continuous cycle of evaluation and improvement based upon data. (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.6, III.C.2, IV.B.2.b)*
- *An integration of the total cost of facilities ownership in both the short and long term planning processes. (III.B.1.c) [NOTE: III.B.1.c does not exist; the team probably means III.B.2.a, given context]*
- *An assessment of physical resource planning with the involvement of the campus community. (III.B.1.a, III.B.2.a, III.B.2.b)*
- *A systematic assessment of the effective use of financial resources, with particular regard to meeting the needs of Library materials and technological resources, and the use of the results of this assessment as the basis for improvement. (II.C.1, II.C.2, III.D.3)*

ER19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation: The institution systematically evaluates and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes, including assessment of student learning outcomes. The institution provides evidence of planning for improvement of institutional structures and processes, student achievement of educational goals, and student learning. The institution assesses progress toward achieving its stated goals and makes decisions regarding improvement through an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation.

I.B.1. The institution maintains an ongoing, collegial, self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes.

I.B.2. The institution sets goals to improve its effectiveness consistent with its stated purposes. The institution articulates its goals and states the objectives derived from them in measurable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be determined and widely discussed. The institutional members understand these goals and work collaboratively toward their achievement.

I.B.3. The institution assesses progress toward achieving its stated goals and makes decisions regarding the improvement of institutional effectiveness in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation. Evaluation is based on analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data.

- I.B.4. The institution provides evidence that the planning process is broad-based, offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.
- I.B.5. The institution uses documented assessment results to communicate matters of quality assurance to appropriate constituencies.
- I.B.6. The institution assures the effectiveness of its ongoing planning and resource allocation processes by systematically reviewing and modifying, as appropriate, all parts of the cycle, including institutional and other research efforts.
- I.B.7. The institution assesses its evaluation mechanisms through a systematic review of their effectiveness in improving instructional programs, student support services, and library and other learning support services.
- II.A.1.a. The institution identifies and seeks to meet the varied educational needs of its students through programs consistent with their educational preparation and the diversity, demographics, and economy of its communities. The institution relies upon research and analysis to identify student learning needs and to assess progress toward achieving stated learning outcomes.
- II.B.4. The institution evaluates student support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. Evaluation of these services provides evidence that they contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes. The institution uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.
- II.C.1. The institution supports the quality of its instructional programs by providing library and other learning support services that are sufficient in quantity, currency, depth, and variety to facilitate educational offerings, regardless of location or means of delivery.
- II.C.2. The institution evaluates library and other learning support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. Evaluation of these services provides evidence that they contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes. The institution uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.
- III.B.1.a. The institution plans, builds, maintains, and upgrades or replaces its physical resources in a manner that assures effective utilization and the continuing quality necessary to support its programs and services.
- III.B.2.a. Long-range capital plans support institutional improvement goals and reflect projections of the total cost of ownership of new facilities and equipment.
- III.B.2.b. Physical resource planning is integrated with institutional planning. The institution systematically assesses the effective use of physical resources and uses the results of the evaluation as the basis for improvement.
- III.C.2. Technology planning is integrated with institutional planning. The institution systematically assesses the effective use of technology resources and uses the results of evaluation as the basis for improvement.
- III.D.3. The institution systematically assesses the effective use of financial resources and uses the results of the evaluation as the basis for improvement.
- IV.B.2.b. The president guides institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment by the following:
- establishing a collegial process that sets values, goals, and priorities;
 - ensuring that evaluation and planning rely on high quality research and analysis on external and internal conditions;
 - ensuring that educational planning is integrated with resource planning and distribution to achieve student learning outcomes; and
 - establishing procedures to evaluate overall institutional planning and implementation efforts.

Observations: Progress to Date

1. The PRAISE Process
 - a. Participation in the PRAISE (Program Review, Allocations, and Institutional Strategies for Excellence) process reportedly approached 100 percent for both instructional and noninstructional programs in 2010-11.
 - b. When true goals were listed in PRAISE submissions, they tended to be measurable, at least in qualitative terms.
 - c. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) provides a standard array of discipline data for instructional program review each year, including headcounts, offerings, enrollments, FTES, and retention and success rates over the most recent three-year period. For each figure, the reports also present comparative data for the institution as a whole. The specific courses that comprise each discipline for each reported term are clearly identified, and all fields are clearly defined.
 - d. All resource requests produced as part of the PRAISE process in 2010-11 were reviewed by the Finance/Budget and Planning Committee (FBPC) on a program-by-program basis in Spring and Summer 2011. The FBPC, in a reportedly exhaustive and exhausting process involving both subcommittee work and several committee meetings, reviewed every request, the PRAISE report that justified it, and the program's last three years of expenditures. On the basis of that analysis, it denied some requests, but approved most of them. That priority list then went to Cabinet for information, and the amounts that comprised it were built into the 2011-12 budget.
 - e. For the last two years, all items that the FBPC approved have been funded. For subsequent years, the Vice President for Administrative Services (VPAS) has suggested application of an index, such as the Consumer Price Index, to place a limit on how much the budget augmentations from PRAISE can grow from year to year, in the interests of not adding to the structural deficit. The FBPC is considering this approach.
 - f. Programs whose requests have been approved are notified of that approval by the VPAS through their vice presidents.
 - g. Personnel Requests
 - (1) Requests for new or replacement faculty positions go through a committee of the Academic Senate. It recommends a priority order to the President, who makes the final decision on which positions to authorize.
 - (2) A management or classified position request typically originates with the position's supervisor, who brings it to (or is) the applicable vice president. The vice presidents, if persuaded that the position is needed, bring the request, along with others in the area, to Cabinet for discussion. The recommended priority order that results is given to the President, who makes the final decision on which positions to authorize.
 - h. The level of campus knowledge about program review is reportedly satisfactory.
2. Physical Resources Planning: The shared-governance Facilities Committee is responsible for planning for most physical resources at the College. (Planning for equipment below a certain level occurs through other processes and structures, such as PRAISE.) Among all the shared-governance committees, it was acknowledged by

interviewees as functioning the most effectively. It is chaired at present by the Director of Facilities and Construction.

3. Technology Planning
 - a. The District contracted with PlanNet to conduct a campus-wide technology assessment in 2008. Long-term technology planning since then has focused on addressing many of the issues that PlanNet identified.
 - b. The Technology Committee and TIR staff published a draft VVC Technology and Resource Plan in February 2011.
 - c. Each department in TIR has its own staff meetings on a regular basis, and the Executive Dean of TIR convenes an “All Hands” division-wide meeting once per month. Current technology needs, projects, and plans are typically discussed at all these meetings.
 - d. Resource requests for infrastructure and other major technology projects are typically formulated by TIR staff and submitted to the Cabinet by the Executive Dean.
 - e. Requests for technology resources on a smaller scale typically come through the PRAISE process. Those requests are not reviewed by TIR staff before approval by the FBPC. If an approved request involves technology that does not meet College standards or is otherwise problematic from the TIR perspective, the purchase order is flagged by the Executive Dean of TIR, who contacts the requester; most of the time the discussion reportedly resolves the issue to the satisfaction of both parties.
4. Library Planning: Resource planning for acquisition of Library materials takes place in the PRAISE process. In addition, the Library has its own Information Technology Plan for 2010-15.
5. Higher-Level Planning
 - a. At a special meeting facilitated by consultant Cindra Smith in May 2011, the Board established a new set of District Directions related to fiscal stability, student success, responding to the accreditation recommendations, and image in the community, and specified a set of Board tasks for 2011-12 under each. Under each Direction, the President has drafted one measurable District Goal and a set of specific performance measures for Board consideration this Fall. These Goals presumably replace those adopted in 2008-09 and contained in AP 1202, most of which the evaluation team regarded as not measurable.
 - b. An ad-hoc committee convened by the Educational Master Planning Facilitator has begun the process of reviewing and revising the Educational Master Plan, which was published in 2007.
 - c. The Annual Report of 2009, an extremely ambitious project, was the closest the College has come to a comprehensive analysis of its overall institutional effectiveness.

Observations: Issues Requiring Action

1. The evaluation team found that Victor Valley is “between the awareness and development levels for program review and remains at the awareness level for planning” in the Commission’s *Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness* for

Program Review. Like all other community colleges, it is supposed to have achieved the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement (SCQI) level in both areas back in 2008.

2. The PRAISE Process

- a. PRAISE is intended as the primary integrated self-evaluation, planning, and resource allocation process for all programs and services at the College. Its supposed purpose is improving program effectiveness, but historically, interviewees confirmed, it has been used primarily to justify requests for resource augmentations.
- b. In 2010-11, the PRAISE process began with a set of three templates, one each for instructional programs, student support programs, and campus support programs. At some point during the year, apparently in an effort to expedite completion of the process, the Academic Senate approved for instructional programs an abbreviated version of the form, which required far less evidence and analysis.
- c. I reviewed a sample of 12 instructional and nine noninstructional PRAISE submissions from 2010-11 for 2011-12. Most of those noninstructional programs used the original, longer program review form, while most instructional programs used the abbreviated version. Quality varied considerably, though most programs appeared to take the process seriously. The focus in the vast majority was indeed on justifying requests for resources, rather than on program improvement as the primary aim.
 - (1) Many reports were far more descriptive than analytical.
 - (2) Use of quantitative and qualitative evidence ranged from substantial to negligible, with most reports falling in the middle.
 - (3) In some cases—even in otherwise comparatively strong submissions—goals were actually resource requests, sometimes accompanied by additional justifications. In some other cases, especially in the noninstructional areas, what were supposed to be goals or quality measures were really just recitations of departmental functions.
 - (4) With few exceptions, treatment of Student Learning Outcomes, Service Level Outcomes, and program evaluation in general was characterized by vague statements rather than by concrete quantitative or qualitative evidence. Only one submission rose to what I would regard as an exemplary level in this respect.
 - (5) Reports of closing the loop by implementing specific improvements clearly based on assessment results were very rare.
 - (6) Justifications for resource requests varied a great deal in persuasiveness.
- d. The data provided by OIE for PRAISE reportedly are regarded as suspect by many faculty members. OIE staff members contend that the reports accurately reflect what is in the student records database, but acknowledge that numerous problems with the data undermine their reliability. Some problems are connected with Datatel updates and data warehouse maintenance issues, but by far most of those problems, they report, are associated with widespread coding, data entry, and other errors that persist despite repeated OIE efforts over the years to call attention to them. Such errors can have ripple effects beyond program review—in

- state and federal reporting, for example. Data integrity reportedly has not been enough of a priority at the College to mount a systematic effort to improve it.
- e. At present, programs whose requests have been denied are not so notified, nor provided a rationale for the denial.
 - f. Responsibility for various aspects of the PRAISE process is divided among at least three bodies at present. The FBPC evaluates and prioritizes the resource requests that come out of the PRAISE process. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee is charged with formally evaluating the program review process for all college programs, though I have not yet seen documentation of a formal evaluation. The Academic Senate has a Program Review Committee that was reportedly reconstituted in Spring 2011, whose charge is to roll out the process each Fall, and evidently to decide what will be included in the Program Review form; however, this committee might be ad hoc in nature, since it is not listed on the Senate's website, in its bylaws, or in AP 1201.
 - g. There does not appear to be any systematic, consistent process or structure for monitoring the quality of PRAISE documents (other than the resource requests), or for coordinating the process from beginning to end. None of the three bodies listed above carries out those functions.
 - h. For the 2011-12 PRAISE process, which has an accelerated due date of December 1, the Academic Senate Program Review Committee approved an even more abbreviated form this Fall. However, it has added a section for more explicit coverage of course and program SLOs, including assessment methods, criteria for success, a summary of evidence collected, and use of results. The column for the latter asks only a single question: "After seeing the summary of evidence, do you need to make changes to the course/program/certificate/degree, etc. Yes or no." There is no analysis or interpretation of SLO assessment results. Other than the SLOs section, the form requires no evidence, either quantitative or qualitative, on demand, offerings, enrollments, student success, student retention, or any other measure of program impact or performance. This approach might represent a step forward in simplicity and brevity, which might encourage participation, but in my judgment, it represents a step backward in substance.
 - i. Curiously, the form header reads on its fourth line, "Instructional and Noninstructional Departments," but according to the Academic Senate President, the Senate program review committee worked only on instructional program review. However, both instructional and noninstructional programs are planning to use this form.
 - j. The Academic Senate properly has the primary role in program review as one of the academic and professional matters under Title 5. However, I have not seen any documentation of formal procedures by which the organization, contents, or forms of program review are developed, reviewed, and approved; by which the schedule for program review is set; or by which PRAISE requirements are to be conveyed to the programs. Such procedures are needed, and if the College's intent is to establish a unified form and process for program review in all programs on campus, instructional and noninstructional, then in my judgment, a broader shared-governance body, with Academic Senate representatives in

- leadership roles, would be the most appropriate structure for accomplishing this end.
- k. There does not appear to be any centralized system at present for tracking and reporting the status of the program review process overall within each year. After PRAISE reports are submitted, however, they are uploaded to the OIE website, along with budget worksheets.
 - l. Reportedly, not everyone is well informed about the results of the program review process each year.
 - m. The program review process has changed significantly every year for the past several years, according to interviewees, but I have not seen documentation of any formal evaluation processes that might have led to the changes. These changes, some of which were made on short notice, reportedly have caused grumbling and frustration among participants, especially if they had already begun the process using last year's process and forms. It is important, of course, to improve deficient processes, but sound practice requires that the improvements be based on evidence and analysis, and that they be timely and not unduly disruptive. Sometimes it is necessary to place a moratorium on change, in part to let participants and the institution catch a breath, rather than rush even excellent ideas for improvement into operation. Then the improvements can be implemented in the next cycle in a more measured and less disruptive fashion.
 - n. Only one question in the Campus Climate Survey conducted in Fall 2010 addressed PRAISE directly, it was too narrow to be very helpful in evaluating the process as a whole. The Academic Senate conducted a survey of faculty in June-July 2010 to gather feedback on the program review process. The open-ended survey questions were those suggested by the Statewide Academic Senate in "Program Review: Setting a Standard" for local senates. Only 17 people responded to the survey, and the results cannot be judged representative in a statistical sense. However, they do provide some in-the-trenches support for the suggestions I have made elsewhere in this report, including the need for comprehensive participation, accurate and easily accessible data, a consistent process from year to year, better application of the findings to decision-making and improvement, and better communication about the results of the process.
 - o. The connection between program-level performance and goals reported in PRAISE and higher-level or strategic goals (e.g., the goals, priorities, and institutional effectiveness outcomes shown in AP 1202) was very often unclear, especially in the abbreviated submissions. This lack of clear integration will make drawing conclusions about overall institutional effectiveness, and planning for improvements in the institution as a whole, much more difficult.
3. Physical Resources Planning
- a. The Facilities Master Plan (FMP), which does not include any provision for review and revision, has not been formally updated since 2007.
 - b. Judging from a review of the minutes from the last year, although the Facilities Committee has suggested revisions to projects that are in the FMP, it has not assessed the FMP as a whole, nor recommended such an assessment. I have seen no documentation that it has ever assessed the process of facilities planning, nor sought feedback from the campus community regarding facilities planning.

- c. Seven questions on the Fall 2010 Campus Climate Survey dealt with facilities. Responses to the two that related most directly to facilities planning indicated some dissatisfaction with the relevance of the FMP, and more dissatisfaction with the amount of attention given to campus and community feedback in decisions related to facilities.
 - d. The evaluation team found that Total Cost of Ownership was not sufficiently integrated into short-term and long-term facilities planning. For example, the cost of maintaining what is now the Regional Safety Training Center was not built into the planning for that building.
4. Technology Planning
- a. Planning for infrastructure and other major technology projects typically begins in Technology and Information Resources (TIR), which brings issues for discussion to the Technology Committee. Some interviewees indicated that Committee membership is not well-balanced across the institution, so that only a relatively narrow set of user perspectives is represented. I did not have access to the Technology Committee's membership roster or minutes, and so cannot comment on its representation, deliberations, processes, or conclusions.
 - b. The VVC Technology and Resource Plan at present does not include any provision for review and revision.
 - c. There is at present no formal process for prioritizing technology needs at the College.
 - d. Seven questions on the Fall 2010 Campus Climate Survey dealt with technology. Responses clearly indicated widespread dissatisfaction with technology resources, planning, and training, and with technology needs assessment based on employee input.
5. Library Planning
- a. The evaluation team called on the College to “stabilize and institutionalize a permanent funding source for its library materials, specifically for its books and electronic resources” now that state categorical funding sources have been eliminated. According to the Library PRAISE document, 32 percent of its expenditures for learning resources during 2010-11 were still from categorical or one-time funds.
 - b. The team praised the Library's assessment of its services and student learning outcomes, but also called on the Library to “use the results of their assessments as the means to meet and improve student learning outcomes”—in other words, to close the loop in the SLO cycle.
6. Higher-Level Planning
- a. The evaluation team found that the program-specific plans such as those for matriculation and student equity did not appear to link to broader planning processes at the College.
 - b. The 2007 Educational Master Plan acknowledged the need for monitoring progress on its goals, but did not include any specific processes or timelines for review and revision of the Plan.
 - c. The Annual Report of 2009 reportedly failed to find an audience, perhaps because of its very comprehensiveness, and was not used or referred to in any significant planning or decision-making processes. It has not been updated.

Consultant Recommendations: Actions to Close the Gap

See also Team Recommendation 6 regarding long-term fiscal planning.

1. **PRAISE Coordination and Organization** (All **Priority 2**)

- a. The College Council, in consultation with the Academic Senate, should systematize the coordination of the PRAISE process across the College by assigning that responsibility either to an existing shared-governance committee (e.g., FBPC or the Institutional Effectiveness Committee) or to a new shared-governance committee established for that purpose. An Academic Senate representative should chair or co-chair the PRAISE coordinating committee, and Senate representatives should comprise the largest single group of constituency members. The functions of the existing Academic Senate Program Review Committee should be folded into those of the coordinating committee. The PPL consultant, under a mutually agreed-upon modification of the provisions of PPL's existing contract, could facilitate and guide the initial work of the coordinating committee. Suggested elements of the charge of the coordinating committee include the following:
 - (1) Develop and implement formal procedures for the process (including requirements, standards, schedule, evaluation, and closing the loop) that adhere to both best practices and accreditation standards, and recommend appropriate changes to AP 3250. An appropriate starting point might be the Academic Senate Program Review Committee's draft handbook.
 - (2) Design clear forms, templates, and other documents used in the process that adhere to sound practices in integrated evaluation, planning, and resource allocation.
 - (3) Ensure adequate training of participants as needed on the components, principles, and terminology of proper program review as applied at Victor Valley College, based in part on the documented procedures.
 - (4) Monitor the quality of submissions, and send back for revision those that do not meet standards.
 - (5) Communicate in timely fashion with all participants and the rest of the campus community about the process, its procedures, and its results, and take steps to ensure the widest feasible participation.
 - (6) Ensure integration of evidence-based evaluation, planning, and resource allocation within the process.
 - (7) Facilitate integration of the process and its results with other major planning, evaluation, and decision-making processes and products (e.g., the SLO assessment cycle, District Goals, Educational Master Plan, Faculty Hiring Priorities). For example, the ACCJC Rubric for SLOs requires that
 - (8) Coordinate the process with other committees (e.g., FBPC, Technology Committee), groups (e.g., Academic Senate), and offices (e.g., Office of Institutional Effectiveness) as needed.

- (9) Evaluate the process on a regular basis, using input from participants as one source of evidence, and recommend and implement improvements as warranted.
- b. To ease the burden of program review while maintaining rigor, the College should move to a staggered three-year cycle, with comprehensive program review in the first year, followed by a shorter version in each of the next two years that reports any significant program changes or implications of updated performance data, progress on previously identified improvement goals, and identification of new improvement goals. The form and contents of resource requests should be identical in the comprehensive and shorter versions, so that all programs participate the same way every year in the resource allocation prioritization process. Planning and preparation for this move by the PRAISE coordinating committee should take place during Spring 2012, with implementation of the new cycle structure beginning in Fall 2012.
 - c. The coordinating committee should clarify, ensure that all forms and procedures reflect, and continually emphasize to all participants, that the point of the PRAISE process is not mere justification of resource requests, but rather improvements in the effectiveness of programs and services. Additional resources are not necessary for every improvement, and when they are needed, they are means, not ends in themselves.
 - d. To facilitate prioritizing resource requests, the coordinating committee, in consultation with the FBPC, should require that program-level requests be prioritized first based on discussion among program representatives and the department chair or supervisor at the department level, then based on discussion among department representatives and the dean or director at the division level, and then based on discussion among the deans and directors at the vice presidential area level, before going to the FBPC for the development of an institution-wide priorities list.
 - e. The coordinating committee should clarify the important roles of department chairs, directors, and deans in preparing, reviewing, and assuring the quality of program review documents, and, where applicable, in rolling up unit-level program review and resource allocation documents into the department, division, and area levels.
 - f. The coordinating committee, in consultation with other appropriate groups and departments, should establish a centralized file or database that tracks and reports progress on program review across the institution, and update it regularly. Constituency leadership and senior management should receive a copy of a report on completions and results at least annually, so that the entire College remains well-informed about the status of program review. If all program reviews eventually reside on the TracDat system, then that system should provide the requisite tracking and reporting mechanisms.
2. **Standards** (All **Priority 2**)
- a. The coordinating committee should move as quickly as it can to ensure that every program review includes the following elements at minimum:
 - (1) Assessment of program effectiveness using appropriate measures (including applicable outcomes), evidence, and methods

- (2) Assessment of the effects of any previously implemented improvements, and progress on any previously established goals and objectives
 - (3) Analysis of the results of the assessments
 - (4) Analysis of the implications of and for plans and outcomes at other levels
 - (5) Specific goals clearly based on analysis results, to maintain or increase effectiveness and/or to facilitate achievement of outcomes (including SLOs)
 - (6) Measurable objectives for each goal, including timelines and identification of those responsible for ensuring progress
 - (7) Resources demonstrably required to achieve each objective or make significant progress toward each goal
- b. The coordinating committee, in consultation with other appropriate groups and individuals, should establish a process to ensure consistency among the set of courses that defines each instructional program in the OIE data reports, the corresponding set of courses listed in the Program of Study in Curricunet, and the corresponding set of courses that comprise the program for which program SLOs have been defined. For example, before beginning each comprehensive program review or annual update, instructional program faculty could check for consistency among these course sets. If they uncover discrepancies, they should initiate immediate corrective action, and the responsible data custodian should make corrections in timely fashion, before the faculty begins work in earnest on the review or update. (See Program SLOs under Team Recommendation 3 below.)
3. **Data Integrity:** The College, under the leadership of the Cabinet, should devote the necessary resources to ensure that the data used for PRAISE and other planning and decision-making processes are accurate and reliable. One approach would be to form an ad-hoc data integrity task force, with representatives from OIE, the coordinating committee for PRAISE, TIR, primary data custodians and their data entry staff, and other offices as needed, and charge it with identifying the primary sources of error, recommending solutions to the root problems, and monitoring effective implementation of those solutions, until such time as regular checks of data integrity show that the primary sources of errors have been eliminated. **(Priority 2)**
 4. **Dialogue:** The College should establish a schedule of recurring opportunities for campus-wide dialogue on program review results, outcomes and other performance assessment, and resource allocations in relation to the improvement of student learning and institutional effectiveness. Such forums, workshops, and/or other experiences should be designed to help break down departmental and constituency boundaries, and to enrich, enliven, broaden, and make permanent the productive conversation about student learning and institutional effectiveness that makes a community college a great place to be, for both educators and students. **(Priority 1)**
 5. **Physical Resources Planning**
 - a. The Facilities Committee, with the assistance of the PPL consultant under the provisions of PPL's existing contract, should undertake an assessment of the effectiveness of physical resource planning. The assessment should include input from the campus community. **(Priority 1)**
 - b. The Facilities Committee should prepare for approval by the President and the Board a formal update of or addendum to the Facilities Master Plan that reflects

- significant changes and initiatives that have occurred since its adoption, that incorporates the Public Safety Training Center and the Workforce Development Center, and that provides for regular review and revision of the Plan. **(Priority 2)**
- c. Administrative Services, the FBPC, and the Facilities Committee should collaborate to analyze the Total Cost of Ownership of every capital project now in progress; the Facilities Committee should ensure that the results are incorporated into the next update of the Facilities Master Plan; and the FBPC should ensure that the results are incorporated into the current and future budgets and budget projections. **(Priority 2)**
 - d. Administrative Services, the FBPC, and the Facilities Committee should collaborate on an ongoing basis to ensure that the Total Cost of Ownership is built into the planning and budgeting for every future capital project in the District. **(Priority 3)**
- 6. Technology Planning**
- a. The College Council should review the composition of the Technology Committee, and recommend any adjustments needed to ensure appropriately broad representation of user perspectives and functions. If adjustments proved necessary, the constituency group leaders should take action to implement the Council's recommendations, through their own recommendations to the President. **(Priority 1)**
 - b. The Technology Committee should complete the draft Technology and Resource Plan, solicit campus-wide feedback on it, incorporate feedback as appropriate, and recommend its adoption to the President by the end of Spring 2012. It should include provision for regular review and revision, based in part on user input. **(Priority 2)**
 - c. The Technology Committee, with appropriate input from the user community, should develop a systematic method for prioritizing both annual and long-term technology needs. **(Priority 2)**
 - d. If feasible, the PRAISE process should build in the review and, if necessary, the modification of technology requests by TIR or the Technology Committee (in close consultation with the requester) to ensure that technology purchases adhere to College standards and are coordinated. The review should take place before the resource request review by FBPC, which should in turn require a sign-off by TIR or the Technology Committee prior to its approval. **(Priority 3)**
- 7. Library Resources Planning:** The Interim Executive Vice President for Instruction and Student Services should convene an ad hoc task force with appropriate representation and expertise to develop a long-term Library Plan that includes recommendations on addressing the need for stable resources for the acquisition of materials. **(Priority 3)**
- 8. Integration of Planning:** The College Council, with the help of the applicable committees, should ensure that program-specific plans, in their next revisions, incorporate as appropriate consideration of and references to other major planning processes and documents at the College, such as the Educational Master Plan, District Goals, and the PRAISE process. **(Priority 3)**
- 9. Overall Institutional Effectiveness:** The Institutional Effectiveness Committee, in collaboration with the College Council, should coordinate the design,

implementation, dissemination, and discussion of a biennial or triennial assessment of overall institutional effectiveness. The assessment should make use of an appropriate combination of available quality and performance measures already created for other planning processes and reports (e.g., PRAISE, the Annual Plan, Educational Master Plan, District Goals), and any new measures of effectiveness deemed suitable for the purpose. **(Priority 1)**

Team Recommendation 3: Student Learning Outcomes

As noted in recommendation 2 of the 2005 Accreditation Evaluation Report, and in order to meet the Standards and the Eligibility Requirements, the College should complete the development of student learning outcomes for all programs and ensure that student learning outcomes found on course syllabi are the same as the student learning outcomes found on the approved course outlines of record. The institution must accelerate its efforts to assess all student learning outcomes for every course, instructional and student support program, and incorporate analysis of student learning outcomes into course and program improvements. This effort must be accomplished by Fall 2012 as a result of broad-based dialogue with administrative, institutional and research support. Student learning outcomes need to become an integral part of the program review process, including incorporating detailed documented analysis from SLO assessments and data based research. Additionally, faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated learning outcomes should have, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes. (I.B.1-7, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a-b, II.A.2.e-f, II.B.4, II.C.2, III.A.1.c, E.R. 10)

- ER10. Student Learning and Achievement: The institution defines and publishes for each program the program's expected student learning and achievement outcomes. Through regular and systematic assessment, it demonstrates that students who complete programs, no matter where or how they are offered, achieve these outcomes.
- I.B.1. The institution maintains an ongoing, collegial, self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes.
- I.B.2. The institution sets goals to improve its effectiveness consistent with its stated purposes. The institution articulates its goals and states the objectives derived from them in measurable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be determined and widely discussed. The institutional members understand these goals and work collaboratively toward their achievement.
- I.B.3. The institution assesses progress toward achieving its stated goals and makes decisions regarding the improvement of institutional effectiveness in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation. Evaluation is based on analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data.
- I.B.4. The institution provides evidence that the planning process is broad-based, offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.
- I.B.5. The institution uses documented assessment results to communicate matters of quality assurance to appropriate constituencies.
- I.B.6. The institution assures the effectiveness of its ongoing planning and resource allocation processes by systematically reviewing and modifying, as appropriate, all parts of the cycle, including institutional and other research efforts.
- I.B.7. The institution assesses its evaluation mechanisms through a systematic review of their effectiveness in improving instructional programs, student support services, and library and other learning support services.
- II.A.1.c. The institution identifies student learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates, and degrees; assesses student achievement of those outcomes; and uses assessment results to make improvements.
- II.A.2.a. The institution uses established procedures to design, identify learning outcomes for, approve, administer, deliver, and evaluate courses and programs. The institution recognizes the central role of its faculty for establishing quality and improving instructional courses and programs.
- II.A.2.b. The institution relies on faculty expertise and the assistance of advisory committees when appropriate to identify competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for courses,

- certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees. The institution regularly assesses student progress towards achieving those outcomes.
- II.A.2.e. The institution evaluates all courses and programs through an on-going systematic review of their relevance, appropriateness, achievement of learning outcomes, currency, and future needs and plans.
 - II.A.2.f. The institution engages in ongoing, systematic evaluation and integrated planning to assure currency and measure achievement of its stated student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees. The institution systematically strives to improve those outcomes and makes the results available to appropriate constituencies.
 - II.B.4. The institution evaluates student support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. Evaluation of these services provides evidence that they contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes. The institution uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.
 - II.C.2. The institution evaluates library and other learning support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. Evaluation of these services provides evidence that they contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes. The institution uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.
 - III.A.1.c. Faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated student learning outcomes have, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes.

Observations: Progress to Date

1. General
 - a. Coordination of the learning outcomes and assessment cycle rests with one Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Facilitator, a full-time faculty member on 20-percent reassigned time.
 - b. The administration and the full-time faculty union have begun a bargaining process regarding rules and compensation for completion of the SLO assessment cycle. I have suggested that that process include discussion and resolution of the issue of including learning outcomes in the evaluation process.
2. Course SLOs
 - a. Course SLOs are supposed to be reported in Curricunet for every course. In a sample of 10 active courses, I found only one that did not list SLOs in any of its versions.
 - b. TracDat, a proprietary system for tracking and reporting on outcomes, program evaluation, and other functions, was approved for purchase in October, and is supposed to be implemented within one month after purchase. The system is supposed to facilitate faculty uploading of outcome assessment tools and results that have heretofore been kept only in their own computers, inaccessible to any centralized examination or analysis. If it works as advertised, and if the implementation and uploading are done properly, it promises to fulfill the crucial function of systematically tracking and reporting on the entire SLO cycle at the course, program, GE, and institutional/degree SLO levels. In so doing, it will also facilitate evaluation of the College's overall progress in reaching the Proficiency level for SLOs.
 - c. The documentary evidence indicates that the initial training materials in the development and assessment of course SLOs covered both theory and sound practice reasonably well.

- d. The most recent course SLO assessment form, which the Academic Senate approved in 2008, asks for open-ended responses on identification of SLOs, assessment methods, assessment results, analysis of results, and plans for improvement and reassessment. The instructor, having applied the assessment methods, rates the average success of students in achieving each SLO as a percentage.
 - e. The form also asks each instructor to map the course SLOs to the GE and Program SLOs. The instructor then averages the success rates for course SLOs mapped to a given GE or Program SLO to measure achievement of that GE or Program SLO.
 - f. At my request, one of the advanced departments provided some documentation of its discussions over the past three years about assessment and improvement in teaching and learning. This department has identified SLOs and assessment methods, with sample assignments, for all its courses. The documents clearly showed that in that department, faculty members are deeply interested in assessing their curriculum based on student performance, and demonstrated that they have taken substantive steps to improve that curriculum in light of the assessment results.
3. Program SLOs
- a. Instructional
 - (1) According to the Spring 2011 report to the ACCJC, 80 percent of all College instructional programs have defined SLOs. (The source of that figure, however, is not clear.)
 - b. Noninstructional
 - (1) According to the Spring 2011 report to the ACCJC, 100 percent of all student and learning support activities have defined SLOs.
 - (2) Student Services reportedly had identified outcomes in 2007, but had done little further work on them until Spring 2011. I confirmed that as of August 2011, all Student Services departments except Student Activities have identified at least one formal outcome, a method for assessing it, and a criterion for success (Student Activities was awaiting the convening of the new ASB). Five departments have Service Area Outcomes (SAOs), six have SLOs, and one has one of each. Customer satisfaction and access are common themes across many departments. Assessment of these outcomes has not yet begun. With the help of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Student Services departments have developed satisfaction surveys and/or pre- and posttests that are scheduled for ongoing administration, typically at point of service, beginning this semester. Analysis and interpretation of results, identification of improvements, and development of action plans are scheduled for Spring 2012.
 - (3) TIR has identified what it calls Service Level Objectives, which specify target response times for initial contact, restoration, and resolution. The department does track response time using LiveTime software, and has done some assessment and some identification of need improvements based on the results.

4. General Education (GE) SLOs were established and approved by the Academic Senate in Spring 2008, and reviewed and approved by the College Council in May 2009 and May 2010.
5. Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs): Four ILOs have been drafted by an ad hoc committee of the Academic Senate. They are scheduled to be presented to the College Council in November.
6. The Board relies primarily on the Academic Senate in the academic and professional matters of curriculum, degree and certificate requirements, grading policies, and standards or policies regarding student preparation and success, all of which intersect with SLOs.

Observations: Issues Requiring Action

1. General
 - a. Victor Valley College, in my judgment, is between the Awareness and Development levels of implementation of SLOs overall, based on the Commission's *Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness*, not because of any failure to lay the necessary groundwork in the early days, but primarily because it has not followed through consistently since then. The Commission requires the College to be at the Proficiency level by Fall 2012.
 - b. Although the ACCJC Rubric does not explicitly call for all course, program, and degree outcomes to be assessed in order to reach the Proficiency level, the implication is clearly there. Moreover, the evaluation team did explicitly call for completion of the cycle in 100% of SLOs at all levels—identified and assessed, with improvements determined, if not yet actually implemented. So to be safe, the proportion of active courses and programs with ongoing assessment of SLOs should be approaching 100 percent by Fall 2012.
 - c. The next stage of the ACCJC SLOs Rubric, Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement, will require that “learning outcomes [be] specifically linked to program reviews.” That requirement is consistent with the Academic Senate's requirement of several years' standing that the PRAISE process incorporate assessment of SLOs, and strongly indicates that the two processes should become more fully integrated at the College. (See Consultant Recommendations under Team Recommendation 2 above.)
 - d. Documentation of SLO assessment, analysis, and implementation of planned improvements to complete the cycle at each level—course, program, and degree/institution—is scattered in multiple places across the College. I have found no systematic evaluation of overall progress toward the Proficiency level. Consequently it is unclear whether the College's progress on learning outcomes will be sufficient by Fall 2012 to pass muster at the Proficiency level.
 - e. There does not appear to be any systematic process for monitoring the quality of SLOs as they are actually developed, or SLO assessment as it is actually practiced, at any level.
2. Course SLOs
 - a. From an outsider's perspective, in Curricunet it was difficult to tell which version of the course was the current one from the lookup menu, and the help function,

which might have clarified the meaning of the labels attached to the various versions, was never available at the times I used the system.

- b. Because there is at present no centralized storage and reporting mechanism for course SLO assessment, I was able to examine SLO assessment practices and results for only 17 courses in the four departments regarded by the evaluation team as most advanced in the SLO cycle. The quality and extent of SLO assessment, analysis, and consequent improvements in the rest of the College's active courses are unknown to me at present.
 - c. According to the Spring 2011 report to the ACCJC, 45 percent of all College courses have ongoing assessment of learning outcomes, up from 20 percent in Spring 2010. The source of these figures, given the scattered nature of SLO assessment documentation, is not clear.
 - d. In the advanced department noted above, the assessments that led to improvement appeared to be based very little, if at all, on achievement of course SLOs, but rather on student success rates within courses and in later courses in the sequence. Departmental discussions of SLOs per se focused more on compliance with accreditation requirements. However, the department has decided to assess its course SLOs systematically beginning in Fall 2011 using embedded common questions or an add-on page in final exams.
 - e. The Self-Study reported that course SLOs were included in every course syllabus. However, I am unaware of any systematic monitoring of that assertion, and interviews indicated that some faculty members do not include SLOs in their syllabi. The evaluation team noted that the SLOs in the sample of syllabi they examined did not always match those in the corresponding course outline of record.
3. Program SLOs
- a. Instructional
 - (1) According to the Spring 2011 report to the ACCJC, only 20 percent of all College instructional programs have ongoing assessment of learning outcomes. The source of that figure, too, given the scattered nature of SLO documentation, is not clear.
 - (2) The definition of a program for program review and program SLO purposes is in transition. To date, the operational definition for SLO purposes has reportedly been restricted to a sequence of courses that leads to a certificate or degree, rather than, say, a discipline. So, for example, English does a program review, but developing program SLOs has not been required. An ad hoc committee of the Academic Senate has reviewed the current definition and other options, and will be making a recommendation to use the Statewide Academic Senate definitions for instructional and noninstructional programs. (See Consultant Recommendations under Team Recommendation 2 above.)
 - (3) It is unclear how many programs have established program SLOs. I conducted an analysis of all the program entries in Curricunet on October 19, 2011, and came to the following conclusions:
 - a) Not counting three apparent test entries and some duplicates that are not listed in the 2011-12 catalog, there were 72 programs in Curricunet:

Status	Total	No. That List SLOs	Percent That List SLOs
Active	7	7	100
Approved	11	11	100
Launched	26	26	100
Pending	28	4	14
Total	72	48	67

- b) Three departments—Automotive, Administration of Justice, and Child Development—accounted for 35 programs (almost half the total), 32 of which listed SLOs (two-thirds of the total). Seventeen programs were not associated with a department in Curricunet (most of which are related to technology); five of them listed SLOs.
 - c) More than half the certificate programs shown in the 2011-12 Catalog did not appear in Curricunet, and are therefore not counted here. The number and proportion of those that have identified or assessed Program SLOs is unknown.
 - d) The methods of assessment shown for each program (e.g., Exams/Tests/Quizzes, Class Work, Home Work, Lab Activities, etc.) appeared to apply to the set of courses of the program taken as a whole, rather than being tied specifically to the Program SLOs.
- (4) An examination of 21 PRAISE submissions (see Observations under Team Recommendation 1 above) revealed that at least some programs that do not appear in Curricunet and in the past have not been required to develop program SLOs have done so anyway.
 - (5) See Observations: Progress to Date: Course SLOs section above for the approach that is supposed to be used for Program SLO assessment. In the course SLO assessments from advanced programs that I examined, none included the mapping to Program SLOs. Reportedly, Program SLO assessment has occurred very little so far.
- b. Noninstructional
- (1) According to the Spring 2011 report to the ACCJC, zero percent of all student and learning support activities have ongoing assessment of their SLOs.
 - (2) The linkage between TIR’s response time assessments and its Service Level Objectives is implicit rather than explicit and systematic, and documentation of improvements was not available to me. No service outcomes, such as customer satisfaction with response times, have been identified to date in TIR.
 - (3) Administrative Services departments have not developed any Service Area Outcomes or Student Learning Outcomes to date.
 - (4) Human Resources has developed Service Level Outcomes, but they are problematic in some respects.
 - (5) I did not have time to search for outcomes and assessment in other noninstructional areas, such as the Library and Child Development Center, so I cannot report on the status of the outcomes cycle in those areas.
4. General Education SLOs
- a. At least three versions of the GE SLOs are in circulation:
 - (1) Those listed in AP 4025
 - (2) Those listed in the Catalog, which substantially revise the citizenship outcome, add a fourth outcome under Category II, and omit the last three outcomes under Category IV

- (3) Those listed in the August 2011 Student Services SLO/SAO documentation, which also revise the citizenship outcome, add three outcomes in an entirely new Category (Computer Literacy), and, in Category VI, alter the third outcome and split the fourth outcome in two.
- b. See Observations: Progress to Date: Course SLOs section above for the approach that is supposed to be used for GE SLO assessment. In the course SLO assessments from advanced programs that I examined, only one program included the mapping to GE SLOs and reported assessment results for them. Reportedly, GE SLO assessment has occurred very little so far.
- 5. Institutional Learning Outcomes: The remainder of the approval and implementation process for the new ILOs, and the extent to which assessment methods have been identified for them, are not clear to me. Because the ILOs are new, none has been assessed to date.

Consultant Recommendations: Actions to Close the Gap

1. Leadership and Guidance

- a. The Academic Senate, in coordination with the Interim Executive Vice President for Instruction and Student Services, should assume leadership in immediately making it a top campus-wide priority for 2011-12 and Fall 2012 to fulfill all requirements of the Proficiency level on the Commission's SLO rubric. (**Priority 1**)
- b. The Academic Senate, in coordination with the Interim Executive Vice President for Instruction and Student Services, should take the leadership in broadening the dialogue about assessing and improving student learning to the campus-wide level. (**Priority 1**)
- c. The President and the full-time faculty union should resolve their differences regarding faculty engagement in outcomes assessment and program review (including the relationship between learning outcomes and the evaluation process) as soon as possible, so that progress on those processes may occur. (**Priority 1**)
- d. The PPL consultant, under the provisions of PPL's existing contract, should meet monthly with the Academic Senate ad hoc outcomes committee or other appropriate body to respond to questions and provide guidance as needed to assist the College in its efforts to reach the Proficiency level on the ACCJC SLOs Rubric by Fall 2012. He should also offer assistance to the committee by providing feedback on a sample of course SLOs, and on the processes for developing, assessing, and revising them. (**Priority 2**)
- 2. **Integration:** The PPL consultant, in consultation with the Academic Senate and other appropriate individuals and groups, should develop recommendations for fully integrating the SLO cycle with the PRAISE process in all departments in such a way as to assure reasonable quality and continuous improvement. (**Priority 2**)
- 3. **TracDat:** As soon as possible, the College should properly install, test, implement, load, and maintain TracDat, to schedule firmly, track reliably, and report accurately all aspects of the SLO cycle for every course, program, GE, and institutional/degree SLO. The database should be updated at least annually, before each ACCJC Annual Report is due, and a consolidated report of SLO status at all levels, along with the

schedule for the next year, should be disseminated to the campus community.
(Priority 2)

4. **Consistency:** The PPL consultant, under the provisions of PPL's existing contract, should assist the Office of Instruction or other appropriate body in conducting a comprehensive review of syllabi and course outlines of record to ensure that the correct course SLOs appear in both, and in coordinating development and implementation of a better process for monitoring the consistency of syllabi and course outlines of record going forward. (Priority 1)
5. **Program Outcomes**
 - a. The Academic Senate ad hoc outcomes committee should request a copy of every SLOs worksheet submitted in the PRAISE process by the December 1, 2011 deadline, and determine the status of every program in the Program SLO cycle: from SLO identified, to means of assessment identified, to criteria of success identified, to assessment completed (with data summarized), to program changes needed. Alternatively, if TracDat is up and running and will accommodate these data, the committee should ask each program to enter them in that system. Either method should produce a comprehensive status report for all programs (as currently defined) on the progress of the Program SLO cycle. (Priority 1)
 - b. Depending on the results, the committee should take appropriate action to facilitate completion of that cycle by all programs no later than Fall 2012. (Priority 2)
 - c. The PPL consultant, under the provisions of PPL's existing contract, should offer assistance to the Office Student Services if requested, by providing feedback on Program SLOs, Service Area Outcomes, and the processes for developing, assessing, and revising them. (Priority 2)
 - d. The PPL consultant, under a mutually agreed-upon modification of the provisions of PPL's existing contract, should assist Administrative Services, Human Resources, and TIR in developing sound administrative outcomes and/or objectives and assessment methods in their departments. (Priority 1)
6. **Timely Completion of the Cycle in Noninstructional Areas:** Programs in Administrative Services, Student Services, and Human Resources, which operate over the summer and winter intersessions with a full or nearly full complement of personnel, should strive to complete SLO/SAO assessments, analyze the results, identify improvements, and implement those improvements by Fall 2012. (Priority 2)
7. **General Education SLOs**
 - a. The College should ensure that the GE SLOs as set forth in AP 4025 are accurately quoted in every applicable publication, including the Catalog. (Priority 1)
 - b. The Academic Senate ad hoc outcomes committee should develop and coordinate the implementation of a plan for assessment of the GE SLOs by Fall 2012. (Priority 2)
8. **ILOs:** The Academic Senate ad hoc outcomes committee, in consultation with appropriate groups and offices, should immediately identify appropriate assessment methods for, and coordinate assessment of, the ILOs, and establish a schedule for completing the ILOs cycle no later than Fall 2012. (Priority 2)

Suggested steps in the process include the following:

- a. Make any necessary preparations to apply the assessment methods.
 - b. Establish a criterion for each ILO, achievement of which demonstrates the desired degree of institutional effectiveness.
 - c. By the end of Fall 2011, assess achievement of each ILO; analyze the results to establish a baseline; and identify and plan for needed course, program, or service improvements or ILO modifications, if any.
 - d. Implement identified course, program, or service improvements, and/or modified ILOs, beginning in Spring 2012.
 - e. By the end of Fall 2012, reassess achievement of each ILO; analyze the results; identify and schedule needed course, program, or service improvements or ILO modifications, if any; and continue the cycle.
9. **Evaluation:** The College should complete a systematic evaluation of SLO structures and processes at all levels by Fall 2012, perhaps in conjunction with the Learning Improvement Forums mentioned above (or similar campus-wide dialogue opportunities). Based on the evaluation results, it should identify needed improvements in the structures and processes, and implement them in Spring 2013 if possible, but no later than the beginning of Fall 2013. (**Priority 2**)

Team Recommendation 4: Campus Climate

As noted in recommendation 6 of the 2005 Accreditation Evaluation Report, and in order to meet the Standards, the College should cultivate a campus environment of empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence by creating a culture of respect, civility, dialogue and trust. (I.B.1, I.B.4, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.C.1.a, III.A, III.A.1.d, III.A.4.c, IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.3, IV.A.5, IV.B.2.b [emphasis on "collegial process"])

- I.B.1. The institution maintains an ongoing, collegial, self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes.
- I.B.4. The institution provides evidence that the planning process is broad-based, offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.
- II.A.2.a. The institution uses established procedures to design, identify learning outcomes for, approve, administer, deliver, and evaluate courses and programs. The institution recognizes the central role of its faculty for establishing quality and improving instructional courses and programs.
- II.A.2.b. The institution relies on faculty expertise and the assistance of advisory committees when appropriate to identify competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees. The institution regularly assesses student progress towards achieving those outcomes.
- II.C.1.a. Relying on appropriate expertise of faculty, including librarians and other learning support services professionals, the institution selects and maintains educational equipment and materials to support student learning and enhance the achievement of the mission of the institution.
- III.A. Human Resources: The institution employs qualified personnel to support student learning programs and services wherever offered and by whatever means delivered, and to improve institutional effectiveness. Personnel are treated equitably, are evaluated regularly and systematically, and are provided opportunities for professional development. Consistent with its mission, the institution demonstrates its commitment to the significant educational role played by persons of diverse backgrounds by making positive efforts to encourage such diversity. Human resource planning is integrated with institutional planning.
- III.A.1.d. The institution upholds a written code of professional ethics for all of its personnel.
- III.A.4.c. The institution subscribes to, advocates, and demonstrates integrity in the treatment of its administration, faculty, staff and students.
- IV.A.1. Institutional leaders create an environment for empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence. They encourage staff, faculty, administrators, and students, no matter what their official titles, to take initiative in improving the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved. When ideas for improvement have policy or significant institution-wide implications, systematic participative processes are used to assure effective discussion, planning, and implementation.
- IV.A.2. The institution establishes and implements a written policy providing for faculty, staff, administrator, and student participation in decision-making processes. The policy specifies the manner in which individuals bring forward ideas from their constituencies and work together on appropriate policy, planning, and special-purpose bodies.
- IV.A.3. Through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution. These processes facilitate discussion of ideas and effective communication among the institution's constituencies.
- IV.A.5. The role of leadership and the institution's governance and decision-making structures and processes are regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness. The institution widely communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement.
- IV.B.2.b. The president guides institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment by the following:
 - establishing a collegial process that sets values, goals, and priorities;

- ensuring that evaluation and planning rely on high quality research and analysis on external and internal conditions;
- ensuring that educational planning is integrated with resource planning and distribution to achieve student learning outcomes; and
- establishing procedures to evaluate overall institutional planning and implementation efforts.

Observations: Progress to Date

1. There has been some progress in collegiality since Spring 2011. For example, a new CSEA Executive Board took office in Spring 2011 with the explicit purposes of reducing the negativity that had characterized previous CSEA leadership, getting the classified voice heard, and working together with other constituency groups and the administration toward the common goal of building the College. The new Interim Executive Vice President for Instruction and Student Services, who is himself a former longtime VVC faculty member, is held in high regard by faculty, who give the President credit for hiring him. New middle managers are reportedly working hard to maintain cordial relations with both faculty and classified staff. Moreover, several interviewees and others with whom I spoke made a point of saying that the College has many good people and good points, and that they are glad to work here, despite its problems.
2. Communication/Dialogue
 - a. All department chairs are now required under contract to hold department meetings at least two times per term. Monitoring is evidently spotty, but most departments reportedly follow the rule. If such meetings are held regularly and properly organized, meaningful communication should improve campus-wide.
 - b. Flex day activities on September 9, 2011 were very well received. Most participants were reportedly adjunct faculty. Organizers received many comments indicating a desire for more college-wide opportunities for dialogue, such as flex days or college hours. Many of the interviewees expressed similar ideas about group experiences at several levels. Some looked back fondly on flex days held many years ago. Others recalled management team or department chairs' retreats that were very helpful in maintaining camaraderie and facilitating a common understanding of the issues faced by the College. Still others thought that management team or division-wide meetings on campus on a monthly or even semimonthly basis would be extremely beneficial in promoting effective communication and preventing problems.

Observations: Issues Requiring Action

1. Campus Climate Research
 - a. The College performed a Campus Climate Survey in Fall 2010 to address the 2005 accreditation recommendation on that subject. The 2011 evaluation team cited the survey results in several places, but criticized it for focusing too much on "issues of structure and organization" and not enough on "respect, civility, dialogue and trust." The team also noted that virtually no use had been made of

the survey results, even by the shared-governance committees to which they were most relevant.

- b. The Campus Climate Survey has been criticized by some on campus, who believe that disaffected part-time faculty and classified staff were disproportionately represented among respondents, and therefore skewed the results in a negative direction. An analysis of respondents by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness indicated that classified staff were indeed overrepresented in the sample, but not as overrepresented as full-time faculty and managers, while part-time faculty were underrepresented substantially. My own brief, unsophisticated analysis of responses (excluding no-opinion and don't-know) indicates that managers and part-time faculty tended to have a slightly more favorable view than full-time faculty and classified staff of both shared-governance committees' work and the prevalence of effective practices in the areas covered by the survey. The overall differences among the groups were not large, however. If I had to put labels on respondents' overall view of shared-governance committees' work and the prevalence of effective practices in Fall 2010, they would be "slightly worse than neutral" and "neutral," respectively. If shared-governance processes were working very well, and if effective practices in such survey areas as communication, decision-making, resource management, and leadership were pervasive, one would expect much higher marks from all groups. Clearly, there is room for improvement.

2. Factionalism

The gorilla in the room of campus climate is the factionalism among classified staff, full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and managers that has been rife at the College for the last several years. Clearly, there is fine teaching and learning and support at Victor Valley College, but I have heard much about other sides of the College that are not so attractive in interviews, meetings, forums, and side conversations. Here is the picture that has presented itself to an outside observer with no axe to grind:

- a. Full-time faculty union partisans are at odds with Academic Senate partisans. Where the Senate sees academic and professional matters governed by Title 5 and shared-governance policy, the union sees working conditions and the need for compensation governed by the collective bargaining agreement, and the two sides seem unable to reconcile their views. Union partisans also express their opposition to the administration in a less than collegial manner, at least on occasion. For instance, one interviewee paraphrased a line from a union newsletter placed in faculty boxes: "How do you know when the administration is lying? When they are talking."
- b. Adjunct faculty members historically have felt like undervalued, second-class citizens at the College. Unintentional slights tend to exacerbate that feeling. For example, at the September 9 flex day attended largely by adjunct faculty, new and promoted classified staff were recognized and applauded, but none of the 19 new adjunct faculty received any recognition. Emergency kits supposedly provided to "everyone" some time ago were not provided to adjunct faculty members. More importantly, adjunct faculty reportedly are not invited to participate in department meetings in at least some cases, and rarely participate in student learning outcomes identification and assessment, even though they teach a great many

- classes. The result of such exclusions is a significant group of employees who feel frustrated, vulnerable, and even angry.
- c. Some classified staff reportedly feel exhausted, discouraged, and disrespected by faculty and especially managers, too many of whom have come and gone in quick succession to establish sound working relationships. One particularly telling example of management's perceived unwillingness to listen to classified concerns was the reported removal of and failure to replace the classified staff representative on the accreditation group charged with writing about Standard IV—which deals with governance and leadership. On the other hand, a small band of classified staff members over the past few years have reportedly acquired a reputation for shirking their work, rejecting accountability for their actions, disrespecting their supervisors and fellow College employees, placing their individual wants above the needs of the College and its students, and otherwise undermining what collegiality there is on campus.
 - d. Managers and faculty will acknowledge when asked that many classified staff members—particularly those in their own departments—perform their duties in exemplary fashion, and that the College benefits enormously from their thoughtfulness, hard work, and dedication to the institution and its students. However, most of the time, the work of classified staff appears to be taken largely for granted, and there is no systematic program for recognizing their contributions—or, for that matter, anyone else's contributions—to the College.
 - e. Middle managers feel they are too often caught between the employees who resist legitimate supervision and a revolving selection of upper management who kowtow to the unions and especially the faculty, have eliminated accountability in contract negotiations, and leave them dangling in the wind, unsupported.
 - f. In this roiling environment of mutual recrimination and turf defense, virtually everyone questions everyone else's motives, and many continue to nurse old wounds long after the offenses that caused them. The reasonable expression of legitimate differences of opinion by mutually respectful disputants in frank discussion appears rare across group lines. Far more common is staking out a position, daring the others to dispute it, and impugning the integrity of those who do—often after the fact, in conversation with people of similar mind behind closed doors. Many people at Victor Valley College without doubt have suffered painful effects from bad decisions and personal animosities in the past, and the desire to redress that pain is understandable. However, in my judgment, the person who looks at the world always through lenses colored by old pain will too often see ill will where there is none, and incompetence where there is simply a lack of understanding that can be remedied. Even when genuinely troubling new issues do arise, he or she will too often see things as far worse than they really are. Such patterns are destructive at all levels. Too often lost in the dust raised by them, in my judgment, is the good of the College as a whole.
3. **Communication/Dialogue**
Some interviewees and forum participants reported systematic difficulty in communicating with others on campus. Phone calls often go to voicemails, too many of which are not returned; emails receive delayed responses or none at all; requests to schedule a meeting or send information are too often ignored. Campus Climate

Survey results were consistent with these observations, and my own experience in campus communications was more consistent with this pattern than I would have expected.

4. See also Observations under Team Recommendation 7 below regarding the communication responsibilities of shared-governance committee members.

Consultant Recommendations: Actions to Close the Gap

See also Consultant Recommendations under Team Recommendation 7 below.

1. **Leadership:** The College Council, which has representatives from all constituent groups and factions on campus, should take the leadership in improving campus climate and facilitating creation of a “culture of respect, civility, dialogue, and trust.” The PPL consultant, under the provisions of PPL’s existing contract, should meet monthly with the Council to provide guidance and assistance in this ongoing effort. **(Priority 1)**
2. **Communication/Dialogue**
 - a. The College, under the leadership of the College Council and the Vice President for Human Resources, should contract with an expert experienced in the community college environment to develop materials and facilitate workshops and/or other employee experiences that will directly and effectively engage, and make significant progress in resolving, the issues of respect, civility, and trust among all groups and individuals in the institution, using tools and approaches suited to the specific needs of Victor Valley College. These materials and experiences should help everyone at the College identify common ground and recognize the contributions that all constituencies can and should make to a positive campus climate. **(Priority 2)**
 - b. All individuals and groups at the College should make a genuine, concerted, and sustained effort to leave behind the anger and hurt produced by old offenses, and to begin anew constructive relationships with each other and the College. They should deal with new issues as they arise in their own terms, and seek to resolve them without dredging up old grudges. **(Priority 1)**
 - c. As soon as negotiations and proper planning permit, the College should reestablish at least two mandatory flex days per year, to provide systematic opportunities for College-wide sharing and dialogue. All College employees in all categories—including part-time faculty and staff—should be required to participate for at least that portion of each day devoted to issues of College-wide significance. **(Priority 2)**
 - d. The College Council should establish a shared-governance Communications Task Force, and charge it with making recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of telephone, email, and other communication among individuals and groups on campus. The OIE should assist the task force in measuring the effectiveness of communication, using Campus Climate Survey results and perhaps other methods. The task force should solicit campus-wide input, and complete its report to the College Council by March 2012. The Council should then forward its recommendations, based on the task force’s work, to the

- President, and establish a system for regularly scheduled reevaluation and improvement of communication effectiveness going forward. **(Priority 1)**
3. **Research and Evidence**
- a. The College Council, with the assistance of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), should add a few questions to the Fall 2011 and subsequent Campus Climate surveys (only a few; the survey is already quite long) that will facilitate rigorous evaluation of the extent of respect, civility, dialogue, and trust on campus. **(Priority 1)**
 - b. The College Council, with the assistance of OIE, should evaluate other methods for measuring the extent of respect, civility, dialogue, and trust on campus, and, if any promise to improve understanding of the relevant issues and solutions beyond what the Council gathers from the augmented Campus Climate Surveys, implement one or more, at least on a pilot basis. **(Priority 3)**
 - c. OIE, under the auspices of the College Council, should administer the Campus Climate Survey again this Fall, and conduct a full analysis to determine the nature and extent of change from 2010, and to establish a baseline for the extent of respect, civility, dialogue, and trust on campus. **(Priority 1)**
 - d. **Distribution and Use of the Campus Climate Survey Results and Analysis (All Priority 2)**
 - (1) OIE should distribute to every shared-governance committee and campus department a report of the results and analysis most applicable to it as soon as possible after completion of the survey.
 - (2) Every shared-governance committee should discuss the OIE report of Fall 2010 and Fall 2011 survey results, and incorporate discussion of that report into a formal self-evaluation of the committee's effectiveness that results in identification and implementation of improvements, if warranted.
 - (3) Every campus department to which the survey results are applicable should incorporate the OIE report as evidence into its PRAISE process, and if the results indicate the need for operational improvements, include those improvements in its planning.
4. **Recognition:** The College should establish one or more programs to provide recognition periodically for classified staff members and other employees who do exemplary work in their positions, or otherwise make especially valuable contributions for the benefit of the College and its students. The point is to give praise where praise is due, and to do so generously. **(Priority 3)**
5. **Celebration:** The College should also provide support on a permanent basis for occasional celebrations at the departmental, divisional, and institutional levels, perhaps with the assistance of the Foundation. Such celebrations, appropriately organized, can help facilitate social interaction, promote camaraderie across departmental boundaries, boost morale, and dispel some of the doom and gloom that has beset many of the California community colleges, Victor Valley included, for the last few years. **(Priority 1)**

Team Recommendation 5: Distance Education

In order to meet the Standards, the College should examine and provide evidence that appropriate leadership ensures the accessibility, quality and eligibility of online and hybrid courses and programs and that such programs demonstrate that all services, regardless of location or means of delivery, support student learning and enhance achievement of the mission of the institution. (I.A, II.B, IV.A.1)

- I.A. Mission: The institution has a statement of mission that defines the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning.
- II.B. Student Support Services: The institution recruits and admits diverse students who are able to benefit from its programs, consistent with its mission. Student support services address the identified needs of students and enhance a supportive learning environment. The entire student pathway through the institutional experience is characterized by a concern for student access, progress, learning, and success. The institution systematically assesses student support services using student learning outcomes, faculty and staff input, and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of these services.
- IV.A.1. Institutional leaders create an environment for empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence. They encourage staff, faculty, administrators, and students, no matter what their official titles, to take initiative in improving the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved. When ideas for improvement have policy or significant institution-wide implications, systematic participative processes are used to assure effective discussion, planning, and implementation.

Observations: Progress to Date

1. Coordination
 - a. As of October 2011, the new interim dean of the STEM division has been assigned the oversight of DE, in consultation with the Distance Education Facilitator. He has a strong background in online education, and is familiar with the ACCJC requirements and standards for DE. During the Fall semester, he and the Dean of Instruction will reportedly undertake an examination of DE offerings and outcomes.
 - b. The Distance Education Facilitator convened an ad hoc Distance Education Advisory Committee (DEAC) in Fall 2011, with the primary purpose of developing formal procedures for DE at the College. Its membership, which is composed of seven faculty members (including the current chair of the Senate Distance Education Committee), has been quite active in developing a Distance Education Plan that is intended in part to respond effectively to this Recommendation.
 - c. An Academic Senate Distance Education Committee (FSDEC) has the following purpose, according to the Senate website: "Recommend to VVC Academic Senate academic and professional policies and procedures regarding DE; these policies and procedures include, but are not limited to: academic freedom, facilitating student success in online courses, and maximizing student access to online courses." It was reportedly not active last year, but minutes of the meetings so far this year indicate that it is working closely with the DEAC, in part through common membership.

2. The Distance Education Plan, in its sixth draft as of this writing, includes sections on DE mission and philosophy; administrative and organizational structure; standards for teaching, learning, and support; and faculty expectations and readiness. It also includes action plans for implementation, one of which addresses evaluation and improvement of DE based on student performance evidence. The draft Plan acknowledges the fact that some DE instructors use platforms other than Blackboard, which is the VVC standard, but its platform-related provisions clearly presume the use of Blackboard. This Plan, though it is still in draft form and will require further campus review, feedback, and revision before it is presented for approval, is a very large step in the right direction with respect to this Recommendation.

Observations: Issues Requiring Action

1. Coordination
 - a. Distance education (DE) courses have been the responsibility largely of the faculty who teach them. Each online instructor reports to the department chair who has responsibility for the applicable discipline. There was little coordination or administrative oversight in the area until Fall 2011, and no systematic evaluation of DE as a cohesive program.
 - b. Oversight of DE is not formally part of the job description of the new interim dean of the STEM division.
 - c. The DEAC at present has no institutional “home”: It is neither an Academic Senate committee nor a campus-wide shared-governance committee.
2. Standardization
 - a. The CTA contract requires that “all new classes offered online” use the Blackboard system, but only “for initial contact with students.” The term “all new classes offered online” is ambiguous in this context; it could apply to every DE section beginning next term, every DE class taught by an instructor new to DE, every course that is being taught via DE for the first time (but perhaps not subsequent times), every course that has never been taught at VVC at all, or any of a number of other meanings. Moreover, the implication of this language is that after initial contact with students using Blackboard, a DE instructor may use any platform.
 - b. Most DE courses are taught using Blackboard, but some faculty reportedly use Moodle, and others use software provided by textbook publishers, instead.

Consultant Recommendations: Actions to Close the Gap

1. **Distance Education Coordination (All **Priority 1**)**
 - a. The College should formally assign the responsibility for oversight of the distance education to a specific administrative position, and include that responsibility in the applicable job description.
 - b. As part of its review and evaluation of governance structures and processes (see General Consultant Recommendations above), the College Council, in coordination with the Interim Executive Vice President for Instruction and Student Services, should review the purposes and work of the DEAC (particularly

- in relation to that of the FSDEC) and make a recommendation regarding institutionalizing distance education planning, evaluation, improvement and related functions on a permanent basis. Those recommendations should answer questions such as, “Should the work of the two committees be combined under the auspices of the Academic Senate? Or should the DEAC be converted into a campus-wide shared-governance committee?”
2. **Planning and Documentation:** DEAC should complete its recommended Distance Education Plan, and forward it through the appropriate review and approval process, as quickly as possible, consistent with sound practice and high quality. (**Priority 2**)
 3. **Evaluation, Improvement, and Monitoring:** The PPL consultant, under the provisions of PPL’s existing contract, should (All **Priority 2**):
 - a. Evaluate and provide further written feedback on the evaluation processes for DE as a whole set forth in the latest draft of the Distance Education Plan, including courses, program, and services.
 - b. Meet up to once per month with the DEAC or its successor body, if desired.
 - c. Assist DEAC or its successor body in evaluating DE processes, programs, services, support, and outcomes, in consultation with the interim dean of STEM and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.
 - d. Assist the interim dean of STEM and DEAC or its successor body in drafting recommendations for improvements in DE accessibility, quality, and contribution to student learning and the College mission.
 - e. Make recommendations to the interim dean of STEM and DEAC or its successor body for systematically monitoring and improving DE going forward.
 4. **Standardization:** The Distance Education Plan should include steps to move toward full standardization of distance education delivery on a single standard platform, the most practical current candidate for which is Blackboard. A single standard platform for all courses will make it easier for students, once they have learned the platform, to move from online course to online course smoothly; facilitate professional development and support for distance education instructors; and facilitate ongoing, systematic evaluation of DE effectiveness. One approach to achieving this goal is to permit the use of a platform other than the standard by an instructor for a course taught via DE only if that instructor has taught that course via DE using that nonstandard platform at least once within the prior two semesters. DE courses that are new to the College or to that instructor, or that have not been taught using another platform recently, would thus have to conform to the standard platform. Of course, how to move all DE instruction to a single standard platform is subject to collective bargaining. Whatever approach is chosen, it should apply equally to full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, managers, and classified staff who teach DE courses. (**Priority 3**)

Team Recommendation 6: Fiscal Plans and Information

In order to meet the Standards, the College should develop long-term fiscal plans that support student learning programs and services that will not rely on using unrestricted reserves to cover deficits. Additionally, the College should provide timely, accurate and comprehensive financial data and budget projections for review and discussion throughout the institution. (III.D, III.D.1.a, III.D.1.c, III.D.2.b, III.D.2.c, E.R. 17)

- ER17. Financial Resources: The institution documents a funding base, financial resources, and plans for financial development adequate to support student learning programs and services, to improve institutional effectiveness, and to assure financial stability.
- III.D. Financial Resources: Financial resources are sufficient to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness. The distribution of resources supports the development, maintenance, and enhancement of programs and services. The institution plans and manages its financial affairs with integrity and in a manner that ensures financial stability. The level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of both short-term and long-term financial solvency. Financial resources planning is integrated with institutional planning.
- III.D.1.a. Financial planning is integrated with and supports all institutional planning.
- III.D.1.c. When making short-range financial plans, the institution considers its long-range financial priorities to assure financial stability. The institution clearly identifies and plans for payment of liabilities and future obligations.
- III.D.2.b. Appropriate financial information is provided throughout the institution.
- III.D.2.c. The institution has sufficient cash flow and reserves to maintain stability, strategies for appropriate risk management, and realistic plans to meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences.

Observations: Progress to Date

1. Managing GIC Funds
 - a. The President is now leading the development of a new method of controlling GIC funds that maintains separation from the base budget.
 - b. Many districts that have an enterprise fund similar to the GIC, or some other external source of college funding, have developed mechanisms for using that fund constructively. Some manage the fund through an auxiliary foundation, or have established an advisory board to consider various uses of the fund, such as the following:
 - (1) Provide for implementation of exemplary programs or new initiatives.
 - (2) Provide staff development or other activities that may be difficult to support from the general fund.
 - (3) Support student services and other activities that have been affected by state budget restrictions.
2. Long-term fiscal planning at the College over the past year has focused (and likely for the next two years or more will focus) on resolving the structural deficit. The College has developed a plan to resolve the structural deficit by 2014-15. It was discussed as early as June 2011 by the FBPC, which made some suggestions for clarification, and an update was presented to the Board on September 13, 2011. It requires a combination of savings from salaries and benefits and/or new ongoing revenue in the amount of \$1.4 million in 2012-13, \$1.7 million in 2013-14, and nearly \$1.8 million in 2014-15, and \$1.2 million from the Bridge Fund in 2012-13.

3. Dissemination, Availability, and Dialogue
 - a. The College posted its annual five-year budget summary for the unrestricted general fund on the Administrative Services website, along with the President's budget message, in October 2010, prior to final approval of the State budget. Posted on the same website each year are the Annual Financial and Budget Report (CCFS311) and the Report of the District's independent auditors.
 - b. The College uses the Snowwhite and Financial 2000 systems for financial analysis and reporting. (Snowwhite was locally developed by San Bernardino County, and will be phased out in favor of Financial 2000 in the coming years.) Users at VVC reportedly rely mostly on Snowwhite for budget summary or activity reports, and must use Financial 2000 for requisitions. Using Snowwhite, an appropriately trained department chair, manager, or support staff member can look up and generate reports on his or her own budget and expenditures to date, or for those of any other department, or division, area, or the college as a whole.
 - c. College employees without logon access may obtain reports of financial data from their supervisor or from Fiscal Services upon request.
 - d. The VPAS facilitates budget workshops twice each year with the Board of Trustees. The Budget Office lays the groundwork for each presentation, which is reviewed by the administrative team in Administrative Services, the President, and the FBPC, and incorporates their feedback before it goes to the Board.
4. Access and Training
 - a. Users who require regular access to financial data typically include managers, department chairs, and the departmental support staff whom the managers or chairs ask to look up data or generate reports. Fiscal Services obtains logon access to the County's data through these systems upon their own individual request or that of their Dean or other supervisor.
 - b. Fiscal Services provides one-on-one training for new users upon request, and tries informally to offer one or two scheduled group sessions annually for both new users and experienced users who want a refresher or answers to specific questions. Training covers both how to use the software and how to interpret budgetary reports. Fiscal Services also responds to phone requests for assistance from users of these systems.

Observations: Issues Requiring Action

1. Evaluation Team Concerns
 - a. The evaluation team's three primary concerns under Standard III.D, as I interpret their report and Recommendation 6, were as follows:
 - (1) The question of the College's solvency because of the continuing structural deficit (expenditures exceeding revenues year after year)
 - (2) The lack of adequate long-term fiscal plans
 - (3) The lack of "timely, accurate and comprehensive financial data and budget projections for review and discussion" by the campus community
 - b. The evaluation team decried the College's use of Guaranteed Investment Contract (GIC) funds to balance the operating budget. The administration contends that the GIC functions as an unrestricted reserve, and as such may be used in way the

- College sees fit. This Recommendation calls on the College not to “rely on using unrestricted reserves to cover deficits.” Resolving the structural deficit would render the GIC issue moot.
2. Long-Term Fiscal Planning
 - a. The details of the plan to resolve the structural deficit by 2014-15 have not yet been widely shared with or discussed in the campus community.
 - b. The FBPC rarely discusses long-term fiscal planning, judging from the minutes of the last 12 months. It concentrates primarily on funding issues related to the following year. That tendency is reportedly due in part to the fact that deliberations on long-term solutions to the College’s budgetary problems will have to consider, on the expense side, adjustments to salaries and benefits (which account for some 84% of the budget), which members regard as collective bargaining issues outside their purview. The danger in that approach is that deliberation and decision-making regarding a complex and thorny issue that is enormously important for the future of the College will not have the benefit of shared-governance input.
 3. Dissemination, Availability, and Dialogue
 - a. Updates of the College’s annual five-year budget summary for the unrestricted general fund and President’s budget message are supposed to be posted on the Administrative Services website annually after the Board approves the budget, but they have not been updated since October 2010.
 - b. It is not clear how familiar employees are with the financial information resources available on the Administrative Services website, nor what other resources might well prove useful to them if they were posted.
 - c. Formal discussion of financial data and budget projections occurs primarily in the FBPC meetings, minutes of which are available through the Committees website. As noted under Team Recommendation 4 above, there are at present no regular opportunities for campus-wide discussion, such as flex days, which might include coverage of financial matters.
 4. Access and Training
 - a. Monitoring and maintenance of access to financial tools and data—who needs it, who has it already, and who no longer needs it—is not yet systematic.
 - b. Training on the use of financial tools and data is also not yet systematic.
 - c. Some users who have access to financial tools and data reportedly prefer to ask for budget and expenditure reports from departmental support staff as they need them, rather than using the systems to generate those reports.
 - d. The College must pay a fee for each logon granted, so universal access to the systems is not practicable.

Consultant Recommendations: Actions to Close the Gap

See also the Observations and Consultant Recommendations under Team Recommendation 2 above.

1. **Guidance:** The PPL consultant, under the terms of PPL’s existing contract, should meet monthly with the FBPC, to respond to questions related to accreditation and

provide guidance in improving fiscal planning, dissemination of fiscal information, and mechanisms for campus-wide review and discussion of fiscal plans and information. **(Priority 1)**

2. **Managing GIC Funds:** The College should complete development of the new method of controlling GIC funds, formalize it, document it, and apply it consistently. **(Priority 1)**
3. **Long-term Fiscal Planning and the Structural Deficit Resolution Plan**
 - a. In the interests of transparency, the VPAS should disseminate the plan to resolve the structural deficit in the long term to the campus community. **(Priority 1)**
 - b. The President should convene a task force to coordinate a campus-wide discussion of the structural deficit, actions which might feasibly contribute significantly to its resolution, and the plan to resolve it. The task force should include representatives of administration and of both shared-governance constituencies and collective bargaining groups, as well as other members he regards as appropriate (e.g., business and/or community leaders). The aim of the discussion is to educate everyone in the College community about the issues, and to strengthen the structural deficit resolution plan if at all possible. **(Priority 1)**
 - c. Under the guidance of the VPAS, the FBPC should devote meeting time on a regular basis to the analysis and discussion of the College's long-term fiscal plans. **(Priority 2)**
 - d. At least annually, the FBPC should create and disseminate to the campus community a brief report of progress on the structural deficit resolution plan, and on the long-term fiscal outlook of, and fiscal planning for, the College. **(Priority 3)**
4. **Financial Information and Training**
 - a. Administrative Services should post on its website the latest five-year budget summary for the unrestricted general fund as soon as each update is available, and notify the campus of where to find the new information. **(Priority 1)**
 - b. In the interests of transparency and broadening understanding of financial issues, the FBPC should evaluate the availability, timeliness, and utility of financial information tools and data provided to the College community, and make recommendations for improvement as needed. For example, it might recommend posting updates of unrestricted general fund or other budget summary reports on the Administrative Services website on a monthly basis. Or it might recommend that Fiscal Services offer one workshop per year on understanding financial data, for anyone who wishes to attend. **(Priority 2)**
 - c. Fiscal Services should formalize scheduling and effectively promoting at least one group training session on understanding financial information and using the financial systems each Fall for any users who wish to attend. **(Priority 2)**
 - d. Fiscal Services should make more systematic the monitoring and training of users who need regular access to financial data. For example, at the beginning of each Fall semester, the office could send an email to an up-to-date list of all managers, department chairs, and applicable departmental support staff, asking them for a timely response indicating whether or not they lack logon access or would like one-on-one or group training. The email could also announce the next group training session. **(Priority 3)**

5. Dialogue

- a. The College should devote part of each flex day (see Consultant Recommendations under Team Recommendation 4 above) to clear and cogent updates on the financial status of the institution and the budgetary issues that face it, and to dialogue regarding those issues. (**Priority 2**)
- b. The VPAS and other campus leaders should take the opportunity during constituency-group, departmental, and other meetings to which they are regularly invited to incorporate at least some coverage of long-term financial issues into their presentations and discussions. (**Priority 1**)

Team Recommendation 7: Leadership and Participation in Governance

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College build and maintain a system for effective, stable and sustainable leadership, to include:

- *Creating a process for succession planning in order to avoid gaps in leadership.*
- *Assisting all employees and students to grow professionally by developing their leadership skills and encouraging their participation in governance groups.*
- *Addressing leadership needs in the key campus areas of student services and distance learning. (IV.A, IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.2.a, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.3, IV.A.5, IV.B.1, IV.B.1.j, IV.B.2, IV.B.2.a)*

- IV.A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes: The institution recognizes that ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization enables the institution to identify institutional values, set and achieve goals, learn, and improve.
- IV.A.1. Institutional leaders create an environment for empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence. They encourage staff, faculty, administrators, and students, no matter what their official titles, to take initiative in improving the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved. When ideas for improvement have policy or significant institution-wide implications, systematic participative processes are used to assure effective discussion, planning, and implementation.
- IV.A.2. The institution establishes and implements a written policy providing for faculty, staff, administrator, and student participation in decision-making processes. The policy specifies the manner in which individuals bring forward ideas from their constituencies and work together on appropriate policy, planning, and special-purpose bodies.
- IV.A.2.a. Faculty and administrators have a substantive and clearly defined role in institutional governance and exercise a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning, and budget that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise. Students and staff also have established mechanisms or organizations for providing input into institutional decisions.
- IV.A.2.b. The institution relies on faculty, its academic senate or other appropriate faculty structures, the curriculum committee, and academic administrators for recommendations about student learning programs and services.
- IV.A.3. Through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution. These processes facilitate discussion of ideas and effective communication among the institution's constituencies.
- IV.A.5. The role of leadership and the institution's governance and decision-making structures and processes are regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness. The institution widely communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement.
- IV.B.1. The institution has a governing board that is responsible for establishing policies to assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution. The governing board adheres to a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the chief administrator for the college or the district/system.
- IV.B.1.j. The governing board has the responsibility for selecting and evaluating the district/system chief administrator (most often known as the chancellor) in a multi-college district/system or the college chief administrator (most often known as the president) in the case of a single college. The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to him/her to implement and administer board policies without board interference and holds him/her accountable for the operation of the district/system or college, respectively. In multi-college districts/systems, the governing board establishes a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the presidents of the colleges.
- IV.B.2. The president has primary responsibility for the quality of the institution he/she leads. He/she provides effective leadership in planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness.

IV.B.2.a. The president plans, oversees, and evaluates an administrative structure organized and staffed to reflect the institution's purposes, size, and complexity. He/she delegates authority to administrators and others consistent with their responsibilities, as appropriate.

Observations: Progress to Date

1. Participation in Governance
 - a. According to interviewees and meeting participants, representatives of all constituency groups typically feel free to express their opinion in committee meetings.
 - b. Full-time faculty take a leadership role on most shared-governance committees, particularly in areas related to the academic and professional matters specified in Title 5.
 - c. Adjunct faculty do have representation on the Academic Senate and, through the AFT, on the College Council, though it is unclear whether they have specific representation on other groups.
 - d. Classified staff are represented in governance by CSEA.
 - e. The AS president, with the help of the faculty advisor, takes pains to ensure that student representatives serve on all active shared-governance committees, and that they have the opportunity to report out at each Council meeting. The AS president also does occasional “person-on-the-street” interviews with random students on campus, asking them to share their ideas and concerns on a written form, and then shares selections from these comments at Council meetings.
 - f. Management members of the College Council often serve on committees as “advocates,” who convene the committee initially and then, after selection of the chair, continue in a support, apparently nonvoting, capacity as liaison to the College Council, according to AP 1201.
2. Leadership in Student Services and Distance Learning
 - a. As noted under Recommendation 5, the interim dean of the STEM division now has been assigned the oversight of distance education.
 - b. The College has also hired a new, permanent Dean of Student Services, who is energetically coordinating that area’s work in planning, program review, and outcomes assessment.

Observations: Issues Requiring Action

1. Succession Planning
 - a. The evaluation team expressed concern about the high turnover in the senior administrative positions, and the presidency in particular. This concern was presumably the main source of their recommendation to create a “process for succession planning in order to avoid gaps in leadership.” But the team also noted that such turnover should not serve as an excuse for the College not making progress in the long run: “The Board of Trustees and the College faculty and staff must find a way to maintain momentum and accomplish initiatives for continuous quality improvement regardless of who is occupying that top administrative position.”

- b. Planning and decision-making at every college can and should take into consideration the fact that leaders, like other employees, come and go, sometimes in unpredictable fashion. One way to minimize the disruption caused by leadership change, and “to maintain momentum and accomplish initiatives for continuous quality improvement,” is to build, maintain, and document formal structures and processes for planning and decision-making that are not dependent on particular people, personalities, or personal relationships. The governance handbook recommended under General Consultant Recommendations above, once it is prepared, will be an excellent example of helpful documentation of such structures and processes. (See also the Consultant Recommendations under Team Recommendation 2 above.)
 - c. Some Board policies address the succession question indirectly:
 - (1) BP 2432 does specify the succession of administrative responsibility in the absence of the Superintendent/President, though it refers to two titles now combined in one position, the Executive Vice President for Instruction and Student Services.
 - (2) BP 2431 requires the Board to establish a search process in case of a Superintendent/President vacancy, but there are no associated procedures, as called for in AP 7120. So the search process is evidently developed by the Board as each vacancy arises.
 - (3) There is no hiring procedure specific to the vice presidents; they are covered under section II of AP 7120.
 - d. Several interviewees observed that Victor Valley’s difficulty in hiring and retaining great people in leadership positions is exacerbated by its remote geographical location in the high desert, away from the more densely populated centers of Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties. But Victorville is only 40 minutes from San Bernardino, and many commutes in Southern California are much longer and harder than that. Moreover, at least some California community colleges that are more remotely located have not experienced this problem. A more persuasive explanation, based on what I have learned at the College and from others in the field over the last few weeks, is that word about the kinds of problems described in this report has percolated through the system over the past few years, and the College has acquired a reputation for being a difficult place for leaders, particularly in top administration, to work.
2. Leadership training and skills development as such reportedly do not occur systematically at the College. Mentoring takes place, if at all, on an informal basis.
 3. Participation in Governance
 - a. Participation in governance, as at most community colleges, reportedly falls mostly to a small minority of each constituency group, many of whom serve on multiple committees. However, many shared-governance committee members reportedly do not engage in regular two-way communication with their constituents about committee and College issues, so that most of those constituents feel themselves in the dark about many of those issues.
 - b. Some classified staff reportedly believe that, although they are heard, their input is not given sufficient weight in many committee deliberations.

- c. According to AP 1201, “The Superintendent/President reserves the ultimate responsibility for the overall membership balance of all standing committees and ensures broad representation across the committees.” In practice, the President reportedly reviews all shared-governance committee appointments by the constituency groups, and has at least on occasion made changes to the representation.

Consultant Recommendations: Actions to Close the Gap

See also the General Consultant Recommendations and the Consultant Recommendations under Team Recommendations 2 and 5 above.

1. Succession Planning

- a. In response to the part of the Recommendation dealing with a succession planning process, with the help of PPL under the provisions of its existing contract, the Board should either expand on BP 2431, or develop a procedure to go with it, to specify 1) how it will prepare for the next presidential vacancy whenever it might occur, and 2) when it does occur, the steps it will take to facilitate an effective search and minimize disruptions in campus planning, decision-making, operations, and improvement. For example, preparation might involve periodically attending CCLC or other conferences or workshops to learn more about presidential succession and selection, or specifying the essential characteristics of a successful presidential candidate for the College. Steps to minimize disruption in campus leadership during a presidential vacancy might include specifications and timelines for the selection process, and guidelines for the use of interims and outside consultants. **(Priority 1)**
- b. The President and Board should consider formulating, with the assistance of PPL under the provisions of its existing contract, a set of essential characteristics for successful vice presidential candidates as well, to include the capacity for executive leadership at the highest level. **(Priority 2)**
- c. The College should update the language of BP 2432 so that it is flexible enough to accommodate title changes that have occurred or might occur from time to time in the future. **(Priority 2)**
- d. The College, under the leadership of the President and the Board, in accord with District Direction 4, and after successful implementation of other improvements recommended in this report, should make a concerted effort to redefine the image of the institution as a fine place to work, as an effective leader in student learning, and as a valuable contributor to the economic success of the community. **(Priority 3)**

2. Leadership Skills

- a. The College, under the leadership of the Vice President for Human Resources and the Staff Development Facilitator, should expand the staff development program to offer opportunities for leadership skills training to members of all constituent groups, and build those opportunities into every annual plan and schedule. **(Priority 3)**

- b. The PPL consultant, under the provisions of PPL's existing contract, should assist in analyzing staff development needs and options in this area, and if requested, may facilitate up to three scheduled leadership skills workshops. **(Priority 2)**
3. **Effective Participation:** Under the provisions of its existing contract, PPL should provide up to three workshops for managers, faculty, staff, and/or students on effective participation in shared-governance committees. **(Priority 2)**

The workshops should include coverage of the following items:

- a. The essential responsibilities of committee conveners and members, consistent with meeting norms now specified in AP 1201
- b. Model ground rules for committee meetings
- c. Decision models, including the meaning of consensus in this context
- d. Title 5 regulations on shared governance

Team Recommendation 8: Board Practices and Evaluation

In order to meet the Standards, members of the Board of Trustees must limit their role in governing the College to those responsibilities established in Board Policy, including delegating power and authority to the Superintendent/President to lead the district and to make administrative decisions regarding the effective implementation of Board Policies without Board interference. Trustees must avoid micromanaging institutional operations including their participation in campus committees and governance groups. Additionally, the Board must establish and follow a specific, regular time interval for evaluating its performance. (IV.B, IV.B.1, IV.B.1.a-e, IV.B.1.g, IV.B.1.j, IV.B.2, IV.B.2.a-e)

- IV.B. Board and Administrative Organization: In addition to the leadership of individuals and constituencies, institutions recognize the designated responsibilities of the governing board for setting policies and of the chief administrator for the effective operation of the institution. Multi-college districts/systems clearly define the organizational roles of the district/system and the colleges.
- IV.B.1. The institution has a governing board that is responsible for establishing policies to assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution. The governing board adheres to a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the chief administrator for the college or the district/system.
- IV.B.1.a. The governing board is an independent policy-making body that reflects the public interest in board activities and decisions. Once the board reaches a decision, it acts as a whole. It advocates for and defends the institution and protects it from undue influence or pressure.
- IV.B.1.b. The governing board establishes policies consistent with the mission statement to ensure the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them.
- IV.B.1.c. The governing board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity.
- IV.B.1.d. The institution or the governing board publishes the board bylaws and policies specifying the board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures.
- IV.B.1.e. The governing board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. The board regularly evaluates its policies and practices and revises them as necessary.
- IV.B.1.g. The governing board's self-evaluation processes for assessing board performance are clearly defined, implemented, and published in its policies or bylaws.
- IV.B.1.j. The governing board has the responsibility for selecting and evaluating the district/system chief administrator (most often known as the chancellor) in a multi-college district/system or the college chief administrator (most often known as the president) in the case of a single college. The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to him/her to implement and administer board policies without board interference and holds him/her accountable for the operation of the district/system or college, respectively. In multi-college districts/systems, the governing board establishes a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the presidents of the colleges.
- IV.B.2. The president has primary responsibility for the quality of the institution he/she leads. He/she provides effective leadership in planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness.
- IV.B.2.a. The president plans, oversees, and evaluates an administrative structure organized and staffed to reflect the institution's purposes, size, and complexity. He/she delegates authority to administrators and others consistent with their responsibilities, as appropriate.
- IV.B.2.b. The president guides institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment by the following:
- establishing a collegial process that sets values, goals, and priorities;
 - ensuring that evaluation and planning rely on high quality research and analysis on external and internal conditions;

- ensuring that educational planning is integrated with resource planning and distribution to achieve student learning outcomes; and
 - establishing procedures to evaluate overall institutional planning and implementation efforts.
- IV.B.2.c. The president assures the implementation of statutes, regulations, and governing board policies and assures that institutional practices are consistent with institutional mission and policies.
- IV.B.2.d. The president effectively controls budget and expenditures.
- IV.B.2.e. The president works and communicates effectively with the communities served by the institution.

Observations: Progress to Date

1. Board Development at Meetings
 - a. The College held a workshop on Board responsibilities on May 21, 2011, with consultant Cindra Smith as facilitator. Subjects included Board roles and responsibilities in effective governance, the Board ethics policy, team-building, adhering to the Brown Act, ending Board member service on College committees, Board self-evaluation, and 2011-12 District Directions and Board tasks.
 - b. At its August 9, 2011 meeting, the Board discussed the results of its most recent self-evaluation, focusing in particular on the Board’s code of ethics.
 - c. A follow-up session was held September 28, 2011, in part to discuss this Recommendation, and also Commission Recommendation 1 regarding the Board ethics policy. The Board revised BP 2715 to include a process for investigating alleged violations of the code of ethics and consequences for such violations, to resolve Commission Recommendation 1.
2. Avoiding Micromanagement: Board members, some of whom had made it a practice to participate actively in College committee meetings, reportedly no longer attend such meetings, as of October 2011.

Observations: Issues Requiring Action

1. Results of the Board self-evaluation have not been shared with the campus community.
2. Avoiding Micromanagement
 Individual Board members reportedly do continue to engage in attempted micromanagement of institutional operations, second-guessing the recommendations of the President or of shared-governance bodies in such areas as facilities planning and instructional technology. It is, of course, important for Board members to stay informed about issues affecting the College, to provide proper financial oversight, and to hold the Superintendent/President accountable for administrative recommendations and decisions. But it is inconsistent with sound practice for the Board to move from making policy (attending to ends, in the language of noted Board expert John Carver) to managing institutional operations (attending to means), which is the President’s job. The Board’s own Policy 2200 lists its primary responsibilities, and Policy 2430 sets forth cogently the authority that the Board has delegated to the Superintendent/President. The following comprise the first three paragraphs of the latter policy:

- a. “The Board delegates to the Superintendent/President the executive responsibility for administering the policies adopted by the Board and executing all decisions of the Board requiring administrative action.
 - b. “The Board delegates to the Superintendent/President the authority to enter into contracts on behalf of the District for up to \$64,000. Expenditures of \$250 or less do not require Board ratification.
 - c. “The Board delegates to the Superintendent/President the authority to make expenditures on behalf of the district pursuant to contracts.”
3. Some comments from College employees and students have raised the question of how well the campus community understands the Board’s express responsibilities, and the delineation between its responsibilities and those of the President. The evaluation team expressed a similar concern.
 4. Some interviewees and meeting and forum participants complained that the Board appears to have lost respect for input from some members of the campus community. For instance, three people mentioned the shift of Reports from groups other than the Academic Senate to the very end of the Board agenda a few years ago, which created a widespread perception among those groups that the Board does not really care to hear from them.

Consultant Recommendations: Actions to Close the Gap

1. Board Self-Evaluation

- a. The President, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, should document the results of the most recent self-evaluation, the Board’s discussion of them, and any conclusions, recommendations, or goals the Board formulated in consequence. In the interests of transparency, the President and Board should report out to the campus community any Board goals or activities that result from the self-evaluation. The same process should apply after every self-evaluation cycle. **(Priority 1)**
- b. The Board should revise Policy 2745 to specify a regular interval for the Board self-evaluation cycle. **(Priority 3)**

2. Governance, Delegation, and Avoiding Micromanagement

- a. Under the provisions of its existing contract, PPL should provide one workshop for the Board of Trustees specifically on the issue of micromanagement. The workshop, using as at least one of its texts “Preventing Micromanagement—Creating High Performance Boards” (Community College League of California, *Board Focus*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Fall 2006), should provide the Board and the Superintendent/President with concrete methods for preventing most micromanagement and dealing with it constructively when it does occur. Materials developed for the workshop, or other suitable materials on the same subject, should be made available to the entire campus community, to help educate all College constituencies on the appropriate delineation of responsibilities. **(Priority 1)**
- b. Going forward, the Board of Trustees should devote some meeting or retreat time on a periodic basis—perhaps biennially or after every Board election that results in new members, whichever comes first—to a facilitated discussion of sound

- practices and District Policies and Procedures related to board governance, the delegation of authority to the Superintendent/President, and avoiding micromanagement, to ensure that all members, whether longtime or new, remain on the same page regarding these issues. (Priority 3)
- c. The Board of Trustees and the Superintendent/President need to establish formal procedures for the orientation of new Board members, and for ongoing staff development for the Board. (Priority 3)
 - d. The Board, with the assistance of PPL under a mutually agreed-upon modification of the provisions of PPL's existing contract, should refine or develop Administrative Procedures and/or Board Policies related to succession and other Board-related issues identified in the process of producing this report. (Priority 2)
3. **Improving Campus Understanding of Board Responsibilities:** The College should devote part of the next flex day (see Consultant Recommendations under Team Recommendation 4 above) to a presentation and discussion of the proper delineation between Board responsibilities and those of the President. (Priority 2)
 4. **Affirmation of Value:** The President, on behalf of the Board, should take specific steps to ensure that the Board's actions accurately reflect that members value the input received from all constituency groups. For example, the Board could take the simple but powerful step of moving the Reports from all employee groups to a slot significantly earlier in the Board meeting agenda, or otherwise manage its time to ensure that all constituency Reports are an integral part of each meeting. (Priority 1)

Accrediting Commission Action Probabilities

Making predictions about Commission actions is a dangerous enterprise at best, because of uncertainties inherent in its processes. However, I will hazard an estimate of probabilities, based on the gap analysis in this report. In my judgment, if the College works very productively between now and March 2012 along the lines set forth in the consultant recommendations above, and writes a strong Follow-Up Report, the most probable outcome of the June 2012 Commission meeting is continuation on Probation, with a requirement for another Follow-Up Report by October 2012 or March 2013. Moving up to Warning, also with a requirement for another Follow-Up Report, is possible if the College makes extraordinary progress over the next few months. Full reaffirmation is unlikely. Also unlikely is a move down to Show Cause, given appropriate College effort and significant progress over the next few months.

Summary of Recommended Actions by Priority Category

Section	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
General	1a-b, d 2 3b 5 6a-b 7	1c 3a 4a	4b
Team Recommendation 1	1		
Team Recommendation 2	4 5a 6a 9	1a-f 2a-b 3 5b-c 6b-c	5d 6d 7 8
Team Recommendation 3	1a-c 4 5a, d 7a	1d 2 3 5b-c 6 7b 8 9	
Team Recommendation 4	1 2b, d 3a, c 5	2a, c 3d	3b 4
Team Recommendation 5	1a-b	2 3	4
Team Recommendation 6	1 2 3a-b 4a 5b	3c 4b-c 5a	3d 4d
Team Recommendation 7	1a	1b-c 2b 3	1d 2a
Team Recommendation 8	1a 2a 4	2d 3	1b 2b-c

Other Accrediting Commission Recommendations for Victor Valley College

Action Required: March 15, 2012 Follow-Up Report, with Resolution of All Deficiencies by March 2013

Commission Recommendation 1: Board Ethics Policy

In order to meet Standards, the Commission recommends that the Board of Trustees amend its ethics policy (Board Policy 2717) to include a clearly defined policy for dealing with behavior that violates the policy. (IV.B.1.h)

Resolution Required by Fall 2012

Team Recommendation 3: Student Learning Outcomes

As noted in recommendation 2 of the 2005 Accreditation Evaluation Report, and in order to meet the Standards and the Eligibility Requirements, the College should complete the development of student learning outcomes for all programs and ensure that student learning outcomes found on course syllabi are the same as the student learning outcomes found on the approved course outlines of record. The institution must accelerate its efforts to assess all student learning outcomes for every course, instructional and student support program, and incorporate analysis of student learning outcomes into course and program improvements. This effort must be accomplished by Fall 2012 as a result of broad-based dialogue with administrative, institutional and research support. Student learning outcomes need to become an integral part of the program review process, including incorporating detailed documented analysis from SLO assessments and data based research. Additionally, faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated learning outcomes should have, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes. (I.B.1-7, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a-b, II.A.2.e-f, II.B.4, II.C.2, III.A.1.c, E.R. 10)