

EVALUATION REPORT

**Palau Community College,
Koror, Palau**

**A confidential report prepared for
The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges**

**This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that
visited Palau Community College from March 1-6, 2010**

**Leon Richards, PhD
Chairperson**

May 4, 2010

Palau Community College
Visiting Team Roster
March 1-6, 2010

Dr. Leon Richards (Chair)
Chancellor
University of Hawai'i, Kapi'olani Community College

Mr. Gary Allen
ESL Instructor and Outcomes Assessment Coordinator
Santa Rosa Junior College

Dr. Susan Bangasser
Dean of Science Division
San Bernardino Valley College

Ms. Carol Bloch
Senior Nursing Instructor
Los Angeles County College of Nursing and Allied Health

Ms. Catherine Chenu-Campbell
Librarian
Sacramento City College

Ms. Bernadette Howard
Director Vocational and Community Education
University of Hawai'i, Windward Community College

Mr. Michael Unebasami
Associate Vice President for Administrative & Community College Ops
University of Hawaii Community Colleges

Dr. Daniel Walden
Dean of Academic Affairs
Los Angeles Southwest College

Dr. Roger Welt
Former Vice President of Student Services
Allan Hancock College

Dr. Audrey Yamagata-Noji
Vice President of Student Services
Mt. San Antonio College

Dr. Salvatore Lanzilotti (Assistant)
Interim Dean of Health Education and Executive Assitant to the Chancellor
University of Hawai'i, Kapi'olani Community College

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

INSTITUTION: Palau Community College
DATES OF VISIT: March 1-6, 2010
TEAM CHAIR: Leon Richards, Chancellor, University of Hawai'i,
Kapi'olani Community College

An eleven-member team visited Palau Community College (PCC) from March 1 to 4, 2010. In addition, three members of the team visited the PCC satellite nursing program on Yap, Federated States of Micronesia, on March 5-6, 2010. The purpose of these visits was to evaluate how well the institution is achieving its stated mission and goals, analyzing how well the college is meeting the Commission standards, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement, and submitting recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) regarding the status of the college.

In preparation for the visit, team members attended an all-day training session on February 3, 2010, conducted by the ACCJC and studied Commission materials specifically prepared for visiting teams. The team was divided into four committees, one for each standard. Team members read carefully the college's Self Study Report, including the recommendations from the 2004 visiting team, and the college's responses to the eligibility requirements.

Prior to the visit, team members completed written evaluations of the Self Study Report and began identifying areas for further investigation. Team members reviewed the lists of evidence presented in the Self Study Report and requested additional evidence be available during the visit. In addition, the team requested approximately 80 interviews (including duplicates). On the day before the formal beginning of the visit, team members spent the morning with the president of the college and some of his staff, and were presented an overview of Palau, its relationship to the other Pacific nations, including the United States, as well as the role of the college in the nation-building of Palau. In addition, the team visited PCC's offsite agriculture program, including the husbandry program involving the raising of pigs. The team members spent the afternoon at the college sifting through the evidence provided for it by the college in a specified team room located in the college library.

After an initial review of the evidence, the team was able to reduce its list of requested interviews so that they could be completed during the time allotted for the visit. The interviews of 91 individuals, counting duplicates, included faculty, students, staff, administrators, members of the Board of Trustees, the president of the college, various administrators, and a Palau legislator. In addition, five interviews were conducted due to requests from individual PCC faculty/staff members. The team also attended two open meetings to introduce the accreditation process to the college community and to allow for questions and comment from any member of the campus or local community.

During the visit, college staff members were very accommodating to the team members and available for interviews and follow-up conversations. Also, the college liaison officer (ALO) was available to reschedule and to obtain interviews at a moment's notice. The college was well

prepared and ready for the team's visit and displayed the highest level of the Aloha spirit, graciousness and accommodation to the needs of the team while attending to the evidentiary needs of the accreditation process.

The team compared and contrasted the information gathered during the site visit, as well as that offered in the Self Study Report, to the ACCJC Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness, Part I: Program Review; Part II: Planning; and Part III: Student Learning Outcomes. The team finds that Palau CC exhibits all of the Development level characteristics and some but not all of the characteristics of the Proficiency level for Part I: Program Review. The team finds that the college exhibits all of the Development level characteristics for Part II: Planning. Also, the team finds that the college exhibits all of the Development level characteristics and some but not all of the characteristics at the Proficiency level for Part III: Student Learning Outcomes. In general, the team concludes that in order for the college to increase its institutional effectiveness and student learning, the college needs to improve its use of a systematic cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement to the areas delineated by each of the four standards. Thus, while the college has made progress in meeting and surpassing the accreditation standards in some areas, the team did cite specific areas needing attention and improvement, as follows.

The team did not find sufficient evidence that the college evaluates its planning and resource allocation processes. In addition, the team found insufficient evidence to establish that the college assesses its evaluation mechanisms in any kind of systematic review of the effectiveness of those mechanisms.

Although faculty and the respective dean reviews the Program Review Report followed by discussion for program improvement, the team found insufficient evidence to demonstrate a link to a college-wide decision making process. Also, the team found insufficient evidence that the evaluation of the program reviews is utilized at a higher level for planning purposes.

The team could not find sufficient evidence of a systematic process for planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement within the library and learning support service areas. Also, library and learning support service areas as yet have not identified student learning outcomes (SLOs) and have not engaged in broad-based dialogue about the assessment of SLOs and how this assessment process could support continuous improvement.

Board policies regarding "Equal Opportunity" and "Non Discrimination" need to be more widely discussed and available. The college needs to improve communication between employees and the administration regarding the terms of their contracts, and decisions related to salary advancement. Additionally, the need surfaced for the college to better follow established procedures for the evaluation of faculty.

While the Technology Resources Committee conducted two very useful surveys in 2009 to assess technology resources and needs, the team found insufficient evidence of a systematic, ongoing assessment process for use of technology resources. Thus, there is a need for a broad institutional dialogue about the use of technology, the adequacy of current resources, and support

and training. Without improvement in ongoing assessment and broad based dialogue, the college will not be able to systematically plan for needed improvements in the technology area.

The team found evidence that suggests that PCC needs to clarify, formalize, and utilize its governance processes and procedures, as the lack of clearly understood governance structures directly impacts the ability to conduct transparent integrated planning and decision making.

Based on the evidence gathered by the team and its observations regarding areas needing improvement, the team offers the recommendations as listed in the next section.

Major Findings and Recommendations of the 2010 Visiting Team Palau

As a result of the March 2010 visit the team made four recommendations, as follows:

Recommendation #1 (2010)

Improving Institutional Effectiveness

To respond fully to the previous team's (2004) Recommendations 1, 2 and 3 concerning the increase of institutional effectiveness and student learning through the use of a systematic cycle of planning and evaluation, e.g., as applied to the college's efforts to integrate planning with resource development and allocations, to improve learning and success through identifying and assessing student learning outcomes, and to conduct systematic program review, respectively, the team recommends the college do the following:

- a. Develop and implement a strategy that ensures appropriate feedback and dialogue wherein assessment results are communicated to all constituent groups in an accurate, timely, and systematic manner (I.B.1, I.B.5).
- b. Establish and implement clear written policies and procedures that demonstrate the flow of human, facilities, technology, and financial planning protocols. (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, II.A.2.e, III.A.6, III.B.2.b, III.C.2, III.D.3)
- c. Ensure these written policies, procedures, and processes delineate the roles and responsibilities of the various college planning groups that will monitor implementation, assessment, evaluation, and improvement of college plans. (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, II.A.2.e, II.B.1, II.B.4, II.C.2, III.A.2, III.A.5, III.A.6, III.B.2.b, III.C.1, III.C.2, III.D.3)
- d. Establish and implement a written process by which the college will systematically review and revise as necessary its human, facilities, technology, and financial planning and budgeting processes. (I.B.6)
- e. Establish and implement a means to assess its programs and services evaluation mechanisms through a systematic review of their effectiveness (I.B.7)

Recommendation #2 (2010)

Library and Learning Support Services

To increase the effectiveness of library services support for student learning and to assure the acquisition of an appropriate and current collection of library materials that are available to support educational offerings, the team recommends that the college provide appropriate staffing and resources; develop and implement student learning outcomes for library programs and services; and assess the SLOs and utilize the resulting information for sustainable planning and improvement. All library and learning support service programs need to participate in the on-going program review process. (II.C.1, II.C.1.b; and II.C.2)

Recommendation # 3 (2010)

Human Resources

To increase the effective use of human resources and to assure a more equitable application of college policies and procedures, such as the Board Policies and the Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual, the team recommends that the college practice transparency, collaboration and communication in the development, implementation and review of all policies and procedures, and to assure that the administrative needs of the college continue to be met, the college needs to fill the key vacant administrative positions. (III.A.1, III.A.1.a, III.A.2, III.A.3, III.A.3.a, III.A.4)

Recommendation #4 (2010)

Leadership and Governance

To assure improvement and full implementation of the governance process created in response to Recommendation 6 of the 2004 team report, the 2010 team recommends that the Executive Committee structure be formalized. Furthermore, to assure that the mission and values statements are central to decision making, the team recommends that the college formalize, communicate, and implement all governance processes for faculty, staff, students, and administration, assess the effectiveness of those processes, and utilize the results for improvement. (I.A.4, IVA.2, IV.A.3, IV.A.5, IV.B.2.b)

ACCREDITATION EVALUATION REPORT FOR PALAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Introduction

Palau Community College (PCC or Palau CC) is located in downtown Koror, where 70 percent of the 19,129 people living in Palau work and reside. PCC was founded in 1969 as a two-year post-secondary vocational/technical institution. It grew out of a trade school that had its beginning in 1927 during the Japanese administration prior to World War II. PCC began with a small group of students enrolled in one vocational program on a campus with limited physical facilities. It was known at the time as Micronesian Occupational Center.

In October 1977, Trust Territory Public Law No. 7-29, amended later by Public Law 7-130, created the College of Micronesia, joining into a single post-secondary educational system the Micronesian Occupational Center and the Community College of Micronesia (which included the CCM-affiliated School of Nursing. In May 1978, Micronesian Occupational Center officially became Micronesian Occupational College (MOC), a distinct and complementary part of the College of Micronesia. In 1993, MOC became Palau Community College.

Today PCC is the single postsecondary institution in the Republic of Palau. There are currently 726 credit students enrolled at the college. The college serves not only the Republic of Palau, but also draws students from the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). FSM is composed of the island states of Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap. There are also Asian students who work and reside in the Republic of Palau enrolled at the college. The college enrollment of 726 is comprised of 76% Palauans, 23% FSM and RMI citizens, and 1% others. The 1% population includes citizens of the United States of America, the Philippines, Korea, Japan, the Republic of China (Taiwan), and the People's Republic of China.

The college also served 2,438 noncredit clients during the 2008-2009 through short-term courses/programs offered by the Continuing Education Division (CE), the Operation and Maintenance Improvement Program (OMIP), and the Cooperative Research and Extension (CRE) program. Palau CC also offers LPN and RN Nursing programs in Yap. Currently, there are 17 students enrolled in this program. The college has 191 employees, i.e.: 84 support staff, 80 faculty, counselors, and librarian (37 full-time, 26 part-time, and 17 full time, nonteaching), and 27 administrators, supervisors and professionals.

The last accreditation visit to PCC occurred on February 17-19, 2004. That visit resulted in five commendations and six recommendations for the college. The 2010 visit resulted in seven commendations and four recommendations, as listed below.

The team commends PCC in the following areas: as follow:

1. Palau Community College is commended for its responsiveness to the diverse educational and vocational needs of the community and its creation of programs to serve those needs.

2. Palau Community College is commended for its efforts to meet the various needs of the community. The college has made extensive efforts to bring a diverse population of students to the campus and even provide travel scholarships for students from several nations surrounding Koror. The campus engages these students through the diversity of educational programs, activities and clubs. These activities and programs provide opportunities for career development, cooperative learning experiences, community service, and leadership development.

3. Palau Community College is commended for its administration, faculty, staff, and students' truly remarkable commitment, passion, and collaborative spirit in meeting the diverse educational needs of the service area. The cultivation of knowledge, talents, diversity and respect for the population of the Republic of Palau and nations of Micronesia is highly evident in the college environment.

4. Palau Community College is commended for its partnership with San Diego State University (SDSU), which allows current staff access to attain bachelor's and master's degrees in the field of education and leadership.

5. Palau Community College is commended for its ability to obtain several formative U.S. federal grants that have enabled staff, managers and faculty to participate in professional training and staff development opportunities, and it is commended for allowing classified staff to enroll in college courses that meet their position training needs during regular work hours.

6. The college is commended for new construction and renovations to existing facilities that have occurred over the past few years. The new library, funded through a tuition increase directed for this construction, along with donations, is a testament to the commitment the college has made to improve the learning environment of Palau.

7. The President is commended for his work and communication with external agencies as well as his efforts to be responsive to the community's needs.

The team compared and contrasted the information gathered during the site visit, as well as that offered in the Self Study Report, to the ACCJC Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness, Part I: Program Review; Part II: Planning; and Part III: Student Learning Outcomes. The team finds that Palau CC exhibits all of the Development level characteristics and some but not all of the characteristics of the Proficiency level for Part I: Program Review. The team finds that the college exhibits all of the Development level characteristics for Part II: Planning. Also, the team finds that the college exhibits all of the Development level characteristics and some but not all of the characteristics at the Proficiency level for Part III: Student Learning Outcomes. In general, the team concludes that in order for the college to increase its institutional effectiveness and student learning, the college needs to improve its use of a systematic cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement to the areas delineated by each of the four standards. Thus, while the college has made progress in meeting and surpassing the accreditation standards in some areas, the team makes the following recommendations to PCC:

Recommendation #1 (2010)

Improving Institutional Effectiveness

To respond fully to the previous team's Recommendations 1, 2 and 3 concerning the increase of institutional effectiveness and student learning through the use of a systematic cycle of planning and evaluation, e.g., as applied to the college's efforts to integrate planning with resource development and allocations, to improve learning and success through identifying and assessing student learning outcomes, and to conduct systematic program review, respectively, the team recommends the college do the following:

- a. Develop and implement a strategy that ensures appropriate feedback and dialogue wherein assessment results are communicated to all constituent groups in an accurate, timely, and systematic manner. (I.B.1, I.B.5)

- b. Establish and implement clear written policies and procedures that demonstrate the flow of human, facilities, technology, and financial planning protocols. (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, II.A.2.e, III.A.6, III.B.2.b, III.C.2, III.D.3)

- c. Ensure these written policies, procedures, and processes delineate the roles and responsibilities of the various college planning groups that will monitor implementation, assessment, evaluation, and improvement of college plans. (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, II.A.2.e, II.B.1, II.B.4, II.C.2, III.A.2, III.A.5, III.A.6, III.B.2.b, III.C.1, III.C.2, III.D.3)

- d. Establish and implement a written process by which the college will systematically review and revise as necessary its human, facilities, technology, and financial planning and budgeting processes. (I.B.6)

- e. Establish and implement a means to assess its programs and services evaluation mechanisms through a systematic review of their effectiveness. (I.B.7)

Recommendation #2 (2010)

Library and Learning Support Services

To increase the effectiveness of library services support for student learning and to assure the acquisition of an appropriate and current collection of library materials that are available to support educational offerings, the team recommends that the college provide appropriate staffing and resources; develop and implement student learning outcomes for library programs and services; and assess the SLOs and utilize the resulting information for sustainable planning and improvement. All library and learning support service programs need to participate in the on-going program review process. (II.C.1, II.C.1.b, II.C.2)

Recommendation # 3 (2010)

Human Resources

To increase the effective use of human resources and to assure a more equitable application of college policies and procedures, such as the Board Policies and the Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual, the team recommends that the college practice transparency, collaboration

and communication in the development, implementation and review of all policies and procedures, and to assure that the administrative needs of the college continue to be met, the college needs to fill the key vacant administrative positions. (III.A.1, III.A.1.a, III.A.2, III.A.3, III.A.3.a, III.A.4)

Recommendation #4 (2010)

Leadership and Governance

To assure improvement and full implementation of the governance process created in response to Recommendation 6 of the 2004 report, the team recommends that the Executive Committee structure be formalized. Furthermore, to assure that the mission and values statements are central to decision making, the team recommends that the college formalize, communicate, and implement all governance processes for faculty, staff, students, and administration, assess the effectiveness of those processes, and utilize the results for improvement. (I.A.4, IVA.2, IVA.3, IV.A.5, IV.B.2.b)

Palau Community College, through its programs, services and dedicated staff, faculty and managers, plays an integral role in the economic and social viability of the Republic of Palau. The team acknowledges the unique challenges that impact Palau Community College due to size, location, and the national economy. Palau Community College has been foremost in advocating for the educational needs of the residents of Palau through the development of outstanding educational opportunities for community college students as well as K-12 students and other adult learners. The team had the opportunity to observe the local youth utilizing the library facilities and resources after school, demonstrating the openness of the college to embrace the community.

Through the conscientious and collective efforts of a hard working staff, faculty and management team, Palau Community College students are receiving a well-rounded education that will prepare them for additional educational opportunities as well as career employment. The team recognizes that the task of meeting the ACCJC accreditation standards for Palau CC can appear to be daunting. The team also recognizes that some of the standards could appear incongruent with the cultural values of Palau. Clearly, the Republic of Palau's governmental and economic structures, together with its distinct cultural values and practices, have an impact on communication and decision-making at PCC. The team would like to commend the entire college community for seriously embracing and addressing the requirements of accreditation and for the progress the college has made.

Evaluation of Institutional Responses to Previous Recommendations

Recommendation #1 (2004 –pages 53-54 of the Self Study Report)

The college should establish a systematic cycle of planning and evaluation to improve institutional effectiveness. Such a process should connect plans with resource development and allocations; major planning areas should include instruction, human resources, student services, facilities, technology and finance. (IB2,4)

Palau Community College has attempted to address this recommendation by formulating a 15-year Master Plan using its previous Ten Year Master Plan as a basis and developing and completing a program review process. In its response to the recommendation, the college claimed it met its requirements with references to its evaluations in instruction, human resources, student services, facilities, technology, and finance. Although planning and some level of evaluation have taken place, the team did not find sufficient evidence that the college has completely developed an on-going, *systematic cycle* of planning and evaluation to improve institutional effectiveness since the 2004 visit. Furthermore, the team found that the college needs to align its planning with resource allocations. Therefore, the team concludes that the college has not fully implemented Recommendation #1.

Recommendation #2 (2004 – page 54 of the Self Study Report)

The college should improve learning and success by identifying and assessing student learning outcomes at the course, program, certificate and degree levels; by using assessment results in an integrated cycle of planning, experimentation and evaluation. (I.B.5; II.A.1.c.)

Palau Community College has made considerable progress on development of course, program and degree SLOs. Faculty identified SLOs for all instructional programs and student services staff identified SLOs for most student services programs. Rubrics were developed and assessment has occurred. SLOs are posted in the schedule and are included on most course syllabi. A web site has been developed that will include SLOs for Student Services and instructional programs. Many SLOs have been posted on the web site, which is under construction. The Program Review template requires listing the SLOs and the rubric for assessment, thereby linking SLOs to the Program Review process. The only exception is the library and learning support service areas which have not yet developed SLOs. Except for SLOs development, implementation, and assessment in Library and Learning Support Services, the team concludes that the college is implementing Recommendation #2.

Recommendation #3 (2004 – page 55 of the Self Study Report)

The college should conduct systematic program review for all programs and services, including student learning outcomes as one element. This review should include the broad participation of those involved in the program. (II.A.1.a, 1.c., 2.a., 2.b., 2.e., 2.f.)

Program review has been embraced as the process for evaluation of programs and departments. Instructional programs completed two cycles (2006 and 2009) and most Student Services completed one cycle (2007). The template for Program Review includes student learning outcomes and the rubrics for assessment. This change has resulted in the ability to provide a learning experience for students that is based on outcomes that have been designed through a process of review, assessment, and revision. The Program Review documents were written by the faculty in instructional areas and by student services staff in student services areas and were reviewed by the faculty, staff and appropriate deans. The level of participation demonstrates a broad participation of stake-holders. The library has just completed its first program review (February 2010). Therefore, the team concludes that the college has implemented Recommendation #3.

Recommendation #4 (2004 – page 55-56 of the Self Study Report)

The college should develop and complete facility and equipment inventory and conduct a facility condition assessment. The college should implement regular preventive maintenance for existing building and equipment, identify, and prioritize and seek funding for deferred maintenance projects; and identify facilities and equipment for replacement as part of long range planning. The college should complete the connection of the new water tanks to the intended facilities. (IIB 1, 1a, IIB 2, 2a, 2b)

Based on the Focus Midterm Report findings in February 2007, the college has met this recommendation.

Recommendation #5 (2004 – page 56 of the Self Study Report)

The college should develop a comprehensive technology plan to ensure a more efficient and cost-effective provision of technology and support services. Such a plan should include an inventory of existing hardware and software; the identification of both equipment and staff support needs to match programs and services; specification of funding sources; and an implementation strategy. (IIC 1,1a, 1c, 1d, IIC 2)

The college created a Technology plan that was approved by the Board in 2007. At the Midterm visit in 2007, the previous team noted that the college had substantially addressed this recommendation. While the college has clearly made great progress in meeting this recommendation, it is not clear how it will move forward to either keep this plan up to date or create a succeeding plan. It is also not clear how the college intends to integrate the Technology plan with other planning processes. Therefore, while the team concludes that the college has implemented Recommendation #5, it recognizes the need for the college to monitor implement, assess, evaluate, and improve its plans on a systematic basis as stated in its 2010 Recommendation #1c.

Recommendation #6 (2004 – page 56 of the Self Study Report)

The college should establish and implement a written policy providing for faculty, staff, administrators and student participation in decision making process. The policy should

identify how individuals and constituencies bring forward issues and ideas. This will enable the college community to create a dialogue to achieve its mission. (IVA 2, 2a, 3)

Palau CC claims to have fully complied with Recommendation #6 by developing a college decision making process. The Focused Midterm Report also says that PCC has “fully complied” with the recommendation by developing a “College Management Team Policy,” which governs the functioning and composition of the Executive Committee. However, this does not agree with information offered in the Self Study Report, Standard IV, which states that there is no written policy for faculty or staff in the decision making process (p. 162). Furthermore, on the same page, the Self Study states, “Although not part of the delineation of the organizational structure, the contributions of the students, faculty and staff...are equally important for the good of the institution.” In addition, while the college’s policy for student participation refers to a student trustee position on the Board, evidence suggests that student participation in decision making needs to be encouraged and improved. Finally, interviews with members of the faculty, classified staff, and management indicated that there is little understanding of how the Executive Committee functions or of the governance process in general, and the evidence confirmed that sufficient written policies do not exist for either faculty or staff participation in the college decision making procedure. Thus, the team concludes that this recommendation has not been fully implemented.

Eligibility Requirements

1. Authority: Palau Community College has the authority to operate as a degree-granting institution: (1) initially based on the October 1977 Trust Territory Public Law No. 729, amended later by Public Law 7-130, which established the Micronesian Occupational College as a distinct and complementary part of the College of Micronesia; and later established in 1993 through Public Law (RPPL) No. 4-2, when the Micronesia Occupational College officially became Palau Community College; and (2) most recently, based on its accreditation granted in 2004 by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, an institutional-accrediting body recognized by the Commission of Recognition of Postsecondary Education and the U.S. Department of Education.

2. Mission: The most recently revised mission statement was reviewed by the Vision and Mission Statement Task Force and approved by the Board of Trustees in August of 2009, and in the most general terms defines the college as an institution of higher education and outlines its broad educational purposes appropriate for the constituency of the college community. The mission is published on the institution's web site, in the college catalog, and is displayed in prominent locations around the campus.

3. Governing Board: The team confirms that PCC has a functioning governing board responsible for ensuring the mission is being carried out. The team found evidence that they are an independent policy-making body that adheres to a code of ethics and understands its responsibility for ensuring the academic and fiscal integrity of the college.

4. Chief Executive Officer: The President of PCC is appointed by the Board and is the chief executive of PCC and has the responsibility and authority to administer Board policies.

5. Administrative Capacity: The institution has appropriate staff with appropriate levels of education and experience to provide administrative support for the college to meet its mission and purpose. The organizational chart depicts the key leadership positions, including fulltime administrative positions. Administrators are hired based on their educational training and experience and are regularly evaluated through an annual performance evaluation. The college catalog contains information pertaining to each administrator's educational background, degrees, and disciplines.

6. Operational Status: The team confirms that the institution is operational with students actively pursuing a range of transfer degrees and certificates, as well as skill development and vocational curricula.

7. Degrees: The college offers degrees and certificate programs. The evidence confirms that programs that lead to degrees are a substantial part of the institution's educational offerings and that a significant number of students are enrolled in these programs.

8. Educational Programs: The team found evidence that confirms that Palau Community College offers a range of degree and certificate programs, and that these programs are consistent

with the college mission and are provided in a manner consistent with the Eligibility Requirements. Student Learning Outcomes have been identified for each course and program.

9. Academic Credit: Credit is conferred based on generally accepted practices in degree granting institutions of higher education. PCC uses the Carnegie unit.

10. Student Learning and Achievement: The team confirms that campus-wide dialog was employed to develop the SLO process, including development, assessment, and evaluation of learning. SLOs were developed for all courses and assessment has been done. Student achievement of SLOs is recorded and linked to credit. The Program Review process includes SLO information.

11. General Education: General education includes courses in writing and mathematics and major areas of knowledge as specified in the accreditation standards. The evidence confirms that all associate degree programs require a minimum of 16 units of general education classes that meet the rigor of higher education.

12. Academic Freedom: Both the college's catalog and personnel manual convey the statement on academic freedom.

13. Faculty: Palau Community College employs approximately 80 full- and part-time teaching and nonteaching faculty. The faculty is sufficient in size and experience to support the institution's education programs.

14. Student Services: The evidence confirms that the college provides appropriate student services that support student learning and development within the context of the institutional mission.

15. Admission: The college's admission policies are consistent with its mission and conform to the adopted college requirements. These policies are published in the college catalog and schedule of classes, on the college web site, and in other appropriate college brochures.

16. Information and Learning Systems: The evidence confirms that the college provides access to information and learning resources through the library and computer laboratories.

17. Financial Resources: Palau Community College has a stable funding base from the Republic of Palau and tuition revenues. The evaluation team found evidence that the college's finances are in order substantiated by annual independent audits and monthly financial reports that provide financial information for monitoring of revenues and expenditures against plans.

18. Financial Accountability: The team found and reviewed the annual external independent audits that ensure the fiscal integrity of the finances of the college.

19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation: The team found evidence that through a recently implemented Program Review Process as well as its 15-year Master Plan, the institution is

beginning to systematically evaluate and make public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes. The college provides evidence of planning for improvement of institutional structures and processes, student achievement of educational goals, and student learning. The institution is beginning the assessment of its stated goals and makes decisions regarding improvement through an ongoing cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, and implementation.

20. Public Information: The college publishes a catalog that describes the mission, admission requirements, enrollment procedures, matriculation guidelines, programs and courses, degree and certificate requirements, costs and refund policies, academic credentials of faculty and educational administrators, and all other areas required for accreditation. The schedule of classes reproduces most of this information as does the college web site.

21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission: Based on the evidence presented, the team confirms that PCC adheres to the accreditation standards and complies with Commission requests, directives, decisions, and policies.

STANDARD I

Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

A. Mission

General Observations: Standard I, as addressed in the college's Self Study, lacks specificity in adequately addressing the requirements of several of the standard's sections. Furthermore, the self study appears to rely heavily on anecdotal claims as opposed to documented evidence. Nevertheless, the team did establish that the college meets the requirements of Standard I.A.1-3, but only partially meets Standard I.A.4, particularly as it relates to using the mission to guide decision making and to link budgeting with planning.

Findings and Evidence:

Palau Community College has a mission and vision statement that defines the broad educational purposes of the institution. In January 2009, The PCC President convened a Vision and Mission Statement task force to review the statements. The task force consisted of representatives from a diverse spectrum of college constituencies. In addition to reviewing the mission statement, a survey was conducted to determine the current understanding of the mission statement, and related dialogue took place with students, faculty, and staff. In August 2009, the board unanimously reaffirmed the current mission and vision statements, and a five-year timeline for review of the mission statement was developed. Although this timeline exists, it is vague as to the process for that review, due to a lack of clarity in the college's participatory governance structure. The Mission Statement is published in the college catalog and is displayed on its website. Mission Statement cards have been given to faculty and staff during meetings to ensure understanding and awareness of the statement. In touring the campus, team members observed the mission statement posted in a variety of locations such as the library, the online learning lab, and on the backs of clothing sold in the bookstore. The college meets these standards (I.A, I.A.2, I.A.3).

The college has developed student learning programs and services aligned with its mission and student population. A wide range of vocational programs and associate degree programs are offered. In addition to the schools of Arts and Sciences, Business, and Technical Education, there are student support services programs such as Upward Bound, Math, and Science. PCC has established partnerships with Penn Foster Career School, one of the largest and oldest distance learning institutions in the world, as well as with San Diego State University, in order to facilitate the achievement of online bachelor and masters programs in education. Career and technical education in areas such as Construction Technology and Small Engine and Outboard Technology serves the needs of the students in the region, and a new Palau Tourism and Hospitality School of Excellence is being developed and a former dormitory remodeled to house the program. In sum, the team commends the college for its response to the diverse needs of the community. The college meets this standard (I.A.1).

The mission and values statement have a prominent position in the 15-Year Institutional Master Plan and inform the four strategic directions: Student Success, Institutional Culture, Resources, and Culture of Evidence. However, the team found insufficient evidence to confirm that the mission statement

guides the decision-making process, and interviews with faculty demonstrated that there is at least a perception that decisions are frequently made that contradict the mission and values statements. The college does not fully meet this standard (I.A.4).

Conclusions:

Palau Community College is commended for its responsiveness to the diverse educational and vocational needs of the community and its creation of programs to serve those needs. In addition, the college is commended for its efforts to meet the various needs of the community. The college has made extensive efforts to bring a diverse population of students to the campus and even provide travel scholarships for students from several nations surrounding Palau. The campus engages these students through the diversity of educational programs, activities and clubs. These activities and programs provide opportunities for career development, cooperative learning experiences, community service, and leadership development. Furthermore, the college is commended for its administration, faculty, staff, and students' truly remarkable commitment, passion, and collaborative spirit in meeting the diverse educational needs of the service area. The cultivation of knowledge, talents, diversity and respect for the population of the Republic of Palau and nations of Micronesia is highly evident in the college environment.

The college has done a good job of reviewing and publicizing its mission and values statements and has created a new 15 Year Master Plan with four strategic directions in consonance with the mission. However, there appears to be a disconnect between the centrality of the mission and value statements and the college's decision-making processes; the college needs to address this disconnect as stated in the recommendation presented in Standard IV. The college mostly meets this standard.

Recommendations:

See **Recommendation #4 (2010)**.

B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

General Observations:

While the college recently developed a new 15 Year Master Plan, there is little evidence that its implementation is being properly monitored. In addition, the institution needs to document procedures in regard to systematic, integrated planning that leads to improvement and institutional effectiveness. Therefore, the team concludes that the college partially meets Standard I.B.1-7.

Findings and Evidence:

While the college engages in dialogue about the improvement of student learning on the various boards, campus committees, and general assemblies, the team found a lack of continuity in its institutional processes as it relates to communication and coordination of the results of student learning outcomes, assessment, and evaluation leading to institutional and program improvement. The self study reports that three committees, the Committee on Programs and Curricula (CPC), the Retention Committee, and the Committee on Student Financial Aid (COSFA) are specifically charged with ensuring and monitoring the improvement of student learning and institutional processes. However, the team found little evidence to substantiate the work of the Retention Committee and COSFA. Team interviews did support the claim that these two committees regularly meet and deal with the issues related to improving student success. While the CPC ensures the inclusion of SLOs in course outlines and programs, none of these three committees had a process to systematically monitor and improve student learning using the assessment results. The Student Services Division, which holds monthly meetings, documented that SLOs were implemented in 2008 and subsequently assessed. Ultimately, insufficient documentation was provided by the college to substantiate claims from the self study and interviewees to show that any program changes were implemented using those assessment results to improve student learning or institutional processes. The college partially meets this standard (I.B.1).

The 1997-2007 Ten Year Master Plan established eight strategic directions for the college. In 2008, the college president appointed a steering committee to develop a new master plan. During 2009, the work of that committee consummated in a new 15 Year Master Plan to coincide with the New Compact between the Republic of Palau and the United States of America. The committee included members of various campus constituencies, e.g. faculty, administrators, classified staff, and students. In addition, the committee used the Ten Year Plan as a basis from which to analyze, improve, and formulate the new 15 year plan. This new plan contains four strategic directions for the college. Written documents and results of committee interviews conducted by the team confirmed that all of the strategic directions were formulated in consonance with the college mission. However, interviewees indicated a divergence between college plans and development and potential outcomes of those plans. Many interviewees articulated they neither were consulted in the formation of those plans, nor were they aware of any systematic implementation of the plans. Furthermore, the team was unable to substantiate, either through written evidence or interviews the college's assessment of its planning outcomes, as well as the use of those outcomes in decision making. Finally, the college did not provide sufficient evidence to establish that it systematically integrates its lower level planning with its higher level institutional plans and systematically evaluates those plans for institutional improvement. The college partially meets these standards (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4).

While it is true that the college produces an annual report, results of surveys, and a fact book, the team did not find sufficient evidence that these data were formulated and produced in a form useful for integrated improvement planning or demonstrated quality assurance. Furthermore, most interviewees indicated a lack of awareness about the usefulness and, in some instances, the existence of these data. Interviewees also felt that when they report assessment results from their particular areas to college leadership, there is a lack of feedback as to the use of their assessment results to make institutional improvements and/or integrate them into other college planning efforts. The team finds that the college partially meets this standard (I.B.5).

The team did not find sufficient evidence that the college evaluates its planning and resource allocation processes. In addition, the team found insufficient evidence to establish that the college assesses its evaluation mechanisms in any kind of systematic review of the effectiveness of those mechanisms. The team finds that the college partially meets these standards (I.B.6 and I.B.7).

Conclusions:

The college's evidence in relation to Standards I.B.1-7 was non-specific in regard to addressing college compliance with these standards in regard to institutional effectiveness. Furthermore, it was difficult to connect the evidence provided to the team with the claims made in the self study. Several sections seemed to be written anecdotally with little to no supporting evidence. Interviews frequently confirmed the lack of evidence and often contradicted the claims of the self study. The team concludes that the college is at the Development level on the Commission's Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness Part II: Planning and therefore only partially meets Standard I.B.1-7 resulting in one recommendation.

Recommendations:

Recommendation #1 (2010)

Improving Institutional Effectiveness

To respond fully to the previous team's Recommendations 1, 2 and 3 concerning the increase of institutional effectiveness and student learning through the use of a systematic cycle of planning and evaluation, e.g., as applied to the college's efforts to integrate planning with resource development and allocations, to improve learning and success through identifying and assessing student learning outcomes, and to conduct systematic program review, respectively, the team recommends the college do the following:

- a. Develop and implement a strategy that ensures appropriate feedback and dialogue wherein assessment results are communicated to all constituent groups in an accurate, timely, and systematic manner (I.B.1, I.B.5).

- b. Establish and implement clear written policies and procedures that demonstrate the flow of human, facilities, technology, and financial planning protocols. (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, II.A.2.e, III.A.6, III.B.2.b, III.C.2, III.D.3)

c. Ensure these written policies, procedures, and processes delineate the roles and responsibilities of the various college planning groups that will monitor implementation, assessment, evaluation, and improvement of college plans. (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, II.A.2.e, II.B.1, II.B.4, II.C.2, III.A.2, III.A.5, III.A.6, III.B.2.b, III.C.1, III.C.2 III.D.3)

d. Establish and implement a written process by which the college will systematically review and revise as necessary its human, facilities, technology, and financial planning and budgeting processes. (I.B.6)

e. Establish and implement a means to assess its programs and services evaluation mechanisms through a systematic review of their effectiveness. (I.B.7)

STANDARD II

Student Learning Programs and Services

A. Instructional Programs

General Observations:

Palau Community College has made significant progress in developing Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for courses and programs. The college has embraced this process and has determined in its self study that it believes it is functioning at the Developmental Level of the Commission's rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness. The evaluative phase of SLO development, assessment, and evaluation is the next step.

The college developed a Program Review process in 2005. All instructional programs completed a Program Review in 2005 for the years 2002-2005. These programs or departments are now on a staggered three year cycle. The second round of Program Review for instructional programs took place in fall 2009.

Palau Community College provides educational opportunities for the diverse needs of the population including on-line courses and programs at off-campus locations. The courses lead to certificates, degrees, and/or transfer. Furthermore, students with lower skill levels and/or without a high school diploma, can become college-ready through the Adult High School. Basic skills for college students are addressed through tutoring and a few courses in math and English at the developmental level. Community needs are also met by the Continuing Education program. The college level courses offered at PCC are articulated so that students can transfer to a four-year institution. Articulation agreements with many colleges and universities provide opportunities for students to continue their education beyond the Associate Degree level. The Nursing Program on the Island of Yap is unique. The Yap Department of Health Services (YAPDHS) and the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) have an agreement with Palau Community College to offer the nursing program in Yap, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The memorandum of understanding clearly delineates the roles and expectations of the college and YAPDHS-AHEC. With the lack of educated practical nurses, the Yap, FSM agencies have committed to the success of the PCC nursing satellite program. Financial assistance to maintain the program comes from AHEC and the Ministry of Health on Yap to provide the support as needed to meet the lack of nurses in Yap. These agencies have great commitment to this program, and there is sustainability for future students to enroll in the nursing program. The program began in spring 2005, and is a work-force program in that all the students enrolled are full-time employees of the state hospital in Yap. Currently, all students are enrolled in the practical nursing program and are targeted in fall 2011 to complete that program. It is noted here that AHEC does not assist with tuition or books, as students are assisted with tuition by financial aid agreements by the college and students either purchase their books or have books available that they can borrow from their school library. However, the AHEC program will be providing tutoring in math, science, and assistance with the TOEFL examination preparation for the students.

Findings and Evidence:

Palau Community College addresses a variety of needs of the community to prepare the students from the island country for entering the workforce or transfer. A research analyst has been hired to collect data for evaluative purposes. The Program Review process, initiated in 2006 includes data for evaluative and decision-making processes. (II.A.1.a)

PCC predominantly utilizes face-to-face delivery methods, but has developed several on-line classes. The on-line classes serve the same population as the face-to-face classes, that is all the students live on campus or commute to the college. The college utilizes a user-friendly course management system; and the faculty for Computer Information Technology coordinates course shell initiation and provides other services for the few on-line classes. (II.A.1.b)

PCC defined and developed rubrics for SLOs for all courses and most programs in a process that was faculty driven. Advisory committee input was used only recently (early 2009) once the advisory committee role was resurrected. SLOs were assessed at the course and program level and assessment is an on-going process. SLOs are provided in the schedule and catalog addendum. Many are also found on the Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment web site. Each proposed course, following the guidelines of the Curriculum Handbook, is required to provide SLOs and rubrics. The course SLOs are linked through an SLO matrix to the program level SLOs. Additionally, the SLOs are aligned with the goals of the Fifteen Year Master Plan. (II.A.1.c, II.A.2a, II.A.2b)

The Committee on Programs and Curricula oversees the SLO process. Minutes from the CPC meetings provide evidence of dialog on membership, curriculum process, and SLO development or review. The SLOs are listed in the catalog (2008-2012) and any changes are provided in an addendum. Minutes from the CPC meeting held March 6, 2009, indicate a dialog identified additions or corrections for the fall 2009 addendum. (II.A.1.c)

SLOs are required to be included on course syllabi and the evidence indicated that most of the sample syllabi did include SLOs. In student evaluations of a faculty member, conducted each semester, students answer a question that asks if the instructor informed the students of what they should know upon completion of the course. Evidence of dialog on evaluation of the assessment results is not apparent. (II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a)

To ensure the quality and improvement of all courses/programs the Program Review process was developed in 2005. At that time a template for the Program Review Process was created and the first round of reviews was initiated in 2006 for all instructional programs. Faculty had a strategic role in preparing the documents. These reports provided a thorough analysis and selfreflection of the instructional programs from 2002-2005. Upon evaluation of the reports CPC modified the template to include additional data. The subsequent Program Review reports were aligned with a three-year matrix and the second round of ten programs or departments were completed in fall 2009. However, the team found insufficient evidence demonstrating a link between Program Review and a collegewide decision making process. (II.A.2.a)

Program Review results are slated to be used in the decision-making processes, such as Program Deletion, as described in the Curriculum Handbook. Minutes from the CPC reveal this is an active curriculum committee but not a committee that oversees the Program Review reports. Evidence was provided that demonstrated that the dean for the instructional area has reviewed the program review data and compared items from 2006 and 2009, such as “Program major needs for improvement” and “Recommendations for improving” for each program. Interviews substantiated that faculty and the respective dean evaluate program review results. However, there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the evaluation of the Program Reviews is utilized at a higher level for planning purposes. (II.A.2.a, II.A.2.c-e, II.A.2.f)

The college has 15 advisory committees to ensure that the students are meeting the employment standards in the community. There has been a rejuvenation of these advisory committees with the assistance of the college president. In February 2010, the college developed a list of selected community members who would serve as representatives of the programs offered to ensure community standards are upheld in the curriculum. The first meeting of the PCC Programs’ Advisory Committees was held on February 26, 2010. (II.A.2.b)

To minimize bias on exams PCC examines and validates institution-generated tests every 3 years or as needed. Standardized math and English exams are used for developmental courses. Also, two or more faculty grade English writing exams to minimize bias. Using a similar concept, math exams are rotated which again assures a practice to minimize bias. (II.A.2.g)

Course credit is granted upon demonstration of competency of skills or learning outcomes as outlined in the instructor’s syllabus. The course outlines also include expected levels of achievement for the grade earned. The SLOs are an integral part of the content of the course and linked to credit for the course. A matrix defines the courses that emphasize a program-level SLO so that upon completion of the required courses, all program SLOs have been met. For a degree or certificate to be conferred, the student must have achieved a satisfactory level of competency in the course and program SLOs. (II.A.2.i)

The catalog describes the general education philosophy and promotes the concept that learning is a lifelong process. The catalog further provides learning outcomes that are associated with the general education courses. The degree programs at PCC include general education courses. The catalog defines the general education courses for both degree and certificates and these courses provide a basis for productive individuals and lifelong learners. The number of required general education units is listed according to the degree conferred, Associate of Applied Science, Associate of Science, Associate of Technical Studies, or Associate of Arts. Additionally, the degree programs have the required area of emphasis or one disciplinary core (IIA.3.a-c, II.A.4)

The General Education Philosophy in the college catalog is broad enough to capture all the elements in this standard. Classes are geared to assist in meeting this standard. The college makes every effort to encourage sharing of cultural heritage through student activities, such as International Night. Since the college faculty, staff and students are very diverse, supporting respect for diversity is an important function of the college. (IIA.3.c)

As clearly stated in the Self Study Report licensures and certifications by external agencies are not required in Palau. However, it is to be noted that the Nursing Programs are reviewed by the Ministry of Health of Palau. If students want to take the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nursing or the National Council for Licensure Examination for Registered Nursing upon graduation from either of the nursing programs, the college curriculum has prepared them for the examinations. In general, actual hands-on experience is provided through internship programs that afford the students the opportunity to actualize their didactic learning in their field of study. Both a worksite supervisor and the External Programs Coordinator of the college evaluate the students. A positive evaluation by both the faculty and supervisor verifies the student's ability to meet the employment standards of this community. The only two programs that do not have an internship are Liberal Arts and Nursing. Nursing has a clinical component throughout the curriculum that provides the students the opportunity to develop the insights and competencies needed to function in the actual work setting. (II.A.5)

In every class section, students receive course syllabi which are prepared by the respective faculty. SLOs are available for students in the Palau Community College Course Offering Schedule and visible on the bulletin board near the Student Services area on the PCC campus. The college makes available to its students clearly stated transfer of credit policies in order to facilitate the mobility of students without penalty. In every class section students receive a course syllabus that specifies learning outcomes consistent with those in the college officially approved course outline. The catalog is the one source that keeps all abreast of changes with its updated addendums. All curriculum-related policies are reviewed every five years or when the need arises. In the event a new catalog becomes effective during the time a student is enrolled in a program, the catalog-stated college policy is that a continuing student is given one academic year to complete the program as described in the older catalog. Therefore, the team finds that the institution presents updated information and presents itself with integrity. (II.A.6.a-c)

PCC clearly states in the catalog the college's beliefs on academic freedom and student honesty. Course syllabi include the faculty policies on academic dishonesty. The college demonstrated commitment to academic freedom by spearheading a national effort to include the right to academic freedom in the Palau Constitution. (II.A.7.a, II.A.7.b)

PCC provides educational experiences designed to meet the needs of a diverse population. The catalog clearly defines Academic Freedom and the Personnel Manual describes expected professional and ethical behaviors. However, PCC is not an institution that prescribes to one world or religious view. The college's efforts to be objective in content and ethical in presentation have been noted. (II.A.7.c)

PCC offers a nursing program at a foreign location, the island state of Yap in the Federated States of Micronesia. To maintain the quality of the off-site program, the instructors meet the same qualifications as those on Palau; PCC course outlines are followed: SLOs are consistent for both nursing programs. (II.A.8)

All seventeen students currently enrolled in Yap are in the A.A.S. Program which is the practical nurse component of the nursing curriculum offered at Palau Community College. Within the

Yap-based program, students were found to be at different levels in the program in the area of anatomy and physiology, as some of the students had the class through the College of Micronesia while others had not yet taken the class. With the initiation of the program at Yap and the need to begin as soon as possible, some students were brought into the program without the benefit of taking the anatomy and physiology class. According to evidence gathered in interviews, this class will be offered to the Yap students lacking the course in summer 2010. The Yap program meets this section of the standard. (II.A.1.a)

As evidenced by the A.A.S. program plan provided, the students have taken a majority of the nursing classes from basic nursing concepts to mental health nursing. The students are provided a variety of hospital experiences to meet their theory content. Because this is a workforce program, the students are taught skills in the skills laboratory but are checked off by using the "Practical Nurse Record of Training" booklet. The skills include basic skills but not the administration of medication by any route. As stated in the requirement section of the checklist, the nurse supervisor or head nurse must observe the student practical nurse and certify that the student has successfully completed the skills in a competent manner in order to be checked off on a particular skill. The Yap program meets this part of the standard. (II.A.1.b)

The current nursing faculty member assigned to teach the nursing courses has a dual position in the nursing program at Yap, i.e., Yap Program Coordinator and Palau Adjunct Faculty for nursing content. However, the faculty member is also the Chief of Clinical Care Services at the state governed hospital in Yap. The faculty member is given release time to accomplish the role and responsibilities of a nursing faculty. As Yap Coordinator for the program, this individual meets the nursing supervisors on weekly basis regarding the clinical progress and problems experienced by the students. Given the variety and magnitude of responsibilities this one person is expected to perform, she was asked how currency in clinical practice was maintained to keep abreast any changes in nursing. These working conditions are identified as one of the program's weaknesses due to the magnitude of responsibilities the faculty member has as part of the multiple positions held in the hospital. To the credit of the current faculty member, she maintains currency by obtaining CEU's on-line, attends APLIC conferences, and weekly medical education conferences. Additionally, based on the evidence, there is one faculty member assigned at this time to teach the nursing content to the students. In the next sessions, the team was informed, other faculty will be recruited to teach content to provide the students a variety of faculty. Being able to learn from more than one nursing faculty member was something requested by the students during their interview. Due to the need for additional faculty support in the Yap program, the college minimally meets the requirements for this section of the standard. (II.A.2.a)

Students in the PCC-Yap nursing program are also full-time employees of the hospital, and as such they participate in the "Nursing Orientation Program" which is four weeks in duration. During this orientation to the hospital, they are taught hospital policies and procedures and how to function with "confidence" in the hospital environment. As hospital employees, they are given five hours a week for the PCC classes. The team finds that this schedule, as well as insufficient evidence of program planning, are factors that have led to students not having a sense of how long it will take to complete the program after having been in it for five years. With

input from the students and urgency to complete the program, a curriculum plan for the remaining courses has been devised so that students can know when they will be able to complete the practical nursing program, currently projected, according to interview information, to be by fall 2011. The team finds that while the college minimally meets the requirements for these sections of the standard at its Yap site, it remains to be seen whether or not plans will be implemented, assessed, evaluated, and the program accordingly improved. (II.A.2.c, II.A.2.e)

Evidence gathered in interviews at the Yap site suggests the need for improved involvement of the Yap faculty in the planning and assessment of the Yap program. Also, the evidence suggests that communication between the nursing instructors at Palau and Yap need to be systematically increased. Presently, if the Yap faculty member needs any assistance, she calls the Palau faculty member for advice. The Palau nursing faculty member goes to the Yap site every summer and teaches and provides student counseling at this time. In addition, the evidence suggests the need for meaningful college management, planning, and support of the Yap program. Consequently, the team finds that the college's Yap site minimally meets the requirements for this section of the standard. (II.A.2.e)

Finally, when the Yap students were asked about SLOs, there was no understanding of what SLOs were, why they were important, nor that they were listed for each course in material that the students had in their possession. Also, the medical library has a great deal of resources that could be of assistance to the student studies but is not being used by the students. Therefore, the team finds that the college minimally meets the standard for student learning services at the Yap site. (II.A.2.a)

Conclusions:

The Self Study provided evidence of meeting accreditation standards by demonstrating a commitment to program review and the establishment of student learning outcomes in the instructional area for course, program, and at the institutional level PCC provides educational opportunities for the diverse needs of the community. The college has collaborated with other institutions of higher learning to assure transfer ability and continuing opportunities for the students.

The team finds that the college partially meets this standard concerning Instructional Programs. For example, the team finds that to meet the level of sustaining the SLO process by 2012, the college must improve the process of faculty dialogue and evaluating assessment results to demonstrate continuous efforts to improve student success and learning. The team found insufficient evidence of dialogue on evaluation of assessment results related to the extent to which faculty informed students of SLOs. Also, although significant progress has been made to institutionalize the Program Review process, the college must improve its efforts to evaluate and utilize the information and data as a planning and decision-making tool to increase institutional effectiveness, instruction and learning. Furthermore, although the advisory committees for career technical programs have recently been re-established, an ongoing and continuous commitment needs to be evidenced to ensure the programs meet community needs, and the results of the work of these committees need to be systematically evaluated, and lead to documented institutional improvement. The team concludes that PCC is at the Development

level and exhibits some but not all of the characteristics of the Proficiency level for both Part I: Program Review and Part III: Student Learning Outcomes in these areas of the Commission's Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness,

Also, as noted by both the nursing faculty in Palau and Yap, there needs to be a recruitment effort by the college to bring nursing faculty to the college to eliminate the burden of one faculty teaching all the content in each site. The nursing faculty needs back-up faculty on each of the islands. Students need a variety of faculty to learn from and to see other views of nursing in clinical practice and teaching methodology. In addition, the team finds that it is essential that communication, problem solving, and decision-making between Palau CC and its satellite occur on a more consistent and systematic basis. Furthermore, the team finds that the college needs to better provide, monitor, and assess student learning programs and services for the students at the Yap site, and improve those programs and services with the assistance of their partners in Yap as the data warrants. For example, the team suggests students be oriented to the resources available to them at the Yap site so that they can better utilize those resources for student success.

The team notes that in reviewing the PCC nursing program, every country educates the practitioner to meet the needs of the country based on cultural needs and technology. The nursing education in both Palau and Yap have been reviewed and accredited by the appropriate agencies of both country and state to meet the competent level for nursing in their respective islands.

The team commends the college for its administration, faculty, staff, and students' truly remarkable commitment, passion, and collaborative spirit in meeting the diverse educational needs of the service area. The cultivation of knowledge, talents, diversity and respect for the population of the Republic of Palau and nations of Micronesia is highly evident in the college environment. Also, the team commends Palau Community College for its partnership with San Diego State University (SDSU), which allows current staff access to attain bachelor's and master's degrees in the field of education and leadership. In addition, the team commends Palau Community College for its ability to obtain several formative U.S. federal grants that have enabled staff, managers and faculty to participate in professional training and staff development opportunities.

Recommendations:

See Recommendations #1b, #1c, and #1e (2010)

B. Student Support Services

General Observations:

To support the learning and success of its students, Palau Community College (PCC) offers a comprehensive array of student services that are delivered through various programs and departments on campus. Student Services provides assistance to students, including admissions and registration, placement testing, orientation, academic advising, personal and career counseling, financial aid, and student activities. Other services include child care and bookstore. All student support services programs have participated in the first cycle of a program review process that ended in 2007. The department is planning to start their second cycle of review. From this process emerged program reviews that included student learning outcomes (SLOs). This process has identified modifications and improvements that have strengthened the college's ability to more effectively serve its students. Evidence for the college's commitment to enhance the quality of student support services is seen as services are modified and improved as a result of completing their first program review cycle. Student support services functions to provide students with an enhanced opportunity to succeed in the classroom.

Findings and Evidence:

The team found evidence that the college researches and identifies the support needs of its students. The college uses information from student surveys, assessment instruments, institutional research, and program reviews to better understand how to develop and enhance existing support services. (II.B)

Department meetings, regularly scheduled college committee, and student government meetings have provided forums of on-going dialogues about student access, progress, learning and success. The team found evidence that the college's program review framework for student support services provides a foundation for critical dialogue on the adequacy, responsiveness, and effectiveness of student support programs and processes by collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data. The team found a number of programmatic and procedural changes and improvements that have resulted from on-going research, data analyses, and program reviews. (II.B.1)

The institution has transitioned to a college catalog that is published every four years (2008-2012). An examination of the catalog revealed that the college does address all general information, requirements, and major policies affecting students required by accreditation standards. The catalog provides readers with the mission, philosophy, vision and a well-structured general information section that presents clear information about the college's course, program and degree offerings, academic calendar, academic freedom statement, availability of financial aid, learning resources, sexual harassment, student grievance, FERPA information, accreditation status, academic honesty, matriculation, TRIO programs, tuition and fees, continuing education, names and degrees of administrators and faculty, and names of governing board members. Addendums are published in a timely manner when changes to the instructional and student services programs are approved by the college. A non-discrimination statement will be included in the next published catalog. Policies affecting students are outlined in the catalog, class schedule, the student handbook, and on the college website. (IIB.2.a-d).

Structurally, the college is committed to providing students with an environment that supports personal and civic responsibility through student representation on the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, the Committee on Programs and Curricula (CPC), and numerous standing committees. These forums provide students with the opportunity to share concerns and issues. Students also have a voting membership in these groups, which gives students the opportunity to be fully engaged with the issues that have an impact on them and the college. The Associated Students of Palau Community College (ASPCC) presents an opportunity in which students function as part of the governance structure. (II.B.3.b)

Activities to support the development of students were seen in the college's extracurricular activities, including intramural sports, international night, camping and fishing trips, and activities that celebrate and preserve the Palauan and Micronesian culture and traditions. The college continues to assess and gain insight into providing a learning environment through both its academic and student support units that provides opportunities for developing the personal and civic responsibilities along with the intellectual and personal development of its students. There are 14 chartered student clubs and organizations that enable students to broaden their intellectual understanding and personal development through activities outside of the classroom. (II.B.3.b.)

The college has trained counselors that serve as academic advisors. Counselors work closely with instructional faculty to ensure that students are clear on what courses students can and cannot take. TRIO programs also provide eligible students with valuable support services. (II.B.3.c.)

As stated earlier, PCC partners in the Yap satellite site with Yap Memorial Hospital and the Yap Area Health Education Center (AHEC). The latter organization is a resource for the program and its students in a variety of ways. For example, individual student files are maintained and kept in the AHEC file cabinet. The file includes the following: transcripts, financial screening, and registration worksheet for TOEFL, financial aid report, supplemental form, Yap AHEC Student Profile, follow up slips on missing documents to students, academic advisement record of classes, admission application, Yap State Health Screening, and birth certificate. Students have access to their files upon request. The three agencies actively collaborate to support the nursing program, e.g., while AHEC staff distributes the Student Handbook, students with questions concerning the handbook see the PCC on-site nursing faculty member, who as stated above, is doing three jobs. However, there are areas of the program needing improvement. For example, students had the student schedule and catalog the day the team interviewed them as a group, but did not know how to use it fully. (II.B.3.a, II.B.3.c)

The college has a number of programs that promote student awareness of both the Palauan culture and a global understanding of other cultures including other Micronesian nations. The Student life and housing area is committed to offering multicultural events each semester. (II.B.3.d)

All admission practices are reviewed each semester by the Student Services management committee and recommendations for improvements also emerge from the program review process. Placement testing procedures are reviewed by instructional faculty. (II.B.3.e.)

The college maintains student records in a secure environment. All paper records are maintained by the Registrar's office in locked, fire proof files. All policies related to student grades are found in the college catalog and copies of related forms are available through the Student Service area. (II.B.3.f)

The implementation of a three-year cycle for program review with annual progress reports for student services was first introduced in 2004 and completed in 2007. This was the beginning of a structured evaluation that was formally linked to the college planning and budget allocation process.

The college has demonstrated that the program review process has resulted in a number of recommendations that have been incorporated into the planning process. It is important that student services continue to use the program review process and use this protocol for budget development. This process also reflects the underlying spirit of the accreditation standards in that an integrated evaluation, planning and improvement cycle does have the potential to begin at the unit level. (II.B.4)

Conclusions:

The Self Study Report provided evidence of meeting accreditation standards by demonstrating a commitment to program review and the establishment of student learning outcomes for course, program, and at the institutional level. A Student Services three-year program review cycle has been implemented that supports the planning process. The Self Study provides some evidence of an ongoing process of evaluation, planning, and improvement. Evidence will need to be reviewed to ensure that dates have been established to support the three-year Student Services program review process. Also, evidence that planning and budget are linked needs further review. Thus, the team finds that the college mostly meets this section of the standard.

The team strongly suggests that PCC needs to work with its partners, the Yap Memorial Hospital and AHEC, to better provide, monitor, and assess support services for the students at Yap, and improve those services as the data warrants. (II.B.3.a, II.B.3.c)

Recommendations:

See **Recommendations #1b and #1c (2010)**.

C. Library and Learning Support Services

General Observations:

Palau Community College offers a variety of library and learning support services designed to meet student needs. In addition, the library serves a large number of community users. The library is located in a new building that opened in spring 2010. The library includes a collection of print materials (about 30,000 items) part of which is a special Micronesia-Pacific collection and a dissertation collection specific to the region. In addition, housed in a separate building, the Western Curriculum and Coordinating Center, the library is responsible for an additional 15,000 items which serve as a resource for instructors and technical programs. The library provides access to an online, full text database of magazine and journal articles. The college also identified other learning support services that are available to students, including tutoring and the Student Support Services program. Finally, the college provides a number of computer labs to support student learning.

Findings and Evidence:

The team is concerned that the library collection does not adequately support the educational offerings of the college and is not sufficiently current to enhance student learning. While the library collection at first appears to be a reasonable size for the number of students served, the Micronesia-Pacific Collection is a substantial portion of the total collection. This is a special collection of materials narrowly focused on regional topics; while it represents an important resource for in-depth regional research, these items do not support the broad educational offerings of the college. In addition, the general library collection is heavily weighted towards fiction materials; these materials are of interest to the community and a resource to meet students' recreational reading needs, but they are not a primary support for much of the curriculum. The general non-fiction collection is too small and is often out of date. The team reviewed sections of the collection that relate directly to programs offered by the college and found the following:

- Nursing materials: among approximately 85 titles on this topic, only 4 were published in the last 10 years;
- Computer/IT materials: among approximately 50 titles on this topic, only 7 were published in the last 10 years;
- Oceanography/Marine science materials: among approximately 25 titles on this topic, only 1 was published in the last 10 years. (II.C.1)

However the college notes in its Self Study Report (p. 111) that students and faculty have access to online catalogs through the library's website and throughout Palau. These catalogs include the college's catalog and the Destiny Union Catalog, the latter allowing access to the Palau Public Library, the Belau National Museum, the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC), and the George B. Harris Elementary School. The college further notes that current research information in specific areas of science can be found at the PICRC site.

The library has a number of new computers for student use, and the computers in many of the student computer labs have recently been replaced. The speed of internet connections varies among labs; some (such as the online lab and the KSID lab) have adequate connections. However, the internet connections in the library are very slow (it generally takes 3-4 minutes to

download a single full text article), hindering students' ability to do research. There is no evidence that the college has engaged in broad dialogue about the sufficiency and quality of library and learning support materials. (II.C.1.b)

The team has serious concerns about staffing in the library. The selection of library materials to support student learning has been seriously compromised by the lack of a professionally trained librarian. The college states that this issue was identified in February 2004 in the last accreditation team visit report and then acted upon by the college in May 2004. However, the college has only had a trained librarian on staff for about three of the last six years; e.g., a faculty member from another area who has been serving in an interim capacity since November 2006 currently fills the position. The college did hire a professional librarian in September 2008, but this person only stayed at the college for about a month. While the position remains open, it is unclear what advertising and recruiting steps are currently being taken. The lack of a professionally trained librarian is of particular concern since this same problem was identified by the visiting team in February 2004 in the college's last accreditation report (II.C.1.b).

Without a professionally trained librarian, there currently is no systematic subject or curriculum analysis being done for library collection development. Assessment of quality and sufficiency of library materials is sporadic and relies upon anecdotal evidence. Although classroom faculty members are given opportunities to request materials, no systematic process is being utilized to ensure broad input from faculty. Based upon evidence provided by the college, many of the current titles being purchased are fiction titles, or titles for the Micronesia-Pacific Collection. Relatively few titles are being added to the general non-fiction collection to support the broad educational offerings of the college. While the Library's collection development policy lists as first priority "Material for academic program/curricular support," the list of titles to be ordered this year is almost entirely popular fiction titles. This problem is further compounded by the fact that the relatively small paraprofessional staff has not been able to keep up with cataloging and processing of new materials. The team observed a significant backlog of materials awaiting cataloging; some of the materials in this backlog would directly support the curriculum (8-10 new books for the computer science section, for example). (II.C.1.a, II.C.2)

Both equipment and software in the student computer labs are chosen by the appropriate learning support staff in collaboration with content area teaching faculty. Similarly, materials to support tutoring and for use in the Student Support Service program are appropriate and sufficient, and have been chosen by learning support staff with input from classroom faculty. (II.C.1a)

Library instruction is primarily delivered through a one hour session within SS100 (a required introduction to college course). Learning outcomes have been identified for the one hour SS100 session, and student learning is assessed with a required follow-up activity. The college did not provide evidence that these assessments are systematically used to improve instruction. In addition, the library offers orientation/tours to classes upon faculty request, and one-to-one instruction is offered by library staff. There is no evidence that these activities have been assessed. There are no basic instructional materials or handouts made available to students, and there have not been plans to develop these materials. In other learning support service areas such as computer labs and tutoring areas, students receive instruction from faculty and staff. The team

did not find sufficient evidence of college dialogue related to the need for students to develop information competency skills. (II.C.1.b)

The library provides commendable hours for access to materials and services; in fact, the library recently adjusted the Sunday schedule to be open two additional hours to better serve community needs. The extensive hours do make it difficult to provide adequate staffing in the library at all times. Decisions about hours of operation are based only upon anecdotal evidence. Staff in the computer labs and other learning support services report that students are satisfied with hours of operation, but their observations are based only upon anecdotal comments. (II.C.1.c)

The college generally provides effective maintenance and security for library and learning support services. The library has a security gate system installed in the new library building, and adequate security provisions appear to be in place for computers in student labs. (II.C.1d) While the college contracts with outside vendors for certain library materials and software, the college does not rely on any other institution for its library or learning support services (II.C.1.e)

The Library has just completed its first program review in Feb. 2010. The tutoring programs and student computer labs have apparently not participated in program review. The Student Support Service program has completed a program review within the student services area. There are some other evaluation tools used in the library and learning support service areas, such as customer satisfaction surveys and student evaluations of services. These evaluations are somewhat unfocused and only minimally cover the full range of programs and services, and it is not clear that the college uses the results to plan for improvements. Student learning outcomes have not been developed for the library's programs and services; and the team did not find evidence of SLOs for tutoring services and the student computer labs. The Student Support Services program is working on SLOs within the student services area. (II.C.2)

Conclusions:

The college meets some portions of Standard II.C, but does not fully meet this standard. The team does not believe that the library's collection and services are adequate to supportfully educational offerings and student learning. These shortcomings in the library area are at least partially attributable to the absence of a permanent professional librarian. The college did not provide sufficient evidence of broad dialogue about the adequacy of materials and services. In general, the team could not find sufficient evidence of a systematic process for planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement within the library and learning support service areas. Many library and learning support service areas have not identified student learning outcomes, and broad dialogue has not occurred about the assessment of SLOs and how this could support continuous improvement.

Recommendations:

Recommendation #2 (2010)

Library and Learning Support Services

To increase the effectiveness of library services support for student learning and to assure the acquisition of an appropriate and current collection of library materials that are available to

support educational offerings, the team recommends that the college provide appropriate staffing and resources; develop and implement student learning outcomes for library programs and services; and assess the SLO's and utilize the resulting information for sustainable planning and improvement. All library and learning support service programs need to participate in the on-going program review process. (I.C.1, I.C.1.b; and I.C.2)

See also **Recommendation #1c (2010)**.

STANDARD III

Resources

A. Human Resources

General Observations:

The college has made progress in establishing and following procedures related to the evaluation and training of employees. Recruitment of hard-to-fill faculty positions can be challenging. Several key administrative positions remained unfilled at the time of the team visit. Additionally, there is a need to link educational needs assessment with the provision and scheduling of academic and vocational programs and courses in an integrated planning approach. It is important for the college to determine which faculty the college needs to hire based on the educational programs and the educational needs of the students and the community. In the Self Study Report, the college speaks to this concern by stating, "While the college does have sufficient teaching faculty to support academic programs, from time to time, additional instructors are needed to meet student needs for specific courses. The college has been fortunate to have adjunct faculty available on short notice. However, the college must continue to recruit adjunct faculty, especially in English, math, and science to position itself to continue to effectively respond to student needs." (p. 127)

There are challenges that are clearly unique to Palau Community College relative to staffing, especially at the professional level. The inability to attract and retain a librarian position speaks to the college's physical location as well as other variables. Having a continuous void of a librarian should be further addressed in terms of how the college intends to improve in addressing position vacancies.

All references regarding human resources processes point to the Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual (Personnel Manual). This Manual contains hiring, evaluation and grievance procedures, faculty academic freedom and responsibilities, as well as employee classifications and salary schedules. It was last reviewed and revised in 2005. All full-time employees receive a copy of the Manual. Concerns were shared with the visiting team that certain provisions of the Manual were not being followed, especially related to hiring contract status and salary schedules.

The partnership with San Diego State University (SDSU) in offering master's and bachelor's degrees is cited as an excellent opportunity for both professional development and promotional opportunities. Six employees have received their baccalaureate degrees and 22 employees have received their master's degrees, with several employees currently taking coursework toward their degrees. A matrix of training needs is developed from information reported by both the employee and the supervisor via the evaluation process. Enrollment is limited to education (teaching and leadership) courses only and has not been expanded to include more advanced, subject matter instruction. Due to the absence of a baccalaureate-level institution within the Republic of Palau, having access to obtain bachelor's and master's degrees from an established U.S. university is beneficial to the employees as well as to Palau Community College.

Findings and Evidence:

Job descriptions for classified staff and management positions include: Nature and Scope, Principal Accountabilities, Reporting Structure, and Qualifications. Instructor descriptions include Nature and Scope and Principal Accountabilities, while specific Qualifications are developed uniquely for each particular faculty opening. Palau Community College's remote location serves as a challenge to fulfilling faculty positions with higher level educational requirements. Therefore, "Master's Degree desired" is requested for non-vocational faculty openings, while "Bachelor's Degree desired" is requested for vocational faculty openings. Teaching experience can be used to substitute for the lack of a degree. Faculty are involved in the selection process by screening and interviewing potential new faculty members and making hiring recommendations to the Dean of Academic Affairs. They review the educational background records, teaching and related work experience. Faculty candidates who hold degrees from non-U.S. colleges are reviewed through World Education Services (WES) for equivalency. (IIIA.1, IIIA.1.a)

A Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual (Personnel Manual) details employment contracts, compensation, performance evaluation, employee discipline, the grievance procedure, faculty workloads, and more. Staff and faculty are provided with copies of the Manual and it is referenced on a regular basis. This Manual was last updated in October of 2005. Because the Manual includes a list of employee positions as well as contract specifications, pay scales and benefits, updating the Manual on a more frequent basis would allow employees to have a reference for more current information related to their employment and assist the college in clarifying employment decisions. The 15-Year Institutional Master Plan, section 3.4.2, cites that an ad hoc committee will periodically review the Manual to update personnel rules and regulations. The college is encouraged to engage in a collaborative process to update the Manual on a more frequent basis and to consider the appropriateness of aspects that are not static due to budget and other impacting conditions. (IIIA.1, IIIA.1.a)

During the team visit, faculty who were selected by the college to be interviewed, as well as other faculty who came forward to speak with visiting team members, expressed concerns that specific aspects of the Manual were not being followed. One area of concern according to the evidence gathered related to the Manual, section on Initial/Renewal Employment Contracts (7.2), specifically related to New Employees (7.2.1), which states, "All new full-time employees with PCC shall be offered an initial contract of two years. Thereafter, such employees shall be offered a renewal contract not less than four years." Some faculty reported that this process was not being followed, and that they were only being provided with annual, one-year contracts. The Manual provides for a "Limited Term Appointment" to fill a temporary position (section 5.5), but that the limited term appointment "in no event is to exceed a total of one year." (section 5.5.1) The process of deciding which faculty receive a standard contract and which receive a limited term contract was not clear to some faculty interviewed, thereby leading to a perception that there was possibly inequitable treatment among faculty. Several conditions might impact the type of contract that a faculty member receives. The team suggests that communication directly with affected employees regarding their contract status will enable the college to be more responsive to its employees. By reviewing and amending the Manual as referenced in the

15-Year Institutional Master Plan, and by communicating the appropriate policies to current and new faculty, transparency can be provided to employee contracts. (III.A.1, III.A.1.a)

Another issue raised by faculty in interviews, as related to the Personnel Manual concerns the section 8.4.2, Advancement on the Faculty Salary Schedule. This sections states, “After the initial placement on the salary schedule, the faculty member shall advance one step (e.g., from step 3 to step 4) on the schedule on his/her anniversary date when the following conditions are met...” Some faculty reported that the salary step progression was not being followed. Exhibit A1 and A2 in the Manual depict the faculty step progression table. It was shared with the visiting team that the Board has needed to take a different course of action related to salary advancement. The process of communicating these decisions appears to be problematic in that employees believed what is stated in the Manual and did not seem to know about deviations to the salary provisions detailed in the Manual. The lack of clear communication to clarify Board decisions related to compensation and benefits, as well as clarification of status to specific employees, was reported as a concern to the visiting team. It is understood that many colleges may be unable, due to budget restraints, to meet certain contractual obligations. Therefore, a decision as to whether more dynamic information should be included in the Manual should be reviewed. (III.A.1, III.A.1.a)

The Personnel Manual contains a section on Faculty Academic Freedom and Responsibilities related to ethical standards for teaching faculty but does not contain a code of conduct for other employees. The college cited this omission in the planning agenda as something it needs to complete. (Self Study, page 126) (IIIA.1.a, IIIA.1.d, IIIA.3, IIIA.3.a)

An evaluation process is in place at the college for classified staff, management and faculty. Human Resources distributes the Employee Performance and Merit Review form for classified employees and faculty and the Managerial Performance and Merit Review form for management employees. This is done annually on the employee’s anniversary date for classified staff and managers. The faculty evaluation process includes: classroom observations, student evaluations of instructors, and the performance evaluations and is mainly coordinated through the office of the Dean of Academic Affairs. Once a semester, the student evaluation of instructors form is given to students. This form contains items related to measuring the faculty member’s effectiveness in meeting assessment and student learning outcomes for the course. The performance evaluation process includes both the employee’s self evaluation and the supervisor’s evaluation of the employee. (IIIA.1.b, IIIA.1.c)

During the team visit, faculty who were both selected by the college to be interviewed, as well as other faculty who addressed the visiting team members voluntarily, shared concerns that the faculty evaluation process was not being followed in all cases. The college process as described in the Self Study Report (pp. 124-125) states that the college is to conduct class observations for new faculty members “to assess teaching effectiveness in order to make sure stated learning outcomes are achieved.” Faculty interviewed stated that they have been evaluated without any classroom observations. The established process involves the Academic Affairs office conducting the classroom observations and completing all of the annual performance evaluations for all faculty. During the visit, it was confirmed that classroom observations were not always

completed and one-on-one evaluation meetings with faculty over their written performance evaluations was not regularly occurring. Because faculty salaries are impacted by the evaluation process, improvement of this aspect is encouraged. (III.A.1.b, III.A.1.c)

Maintaining a highly trained and adequate number of employees can be clearly challenging to a college like Palau Community College, due to the geographic location of Palau as well as the economic and educational levels of the majority of the Palauan population. Technical areas such as finance, human resources, and academic affairs require that administrative staff are well-informed of legal and technical aspects related to their assigned job responsibilities. Individuals interviewed during the team visit expressed concern about vacancies in critical administrative areas such as these. College officials interviewed during the team visit described an informal process of maintaining a sufficient number of qualified full-time faculty, especially in English, Criminal Justice, and Information Technology, due to a shortage of highly educated and trained individuals with these academic backgrounds. Through the college's close relationships with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and other key entities, educational and training needs of the community are defined, and college programs are developed for which new faculty need to be hired. The college has sought to develop and expand many new educational programs. Both faculty and management described this informal process as enabling the college to define specific faculty positions based on academic program needs. Evidence of a more formal planning process linking faculty positions with academic program needs was not found. (III.A.2)

Faculty and managers interviewed during the team visit detailed providing instruction in low-enrolled courses. The minimum number of students for a course to be taught is normally five students, but if even one student is in need of a particular class for graduation, the course will be taught to that one student. Low class size may indicate: a need to improve the planning process in developing the class schedule so as to maximize faculty resources; a need to conduct more targeted outreach to boost enrollment; or a need to re-evaluate the necessity to offer the program. The team suggests the systematic process of planning and assessment applied to this issue would help determine the extent to which the issue of low-enrolled courses is problematic in relation to the faculty resources of the college. (III.A.2)

The Personnel Manual details employment policies which include recruitment and hiring procedures based on non-discrimination practices and equal employment opportunities. However, a non-discrimination statement is not printed in the college catalog. There does not appear to be a Board Policy on non-discrimination either. In fact, the college's Board Policies do not exist in a separate, official collection of policies. Rather, reference is made to resolutions passed by the board and minutes of board meetings wherein formal action is taken. The Grievance Procedure is contained in the Personnel Manual. Employee records are maintained in secured, locked containers and may be accessed by employees only upon written request. (III.A.1.b, III.A.3)

Palau Community College addresses issues of equity and diversity through the hiring of employees from diverse backgrounds including individuals from the United States, the Philippines, Japan, and other Pacific nations. The college admits in its Self Study that the

diversity level is not as high as they would like. In its regular review of the employment of staff, it was reported that out of 193 employees, 158 or almost 80% are Palauan. Regular employment reports detail the level of employment related to diversity and equity. Overall, there are more female regular/permanent employees than males. With a majority of Palauan staff and students, there is a need for the college to continuously work toward full inclusion of students and staff from other countries who are not fluent in Palauan language. The multicultural history of Palau and the multicultural tourism industry have provided Palau Community College with some opportunities to diversify the staff, the student enrollment, and the curriculum. Most recently, in collaboration with the United States government, the college welcomed a small number of Uighurs (Muslim students from northern China) who had been released from Guantanamo Bay. (III.A.4, III.A.4.a, III.A.4.b)

Palau Community College has developed procedures to accommodate the hiring of employees from foreign countries. Although no longer supported by the government, the college provides a housing benefit for individuals hired from abroad. A comparable pension plan for “non-Freely Associated States citizens,” of which there are 31, has been developed for the staff from the Philippines, the U.S., and other foreign countries who are not eligible for benefits under the Republic of Palau government. This issue was clarified in the February 2004 Evaluation Report based on the team visit. However, there continues to be a goal to amend local statutes to allow non-FAS citizens to participate in the college’s pension plan. Differences due to legal requirements and culture and language contribute to a need to work diligently to ensure that all non-Palauan employees feel equitably and fairly treated. Improving on communications and resolving concerns with non-Palauan employees will assist the college in addressing issues related to equity and diversity. (III.A.4, III.A.4.a, III.A.4.c)

As part of the performance evaluation, the supervisor provides a promotion rating of the employee. This is a proactive step in that it recognizes both the employee’s contribution as well as the employee’s potential for advancement. This rating, in addition to the training needs assessment, can serve to ensure that employees are trained and prepared to contribute to the success of the college. (III.A.4.c)

The college makes a concerted effort to provide training on campus as well as off-island trainings. Understandably, budget constraints can negatively impact the type, level, and duration of training for faculty and other staff. The college allows classified staff to enroll in college courses that meet their position training needs during regular work hours. A matrix of training needs is developed from information reported by both the employee and the supervisor via the evaluation process. Specific staff’s training needs are generally routed to Continuing Education to assist in offering training. Faculty interviewed as part of the team visit had mixed responses regarding the availability of training opportunities. Some of this was due to the different funds available (more funding for science-related training through federal grants) and possible misunderstandings as to how to request training opportunities. Grant funding enables science faculty to study during the summer months at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. TRIO funding enables program coordinators and staff to attend federal training as well. Federal training related to Financial Aid is also very critical. (III.A.5, III.A.5.a)

As the college works to provide more coordinated training for staff, faculty and management, a concomitant need exists to evaluate the training for its appropriateness and effectiveness. The following statement from the self study narrative should be addressed in the college's Planning Agenda, "While staff has taken advantage of these professional development opportunities, the college has not systematically evaluated these professional development programs and used the results as a basis for improvement." (III.A.5.b)

With no university within close proximity to the islands of Palau, hiring faculty and managers with the appropriate background and experience can be problematic. The college has had to hire faculty without advanced degrees due to the lack of graduate level educational opportunities. The college's partnership with San Diego State University (SDSU) is unique and worthy of commendation. San Diego State University, utilizing a hybrid approach, offers courses toward a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education and a Master of Arts degree in Education with an emphasis in Leadership in Postsecondary Education. A full twenty-two PCC teaching faculty have received their Master of Arts degrees at the time of the completion of the Self Study Report. Several individuals (staff, faculty and managers) interviewed during the team visit were anxious to continue their SDSU studies and advance to degree attainment. The SDSU program does not provide graduate or baccalaureate level coursework in academic fields other than education. The 15-Year Institutional Master Plan includes efforts for succession planning. The San Diego State program clearly assists the college to meet a training goal to prepare more individuals to perform their roles as teachers and managers. (III.A.5, III.A.5.a)

The Self Study Report (p.124) noted a need to improve in providing for the training of supervisors in order to improve the employee evaluation process. During the team visit, it was clarified that this training was to assist in providing greater consistency in the numerical rankings of the employee performance evaluations. Although noted in the Self Study, supervisor training had not yet been initiated as of the team visit. (III.A.5, III.A.5.a)

Human Resources completed their first program review in January of 2010. The program review results found that Human Resources is lacking a mission statement for its department as well as a service evaluation. During the team visit, it was shared that the service evaluation was recently conducted but that the formal results were not yet available. Continued inclusion of a regular program review with a service evaluation will assist Human Resources in measuring its effectiveness and in using the results of evaluation as the basis for improvement. (III.A.6)

A more critical concern centers on the planning and decision-making process by which faculty are hired to teach in particular disciplines and academic/vocational programs. Relationships with government agencies (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Justice) and individual schools allow the college to learn of employment and training needs. However, because of the college's ongoing concern in attracting and retaining qualified faculty, and the under-enrollment in certain courses and programs, careful planning regarding the development of the instructional class schedule and use of valuable human resources is essential. (III.A.6)

The 15-Year Institutional Master Plan cites an objective to develop a Succession Plan. Given the employment challenges the college continues to face, this is an outstanding plan. Many

promising young people who go “off island” to further their education, do not always return to Palau. Some faculty come to the Republic of Palau from other countries (e.g., due to the employment contracts of their spouses in Palau) and do not stay for a long period of time. Rationale associated with this Master Plan objective sheds light on the unique situation faced by Palau Community College in integrating the planning for recruitment and retention of qualified faculty: “To be able to find and recruit; because we are too few to find, too few to recruit, too few to return.” (III.A.6)

Conclusions:

Palau Community College has made an attempt to improve its evaluation process and professional development programs. Attracting and retaining an adequate number of qualified faculty in specific areas has been understandably challenging. The college is commended for its partnership with San Diego State University (SDSU), which allows current staff access to attain bachelor and masters degrees in the field of education and leadership. The college is commended for obtaining several formative federal grants that has enabled staff, managers and faculty to participate in important and necessary professional training and staff development opportunities, and it is commended for allowing classified staff to enroll in college courses that meet their position training needs during regular work hours. This enhanced training and professional development will connect directly to the college’s ability to better educate its students and to better manage the operations of the college.

The college partially meets the requirements of this standard. The need for improved institutional planning agenda between Human Resources and Academic Affairs is critical in determining which academic programs are in need of faculty to be recruited and hired. Additionally, this dialogue is essential in collective decision-making related to which new academic/vocational programs should be initiated to meet both educational and employment and training needs of the Republic of Palau. To reiterate, the team commends the PCC President for his work and communication with external agencies as well as his efforts to be responsive to community needs. However, it is important to note that filling key vacancies in administrative fields such as finance, academic affairs, and human resources will enable the college to keep up with the legal and technical aspects of operating a well-functioning college while developing and sustaining the college’s relationships with external agencies and the community it serves.

Following the 2005 revised version of the Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual has been challenging due to issues affecting the college’s ability to implement all aspects of employee contract provisions as detailed in the Manual. A Board policy regarding “Equal Opportunity” and “Non Discrimination” is not available. The establishment of a formal collection of Board Policies is critical to enable the college to codify legal requirements as well as decision-making guidelines. In addition, improved communication between employees and the administration regarding the terms of their contracts, and decisions related to salary advancement appears necessary. Implementing a collaborative review of the Personnel Manual and communicating the details of the results of that review will greatly assist the college in clarifying policies and procedures related to hiring, evaluating, and compensating employees. Additionally, following established procedures for the evaluation of employees, especially faculty, is important in creating a transparent process in the treatment of all staff, faculty and managers.

Recommendations:

Recommendation # 3 (2010)

Human Resources

To increase the effective use of human resources and to assure a more equitable application of college policies and procedures, such as the Board Policies and the Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual, the team recommends that the college practice transparency, collaboration and communication in the development, implementation and review of all policies and procedures, and to assure that the administrative needs of the college continue to be met, the college needs to fill the key vacant administrative positions. (III.A.1, III.A.1.a, III.A.2, III.A.3, III.A.3.a, III.A.4)

See also **Recommendations #1b and #1c (2010)**.

B. Physical Resources

General Observations:

The Self Study Report provides specific details of processes in some areas while lacking details in others. The report fails to address how physical resource planning is integrated with institutional planning. It is difficult to make an assessment on whether this standard is adequately met by simply reading the Self Study Report. While there seems to be much progress in the building of new facilities and renovations of existing facilities, the Self Study Report does not indicate the effectiveness of these improvements in physical facilities in supporting student learning programs and services and institutional effectiveness.

Findings and Evidence:

In relation to safe and sufficient physical resources, the Self Study Report discusses in detail the “Buildings Maintenance Inspection Form” and bi-weekly facilities inspections. The report also provides some detail relating to buildings that were constructed since the last selfstudy. The report maintains that “the college is continuously planning, building, maintaining, and upgrading its physical resources to support its program and services.” There seems to be evidence to that end; however, there is no mention in the report of how this physical resource planning is integrated with institutional planning. (III.B.1)

Reports reviewed during the site visit clearly indicates that the college has implemented an intensive reporting system that documents repairs and maintenance work being done on daily basis. Facilities and grounds are very well maintained to the extent possible given the limited resources of the college. (III.B.1)

The report also states that “while the college faces financial challenges, it has been able to undertake major facilities improvement projects.” The college has been very successful in obtaining funding from the Republic of Palau for the construction and renovation of facilities, funding that is separate from their operating appropriation. In addition, the college has taken the initiative to help itself by instituting a tuition increase in 2003 of \$10 per credit for the purpose of building a new library that was completed in 2009, a \$1.2 million structure totally paid for by the tuition increase and donations. Additional tuition increases have been approved with funds directed for facilities improvements based on their 15-Year Institutional Master Plan. There has been a tremendous improvement in facilities, both new and renovated that enhances the learning environment of the college. (III.B.1)

Concerning the feasibility and effectiveness of physical resources, the Self Study Report states that there is an “absence of a formal evaluation to assess the use of facilities.” However, it also states that “the new PCC 15-Year Institutional Master Plan includes physical resources planning for the college to support its programs and services.” A review of the 15-Year Institutional Master Plan supports this claim. However, while the plan provides details relating to planning for new and renovation of existing facilities, the plan fails to provide a prioritization of the projects listed as part of the Master Plan. It also fails to address the assessment of the effective use of facilities in support of its programs. (III.B.2)

Conclusions: The team finds that the college partially meets the requirements of this section of the standard. The team found insufficient evidence to address how physical resource planning is integrated with institutional planning. The college needs to improve its use of systematic planning and evaluation by revisiting its plan and better integrating physical resource planning with the overall institutional planning process, e.g., by determining whether the additional resources anticipated through the four-year tuition increase plan is best allocated for improvements to its physical plant versus other pressing needs of the college. The college is commended for new construction and renovations to existing facilities that have occurred since the last self study. The new library, funded through a tuition increase directed for this construction, along with donations, is a testament to the commitment the college has made to improve the learning environment of Palau.

Recommendations:

See **Recommendations #1b and #1c (2010)**.

C. Technology Resources

General Observations:

Palau Community College has significant technology resources, primarily computers used by faculty, staff and students. In addition, the college has substantial technology infrastructure, including servers, a campus network, a wireless network, and internet connectivity. The college is also providing a course management system to support on-line courses. The college faces unique challenges in acquiring sufficient technology resources in a situation where robust and reliable technology infrastructure is often unavailable, and where technology costs are very high.

Findings and Evidence:

Technology needs at the college are identified in many ways, but there is no systematic mechanism to ensure that technology resources are adequate to support learning, teaching, communications, research, and operations. The college currently has a substantial number of computers for faculty, staff, and student use, with several computer labs newly installed. In a January 2009 survey, 62% of faculty and staff believed technology resources were satisfactory or excellent; the remaining 38% either rated resources as poor or did not answer this question. The Self Study Report acknowledges shortcomings in the technology area, including a need to re-design the network backbone and the difficulty in obtaining sufficient bandwidth for internet connectivity. The issue of adequate internet connectivity for the college is a complicated problem because of the limited and expensive options available on the island. Beyond the single survey distributed in January 2009, the team found insufficient evidence that the college systematically gathers data to assess sufficiency of technology resources, and inadequate evidence that the college is engaged in broad-based dialogue on this topic. (III.C.1)

The team did not find documented evidence of systematic planning for technology or of a clear decision making process related to the purchase and implementation of technology. There is a Technology Plan that was created in 2007 by the Technology Resource Committee (TRC). This committee was created expressly to create the Technology Plan, and to update it on an annual basis. At this time, the TRC meets only sporadically (typically a couple of times per year) to review the Technology Plan, and to identify high priority projects in the plan for which the TRC will seek funding. The current TRC members have placed a high priority on projects that involve student computers, but this priority was not established through any process of broader dialogue. TRC directs its funding requests to the president for consideration. In addition to this process, individual areas may also identify technology needs (e.g., through the program review process), and in some cases, requests can be made through the Academic Affairs Office. At the current time the TRC is not made aware of these requests, and there is not a clear process for identifying funding for them.

The college currently offers relatively few online courses (nine courses are being taught in the current semester). Courses generally utilize Moodle, an open source software platform to support online courses. The courses are hosted on a local server, and an IT faculty member is providing support to the few faculty members who are currently teaching online. A separate lab is available to students enrolled in online courses, and this lab has sufficient dedicated bandwidth to ensure robust internet connectivity. (III.C.1.a)

Training needs of faculty and staff are identified during the annual performance evaluations. In some cases, training is accomplished by having the faculty or staff member take credit computer courses or continuing education courses taught at the college. In addition, some training sessions have been offered at the college, and other training needs have been met by sending faculty and staff to off-site workshops or sessions. Training needs for the IT support staff present some particular challenges; they need very specialized courses or workshops that are not readily available locally, and it is difficult for them to leave the college to go to off-site training because of the day-to-day IT support demands. In the January 2009 technology survey of faculty and staff, 59% of respondents indicated that they had computer training needs they wanted addressed. Formal training is available to students through computer courses taught by the college. In addition, informal training is available from faculty and staff in student computer labs, in the library, and in various support services where computers are located. However, in the January 2009 technology survey, 38% of students responded that additional training was needed. The college does not have any overall plan for technology training, nor does it have a process to evaluate the effectiveness of training. (III.C.1.b)

The college provided insufficient evidence of having a method to track and manage its computer assets; there is a partial inventory of equipment, but it is not complete or up-to-date. Also, the college provided inadequate evidence of having a system to log, track, or count calls for technology support and repair. In the Self Study Report, the college identified a shortage of IT support staff; this has resulted in the need to utilize IT faculty members to provide technology support and at times also has required the college to contract with an outside company for needed support. In the January 2009 survey of faculty and staff, 90% of respondents identified a need for additional IT support staff. The IT support staff is also hampered by a lack of adequate office space. The existing space is so limited that it is difficult for them to work, and there is no space that would allow them to utilize students who could do simple maintenance and repair tasks. The Technology Plan outlines a systematic five-year replacement cycle for all hardware; this plan has not yet been implemented. (III.C.1.b, II.C.1.c)

The college takes appropriate steps to ensure that the main servers are backed up regularly. Incremental backups are done nightly and weekly, with full backup done each month and annually. Tapes are stored in a variety of locations to provide necessary redundancy. The most significant factor in reliability for technology systems is power supply, and the problems are not at the college but with the basic power systems on the island. Appropriate precautions such as battery back-ups are utilized to protect major technology systems. (III.C.1.c)

The college has a number of technology resources available to support particular programs and services (e.g., labs that are dedicated to specific programs). The Self Study Report asserts that “... [they] meet the needs of the courses offered at this time ...” In observations and interviews during the team visit, it did seem generally true that the computer labs and classrooms available to support courses and programs are sufficient. However, the college has little data about the usage of labs, and only a handful of informal student surveys done by individual labs to assess whether the technology resources are meeting student needs. The Self Study Report contained concerns about available bandwidth and the speed of internet connectivity. These concerns were

expressed by students in the January 2009 survey, where 66% of students said that internet connections were slow. The concerns were also expressed by faculty and staff in numerous interviews during the team visit. While the college must work within external constraints related to internet connectivity available on the island, it was not clear to the team how decisions are being made about the use of bandwidth, nor was it clear that this limited resource is being deployed in a way that maximizes use of this scarce resource. (III.C.1d)

The Technology Resources Committee created a Technology Plan for the college in 2007. In the memo establishing the TRC, the committee was charged with updating the plan annually. However, there was insufficient evidence that a clear process has been identified to accomplish the items documented in the Technology Plan. While the Technology Resources Committee conducted two very useful surveys in 2009 to assess technology resources and needs, there is insufficient evidence of a systematic, ongoing assessment process for use of technology resources. There is also inadequate evidence of a collegewide dialogue about the use of technology, and about the adequacy of current resources, support, and training. Without ongoing assessment and broad-based dialogue, the college cannot systematically plan for needed improvements in the technology area. (III.C.2)

Conclusions:

The team finds that the college partially meets the requirements of this section of the standard. The college did not provide adequate evidence of an integrated planning process in which technology needs are clearly identified. There was also insufficient evidence that the college has a clearly defined process for making decisions related to the use of technology; this need for a clear and broadly understood process is particularly problematic when allocating a resource such as internet connectivity which is a scarce and valuable resource for the college. It is not clear that the college has identified adequate resources to maintain and support its technology resources and to provide adequate training for the users of these resources. Finally, there is need for a systematic and ongoing process to evaluate the adequacy of technology resources and the effectiveness of technology to support learning, teaching, communications, research, and operations.

Recommendations:

See **Recommendations #1b and #1c (2010)**.

D. Financial Resources

General Observations:

While the Self Study Report provides some information regarding the college's budget process and funding levels, the Self Study does not provide any discussion relating to financial planning and financial stability. It is difficult to conclude by the information provided in the Self Study Report whether the college is financially sound. While audit findings in the past have resulted in "no findings," that in itself does not indicate that the college's finances are stable. However, review of the relative financial and planning materials during the accreditation visit indicates general compliance with Standard IIID, Financial Resources.

Findings and Evidence:

Palau Community College's financial resources are adequate to support student learning programs and services. To the extent that there is institutional planning at the college, financial planning, especially as it relates to facilities planning, is an integrated part of the planning process. Annual budget allocations are developed based upon revenue projections, and funds are allocated according to the priorities established in the 15-Year Institutional Master Plan. (III.D.1)

Palau Community College received an appropriation from the Republic of Palau of \$2,350,373.04 in FY 2009. The appropriation for FY 2010 is \$2,128,100, a decrease of \$222,273.04 from FY 2009. However, the President of the Republic of Palau has submitted a FY 2010 supplemental budget request to the National Congress for an additional \$281,000 that is intended to restore the appropriation for Palau Community College back to its FY 2007 level of \$2,409,100. Revenues from tuition, \$1,918,462.71 in FY 2009 and \$2,206,000 projected for FY 2010 make up the balance of the basic operating budget for those respective fiscal years. (III.D.1)

The college approved a tuition increase of \$10 per credit each year for a four-year period beginning fall 2008. According to the report, this increase is "to ensure that it has sufficient revenues to support specific programs, services and educational improvements." This increase should add an additional \$150,000 a year in tuition revenues for four years, generating an additional \$600,000 a year by FY 2011. With the 2008 tuition increase, in addition to the increase of \$10 per credit hour in 2003 for the building of the new library, it is clear that the college is attempting to help itself in the area of facilities improvements. However, while these additional tuition revenues can be used to support programs, services and educational improvements, current plans are to deposit these funds in the separate bank account to meet the planning goals for facilities improvements outlined in the college's 15-Year Institutional Master Plan. (III.D.1)

In addition, the report states that "the college continues its efforts to raise the Endowment Fund to a level which can assure financial stability of the college." With the current endowment of \$1.5 million and a goal of \$10 million by 2024, the college has embarked on a vigorous campaign to build the endowment by encouraging its employees as well as other government employees to contribute through payroll assignments. (III.D.1)

The Self Study Report indicates that there are many timely financial reports being provided on a monthly basis to all constituents of the college. In addition, independent financial audits have resulted in “no findings” over the past several years. However, in reviewing the monthly financial reports, several inconsistencies were noted and suggestions were made to improve the validity of the report. Revenue projections were not reflected properly which could lead to inaccurate conclusions when compared against actual revenues. (III.D.2)

The college does a tremendous job in managing its resources, especially given the uncertain cash flow created by the distribution of funds from the National Government. However, with an operating budget of around \$5 million and ending fund balances ranging from \$581,000 in FY 2006 to a low of \$355,000 in FY 2008, coupled with a monthly allotment system from the Palau National Treasury, cash flow should be a concern. While the SelfStudy states that “there are mechanisms in place that enable the college to sustain its operation, even in the event of emergencies,” and that “as a national college of the Republic, the National government will help provide support in the event of an emergency,” cash flow and financial stability are concerns that should be addressed. Reiterating the fact that the college has done a commendable job in managing its resources, it would be advisable for the college to establish a reserve policy and earmark funds in a separate account designated “reserve and working capital” for the purpose of addressing cash flow issues that may arise from time to time, as well as a reserve for emergency situations. The tuition increases approved beginning in FY 2008 would be a source of additional funds to establish the reserve without affecting the operating budget and would provide the college with better assurances for financial stability. (III.D.2)

Palau Community College uses the findings and recommendations from its annual financial audits as a basis for evaluating its financial management processes. A review of these external financial audits indicates that the college is in compliance of general accepted accounting principles and has found no material weaknesses in the college’s accounting system. (III.D.3)

The college successfully installed a new financial management system in 2008. This new accounting system, based on the Sage MIP Fund Accounting Software, provides the college with sound financial information for effective financial management of the college’s resources. This new system, coupled with the updating of the Administrative Procedures Manual in 2007 and 2009 with reviews planned every five years, provides the foundation for regular evaluation and assessment of the college’s financial management processes, policies, and procedures. (III.D.3)

As referenced above, the college also provides monthly financial status reports that are used to assess the revenue and expenditure performance during the course of the fiscal year against the approved expenditure plan. These monthly financial reports provide a wealth of information on the financial performance of the college on a monthly basis with year-to-date information. However, as indicated above, the information provided in its current format and monthly projection methodology does not present valid and accurate information. In several revenue and expenditure categories, the annual projections/allocations were simply divided into twelve months, resulting in erroneous variances when compared with the actual revenues/expenditures. It was suggested that the monthly budget be reflective of when revenues/expenditures were actually expected to occur. The staff was very receptive to the recommended changes. (III.D.3)

Conclusions:

Palau Community College has the support of the Republic of Palau, from its president and the Palau National Congress. As everyone worldwide struggles through economic difficulties, the college has been able to maintain its funding support from the Republic. In addition, the college is also trying to help itself in recognizing the growing needs of the college and has approved tuition increases to address facilities requirements to improve the learning environment for the students. The college has been proactive in providing the financial support required to implement its 15-Year Institutional Master Plan, especially in the area of physical resources.

The team suggests that the college review the format of the monthly financial reports to provide meaningful monthly status of revenues and expenditures on a monthly basis. The team also suggests that the college recognize the cash flow situation, essentially created by the monthly allotment of funds from the National Government, and establish a reserve policy to ensure that funds are always available to meet operational requirements. The team finds the college meets the requirements of this section of the standard.

Recommendations:

See **Recommendations #1b and #1c (2010)**.

STANDARD IV

Leadership and Governance

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

General Observations:

The Standard IVA section, as in most other parts of the Self Study Report, is quite general and anecdotal in nature, with very little evidence supplied. Also, the planning agenda items are few, lack specificity, and do not delineate time frames for their completion.

Findings and Evidence:

Palau Community College went through a collaborative mission and values statement review in 2009 and reaffirmed those statements, which include its “Unifying Principles” and an emphasis on team work and open communication. Additionally, PCC has identified its goals through the 15-year Institutional Master Plan. Overall, the president is respected within the college community as evidenced by the Presidential Survey of 2008 in which 62% of the respondents said that they were either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with his overall performance. Through the creation of the Executive Committee and its representatives from a broad spectrum of college constituencies, the president has created a potential forum for empowerment and institutional excellence. Additionally, in 2006 the Classified Staff Organization was formed, which gives them a voice in the participatory governance process. Nevertheless, these governance processes are still in their formative stages, and much remains to be done to formalize them (IV.A, IV.A.1).

Due to the relatively small size of PCC, informal dialogue about and understanding of roles in the participatory governance process is widespread; however, there is very little written or formal policy. The primary participatory governance committee is the Executive Committee, which acts in an advisory capacity to the president, but the evidence and interviews confirmed that a policy that supports this process has not been formally approved, and currently the Committee is not following its own guidelines in terms of regularly scheduling meetings or keeping formal agendas and minutes. Several faculty members expressed frustration and a lack of understanding as to how to gain a voice in the decision-making process. The Self Study Report states, “...there is no written policy for faculty members’ role in the institution governance...” and “...there is no written policy for staff participation...” as well. Although the Classified Staff Organization was formed in 2006 in response to an accreditation report, interviews confirmed that the direction, purpose, and functioning of the Executive Committee are not yet clear, and regular meetings do not take place. A student trustee is a voting member of the board, but training of the incoming trustee and communication regarding changes in meeting schedule need to be addressed (IV.A.2, IV.A.2.a).

The institution relies on its faculty, through the Curriculum Planning Committee (CPC), to have a major role in recommendations about program creation and curriculum design. Minutes of past meetings and interviews with faculty members indicate that there is a proper balance between the roles of the faculty and academic administrators. (IV.A.2.b).

There is pride in PCC among faculty, staff, administration, and students. These constituencies obviously care about the quality of the programs that PCC provides to the community, and the beauty of the grounds also reflects the desire to make PCC an attractive place to study and work. However, until the governance process is more clearly articulated, it is difficult to verify that these constituencies are working together effectively. It is clear that much informal dialogue takes place in a variety of settings, but there is very little evidence, such as agendas or minutes of the Executive Committee or the Classified Staff Organization, to validate that inclusive and constructive dialogue exists (IV.A.3).

PCC has demonstrated honesty and integrity in its relationships with external organizations such as the Accrediting Commission and the Palauan Legislature. The institution responded to the previous team's visit regarding governance (Recommendation 6) by creating the Executive Committee; however, PCC has not followed through with the implementation of the governance structure and is not following the guidelines of its own Executive Committee (IV.A.4).

PCC has not yet developed assessment practices for its governance and decision-making structures. Due to the lack of formal written policies and procedures for governance committees such as the Executive Committee and the Classified Staff Organization, it is difficult to assess the goals of these structures. With the recent hire of a new institutional researcher, this is an area in which data could be gathered. However, as of yet, there is no evidence that any assessment of the governance system has taken place (IV.A.5).

Conclusions:

Decision-making roles and processes are areas of major concern as the team finds a lack of formal or clearly defined and understood policies for governance structures; an absence of reliance on governance structures for recommendations; and a lack of evaluation of governance structures and decision-making processes at Palau Community College. The team finds that the college partially meets the standard.

Recommendations:

Recommendation #4 (2010)

Leadership and Governance

To assure improvement and full implementation of the governance process created in response to Recommendation 6 of the 2004 report, the team recommends that the Executive Committee structure be formalized. Furthermore, to assure that the mission and values statements are central to decision making, the team recommends that the college formalize, communicate, and implement all governance processes for faculty, staff, students, and administration, assess the effectiveness of those processes, and utilize the results for improvement. (I.A.4, IVA.2, IVA.3, IV.A.5, IV.B.2.b)

B. Board and Administrative Organization

General Observations: In Standard IVB, the college makes a somewhat stronger case for itself. The legislation creating the Board spells out the roles and responsibilities of its members. The Board has written policies and acts in a manner consistent with those policies. The Board adheres to policies that are consistent with the mission, and the policies ensure integrity, quality, and effectiveness. The Board recognizes its role in ensuring that student learning outcomes are met. It recognizes its responsibility for educational quality and financial integrity. It understands its role in accreditation. It recognizes its responsibility in relation to the college president. The president is recognized as the leader responsible for planning, organizing, budgeting, personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness. The president and the board guide institutional improvement and ensure that there is communication with its constituencies.

Findings and Evidence:

There has been only one presidential search since the inception of the board and there was no written policy for how a search would be conducted. The college recently developed a written process for the selection of the chief administrator. It is scheduled to be voted on by the board at the March 11, 2010 regular meeting. (IV.B.1)

The college provided evidence through minutes and interviews that the board has a clear understanding of its responsibility to establish policy and assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of student learning and the financial stability of the college; that it acts as a whole once decisions are made; and that it advocates and protects the college from undue influence. Through an interview with the Speaker of the House of Delegates of the Palau National Congress, the team confirmed that the legislature is clear that the board is an independent policy-making body. (IV.B.1.a)

Written evidence and interviews with trustees and the president confirmed that the board is the recognized entity with responsibility for the academic, fiscal, and legal integrity of the college. (IV.B.1b and IV.B.1c)

There are published by-laws and policies for the Board, and minutes of its meetings verify that it acts in accordance with them. There is no central repository for board-approved policies and revisions to those policies which the team members see as a concern. They are contained in the minutes of the board meetings only. The minutes are made public and are accessible. Interviews confirmed that the board uses data from evaluations of the president and the board to create and/or revise policies as necessary. The by-laws and policies are public documents albeit the policies are not easy to access. (IV.B.1.d, IV.B.1.e)

The team found that the college does invest in the training and development of the board members, but interviews with staff and with the student trustee confirmed that the orientation for the student member has not been sufficient. PCC recognizes this and has plans to develop and publish a more comprehensive and thorough orientation for new trustees. (IV.B.1.f)

There is a process for self-evaluation of the board. There is evidence that the trustees evaluate their performance as board members. Through interviews with board members, the team found evidence that changes were made as a result of the evaluations. (IV.B.1.g) Also, there is a written code of ethics and a policy for dealing with violations— though there are no reports of ethics violations by board members past or present. (IV.B.1.h)

Interviews with trustees and with the president confirm that the board was actively involved in the accreditation process through the review and endorsement of the selfstudy. The student member, however, because she had only been elected in October, 2009, had little knowledge of the process. She did express her understanding of the significance of accreditation. (IV.B.1.i)

The president and the board clearly understand the proper role of the president. All other faculty and staff who were interviewed confirmed their understanding that the president has primary responsibility for leading the planning, organizing, budgeting, selection of personnel, and assessment of institutional effectiveness. (IV.B.2, IV.B.2.a)

Interviews confirmed that the president implements board policies and controls the budget and expenditures. (IV.B.2.c, IV.B.2.d) In an interview with the Speaker of the House of Delegates of the Palau National Congress, the team found that there is strong support in the community at large and the government in particular, for the president and the board. The Speaker expressed the great pride the nation feels for the college and its place in the community. The Speaker suggested that a clear indication of support for the college is reflected in the fact that although the legislature was forced to cut all other government entities by 5% this year, the college was cut only 2 ½%. (IV.B.2.e)

While a segment of the campus community expressed their strong support for the style and manner with which the president leads the college, others expressed their belief that the president's style and manner do not foster a collegial atmosphere on the campus. The standard states that the president is responsible for developing and fostering a collegial process to guide institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment (IV.B.2.b). The standard further states that the college will conduct educational planning that is integrated with resource planning and distribution to achieve student learning outcomes (IV.B.2.b). As reported in Standard IV.A, there is insufficient evidence that this is happening at PCC. The president and members of his Executive Committee admit the need to establish this Committee as one of the fundamental elements in the participatory governance structure of the college. (IV.B.2.b)

Conclusions:

Standard IVB concerning Administrative Organization is an area of concern for the team, as the lack of formal and/or clearly understood governance structures, as well as their use, directly impacts the ability to conduct transparent, integrated, collegial, participative, and integrated planning. The team finds that the college partially meets the standard.

Recommendations:

See Recommendation #4 (2010)