

**EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

**Feather River College  
570 Golden Eagle Avenue  
Quincy, CA 95971**

**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 External Evaluation Team that visited  
Feather River College March 12 – March 15, 2018**

**Jose. L. Fierro, D.V.M., Ph.D.  
Chair**

## Table of Contents

<b>List of Team Members</b>	3
<b>Summary of the External Evaluation Report</b>	4
<b>Major Findings and Recommendations of the 2018 External Evaluation Team</b>	6
<b>Introduction</b>	8
<b>Eligibility Requirements</b>	9
<b>Checklist for Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Related Commission Policies</b>	11
<b>STANDARD I</b>	17
Standard I.A: Mission	17
Standard I.B: Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness	19
Standard I.C: Institutional Integrity	23
<b>STANDARD II</b>	27
Standard II.A: Instructional Programs	27
Standard II.B: Library and Learning Support Services	32
Standard II.C: Student Support Services	34
<b>STANDARD III</b>	37
Standard III.A: Human Resources	37
Standard III.B: Physical Resources	40
Standard III.C: Technology Resources	42
Standard III.D: Financial Resources	43
<b>STANDARD IV</b>	46
Standard IV.A: Decision-Making Roles and Processes	46
Standard IV.B: Chief Executive Officer	48
Standard IV.C: Governing Board	50
<b>Quality Focus Essay Feedback</b>	52

## List of Team Members

Dr. Jose Fierro (Chair)  
Superintendent/President  
Cerritos College

Ms. Andrea Wittig (Assistant)  
Executive Assistant  
Cerritos College President's Office

Mr. Randy Beach  
Professor of English, Curriculum Committee  
Faculty Co-Chair  
Southwestern College

Dr. Jean Shankweiler  
Vice President for Academic Affairs  
El Camino College

Dr. Sharyn Eveland  
Faculty and Social Science Division Chair  
Taft College

Dr. Tina Inzerilla  
Library Coordinator  
Las Positas College

Dr. Janet Fulks  
Professor of Biology  
Bakersfield College

Dr. Albert Alt  
Vice President of College Administrative  
Services  
Modesto Junior College

Dr. Meeta Goel  
Dean Institutional Effectiveness, Research,  
Planning, and Library Studies  
Antelope Valley College

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

Dr. Kristin Clark  
President  
West Hills College Lemoore

## Summary of the External Evaluation Report

INSTITUTION: Feather River College

DATES OF VISIT: March 12 – March 15, 2018

TEAM CHAIR: Dr. Jose Fierro

An eleven-member accreditation team visited Feather River College (FRC) from March 12 to March 15, 2018 for the purpose of determining whether the College continues to meet Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and USDE regulations. The team evaluated how well the College is achieving its stated purposes, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement, and submitting recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) regarding the accredited status of the College.

In preparation for the visit, the team chair participated in a team chair training workshop on December 7, 2017 and conducted a pre-visit to the campus on February 2, 2018. During this visit, the chair met with campus leadership and key personnel involved in the self-evaluation preparation process. The entire external evaluation team received team training provided by staff from ACCJC on February 8, 2018.

The evaluation team received the college's self-evaluation document and related evidence several weeks prior to the site visit. Team members found that the document described the processes used by the College to address Eligibility Requirements, USDE requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission Policies. The team confirmed that the self-evaluation report was compiled through broad participation by the entire College community including faculty, staff, students, and administration. Further, it contained three self-identified themes and accompanying action plans for institutional improvement as part of the Quality Focus Essay.

On Sunday, March 11, 2018, team members arrived in Quincy, California in preparation for the site visit. Upon arrival to the College on Monday afternoon, the team was introduced to College leadership at a reception and was provided a comprehensive tour of the campus and student housing locations.

During the evaluation visit, team members conducted approximately 35 interviews and observations involving College employees, students, and board members. Informal interactions with students and employees took place outside of officially scheduled interviews, as did observations of in-session classes and other learning environments. One open forum provided the community members and College personnel opportunities to meet with members of the evaluation team.

The team reviewed numerous materials supporting the self-evaluation report, which included documents and evidence supporting the Standards, Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and USDE regulations, in the team room and electronically. Evidence reviewed by the team included, but was not limited to, documents such as institutional plans, program review

procedures and reports, student learning outcomes evidence, distance education classes, correspondence education offerings, College policies and procedures, enrollment information, committee minutes and materials, and College governance structures. Said evidence was accessed via hard-copy in the team room and electronically via flash drives, internal College systems (e.g., SharePoint, etc.), and the College's internal and public webpages. The team found the college to be exceptionally helpful in providing additional evidence promptly and in electronic format.

The team greatly appreciated the enthusiasm and support from College employees throughout the visit. The team appreciated the assistance of key staff members who assisted the team with requests for individual meetings and other needs throughout the evaluation process. College staff met every request.

The team found the College to be in compliance with all Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies and Standards and USDE regulations. The team found a number of innovative and effective practices and programs and issued four commendations to the College. It also issued several recommendations to increase effectiveness.

## **Major Findings and Recommendations of the 2018 External Evaluation Team**

### **College Commendations**

#### **College Commendation 1**

The team commends the College for bringing its mission to life by incorporating the natural environment into its educational activities and sustainability efforts, which promotes a family-like community that engages students and enriches their academic programs. (I.A.1)

#### **College Commendation 2**

The team commends the College for its social justice work that serves disproportionately impacted incarcerated students. The faculty and administrators collaborate in creative ways for the development of innovative pedagogy that has resulted in a significant increase in student success rates in a challenging and constrained environment. (I.B.6)

#### **College Commendation 3**

The team commends the College for engaging students in college life through creative Student Services efforts. The College maximizes its advising functions by collaborating across departments in order to orient and engage students in the life of the college, culminating in a familial atmosphere that fosters inclusion. (II.C.5)

#### **College Commendation 4**

The Professional Development Committee and the Diversity Committee have worked to exceed the standard by providing practical and inspirational professional development opportunities based on campus-wide and department-level need resulting in a culture of openness and inclusivity by sponsoring many events that raise awareness of different cultures and walks of life. (III.A.14)

### **College Recommendations for Improvement**

#### **College Recommendation 1 (Improvement)**

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the College develop a formal, systematic, and comprehensive process to do the following:

- evaluate policies and practices,
- document and communicate the evaluation results,
- use the results for improvement, and
- communicate the improvement actions taken. (I.B.7, I.B.8, I.B.9, I.C.5)

#### **College Recommendation 2 (Improvement)**

In order to improve effectiveness, the team recommends that the College ensure that all documents provided to students in the Incarcerated Students Program are aligned with the College catalog. (I.C.2, I.C.5)

#### **College Recommendation 3 (Improvement)**

In order to improve effectiveness, the team recommends that the College ensure program student learning outcomes for specific certificates and degrees are listed in the catalog and are available

to current and prospective students in a clear and accessible way. (I.C.1, I.C.3, I.C.4)

**College Recommendation 4 (Improvement)**

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the College improve upon its existing processes to develop a formal, systematic, and comprehensive plan to do the following:

- assess student learning outcomes,
- document and communicate the assessment results,
- use the results for improvement, and
- communicate the improvement actions taken. (II.A.2)

**College Recommendation 5 (Improvement)**

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the College develop a formal, systematic, and comprehensive process to do the following:

- evaluate committee effectiveness,
- document and communicate the results,
- use the results for improvement, and
- communicate the improvement actions taken. (IV.A.7)

**College Recommendation 6 (Improvement)**

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the College adopt a procedure to document the CEO selection process. (IV.C.3)

## Introduction

Feather River College was founded in July 1968 with the annexation of the Plumas Unified School District with the Peralta Community College District in Oakland, California. FRC offered its initial academic program in September 1968, holding classes in the high schools of Plumas County. The College was established at its permanent location in April 1971. In July 1988, the College was de-annexed from the Peralta District.

Feather River College is located in a beautiful, rural region of northeastern California. The College serves Plumas County, consisting of approximately 2,600 square miles of land and approximately 20,000 residents. This setting and service population gives the College its unique identity. The more than 420-acre campus, located in the town of Quincy, is situated within 1.2 million acres of the Plumas National Forest.

Among the county's mountains are a number of population centers. Quincy, the county seat, is near the geographical center of Plumas County. Greenville and Chester are to the north, and Portola and Graeagle are to the east. Feather River College serves these communities as well as a small corner of Lassen County including the town of Westwood, and a portion of Sierra County, and the towns of Loyalton and Sierraville. The educational opportunities available to students throughout the College's existence have been defined largely by this setting.

The diversity of programs and range of delivery modes has increased the diversity of FRC students. The ethnic composition of on-campus FRC students, including distance education, is 67% Caucasian, compared to 24% for Incarcerated Student Program (ISP) students, and 47% in the instructional service agreement (ISA) programs. Among on-campus students, 25% are Hispanic, compared to 34% of ISP students, and 38% of students in ISA programs.

The most significant difference between on-campus and ISP students is in the percentage of African-American students: 10% on campus and 27% in ISP. Similarly, 2015-2016 figures show a gap in student median age by delivery mode: among on-campus students it was 23 years old, and 36 years old among incarcerated students. The majority of on campus students are female, 53%, compared to 47% male. This is quite different in ISP where 78% of students are male. Among on-campus students, residents are the significant majority, and 15% and 2% are out of state and international students, respectively.

Since its last site visit, the College has experienced several administrative changes, including a new president and chief student services officer. In 2012, Feather River College's accreditation status was reaffirmed with seven recommendations. Each of these recommendations were adequately addressed in its 2013 follow-up report. In 2015, the College began the substantive change process with the ACCJC for the bachelor's degree in Equine and Ranch Management. This process culminated with a site visit in December 2016 and the Commission's approval of the substantive change proposal in May 2017.

## **Eligibility Requirements**

### **1. Authority**

The team confirmed that Feather River College (FRC) is a state institution authorized to operate as a post-secondary, degree-granting institution. The College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The ACCJC is a regional accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and granted authority through the Higher Education Act of 2008.

The College meets this Eligibility Requirement.

### **2. Operational Status**

The team confirmed that the College is operational and provides educational services to 2,085 unduplicated student enrollments within degree applicable credit courses for the fall 2017. For 2016-17, the College enrolled 2,662 students with 25% of those students being enrolled as full-time. The majority of students are pursuing educational goals that relate to degree, certificate, or transfer.

The College meets this Eligibility Requirement.

### **3. Degrees**

The college offers twenty-four programs that lead to associate degrees, either AA, AA-T, AS or AS-T degrees. Over the seven year period, the college awarded a total of 1,444 associate degrees. In addition, the college is approved to offer one Bachelor's degree program.

The College meets this Eligibility Requirement.

### **4. Chief Executive Officer**

The team confirmed that the College has a chief executive officer appointed by the governing board, whose full-time responsibility is to the College, and who possesses the requisite authority to administer board policies. Neither the district/system chief executive nor the institutional chief executive officer serves as the chair of the governing board. The institution informs the Commission immediately when there is a change in the institutional chief executive officer.

The College meets this Eligibility Requirement.

### **5. Financial Accountability**

The College has a qualified audit firm complete an audit of the financial statements on an annual basis. The audit firm produces an annual report regarding the financial statements using Government Audit Standards and in compliance with the Contract District Audit Manual produced by the California Community College Chancellor's Office. The most recent audit found the financial statements presented fairly, in all material respects, the net assets of FRC in conformity with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles. For the fiscal years ending June

2016, the College did not have any material weaknesses identified in any of its external audits. The external audit findings are communicated appropriately by the Chief Business Officer and addressed in a timely manner.

The college default rates are within acceptable range – under 30%. The college has taken proactive measures to contain and reduce the default rate by educating borrowers and counseling. The Financial Aid Director also regularly monitors the rate.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

## **Checklist for Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Related Commission Policies**

### **Public Notification of an Evaluation Team Visit and Third Party Comment**

#### **Evaluation Items:**

- The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comment in advance of a comprehensive evaluation visit.
- The institution cooperates with the evaluation team in any necessary follow-up related to the third party comment.
- The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions* as to third party comment. [Regulation citation: 602.23(b).]

#### **Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

#### **Narrative:**

Third party comment opportunities were examined on the College website, through review of minutes at a variety of meetings including community and Board meetings. The ISER reported and provided evidence of open meetings and community feedback.

### **Standards and Performance with Respect to Student Achievement**

#### **Evaluation Items:**

- The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance across the institution, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. Course completion is included as one of these elements of student achievement. Other elements of student achievement performance for measurement have been determined as appropriate to the institution's mission.
- The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance within each instructional program, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. The defined elements include, but are not limited to, job placement rates for program completers, and for programs in fields where licensure is required, the licensure examination passage rates for program completers.
- The institution-set standards for programs and across the institution are relevant to guide self-evaluation and institutional improvement; the defined elements and expected performance levels are appropriate within higher education; the results are reported regularly across the campus; and the definition of elements and results are used in program-level and institution-wide planning to evaluate how well the institution fulfills its mission, to determine needed changes, to allocating resources, and to make improvements.
- The institution analyzes its performance as to the institution-set standards and as to

student achievement, and takes appropriate measures in areas where its performance is not at the expected level.

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(i); 602.17(f); 602.19 (a-e).]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative:**

The College has institution-set standards and reports them. There are separate institution-set standards for the baccalaureate program but they are not complete because the program is just completing its first cohort.

**Credits, Program Length, and Tuition**

**Evaluation Items:**

- Credit hour assignments and degree program lengths are within the range of good practice in higher education (in policy and procedure).
- The assignment of credit hours and degree program lengths is verified by the institution, and is reliable and accurate across classroom based courses, laboratory classes, distance education classes, and for courses that involve clinical practice (if applicable to the institution).
- Tuition is consistent across degree programs (or there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition).
- Any clock hour conversions to credit hours adhere to the Department of Education’s conversion formula, both in policy and procedure, and in practice.
- The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits*.  
[Regulation citations: 600.2 (definition of credit hour); 602.16(a)(1)(viii); 602.24(e), (f); 668.2; 668.9.]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative:**

The College website, catalog and curriculum documents were examined for compliance with units, hours, rigor and adherence to higher education practice. The difference in the program tuition for the baccalaureate degree is clearly described and consistent with statewide regulations

for upper division tuition requirements by the state. The rationale for the difference meets the federal regulations and commission policies.

### **Transfer Policies**

#### **Evaluation Items:**

- Transfer policies are appropriately disclosed to students and to the public.
- Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to accept credits for transfer.
- The institution complies with the Commission *Policy on Transfer of Credit*.  
[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(viii); 602.17(a)(3); 602.24(e); 668.43(a)(ii).]

#### **Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

#### **Narrative:**

The team reviewed the website, catalog, essential college documents and policies to determine that transfer policies meet the regulations.

### **Distance Education and Correspondence Education**

#### **Evaluation Items:**

- The institution has policies and procedures for defining and classifying a course as offered by distance education or correspondence education, in alignment with USDE definitions.
- There is an accurate and consistent application of the policies and procedures for determining if a course is offered by distance education (with regular and substantive interaction with the instructor, initiated by the instructor, and online activities are included as part of a student's grade) or correspondence education (online activities are primarily "paperwork related," including reading posted materials, posting homework and completing examinations, and interaction with the instructor is initiated by the student as needed).
- The institution has appropriate means and consistently applies those means for verifying the identity of a student who participates in a distance education or correspondence education course or program, and for ensuring that student information is protected.
- The technology infrastructure is sufficient to maintain and sustain the distance education and correspondence education offerings.
- The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education*.  
[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(iv), (vi); 602.17(g); 668.38.]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative:**

The team confirmed the College has and follows defined processes for identifying students interested in enrolling in DE/CE through review of position descriptions, minutes documenting discussion of the processes and through interviews with individuals involved with the prospective student identification processes. The online classes observed by the team seemed to be robust in content and students and instructors seemed to have frequent academic interaction.

**Student Complaints**

**Evaluation Items:**

- The institution has clear policies and procedures for handling student complaints, and the current policies and procedures are accessible to students in the college catalog and online.
- The student complaint files for the previous six years (since the last comprehensive evaluation) are available; the files demonstrate accurate implementation of the complaint policies and procedures.
- The team analysis of the student complaint files identifies any issues that may be indicative of the institution’s noncompliance with any Accreditation Standards.
- The institution posts on its website the names of associations, agencies and governmental bodies that accredit, approve, or license the institution and any of its programs, and provides contact information for filing complaints with such entities.
- The institution demonstrates compliance with the *Commission Policy on Representation of Accredited Status* and the *Policy on Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions*.  
[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(ix); 668.43.]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative:**

The team examined and validated the appropriate policies regarding student complaints and the accessibility and integrity of the policy across all college materials. The team examined complaint files since the last Accreditation site visit. Appropriate accrediting agency and information is posted on the website and provides contact information for complaints. The institution has complied with all commission policies.

**Institutional Disclosure and Advertising and Recruitment Materials**

**Evaluation Items:**

- The institution provides accurate, timely (current), and appropriately detailed information to students and the public about its programs, locations, and policies.
- The institution complies with the Commission *Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status*.
- The institution provides required information concerning its accredited status as described above in the section on Student Complaints.  
[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(vii); 668.6.]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
- The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative:**

The team has reviewed information available to prospective students and the public for accuracy, level of detail and timeliness. The web, catalog and various student services documents were reviewed. Public information for advertising and recruitment policies, as well as student complaint information are consistent with the Commission policies and regulations.

**Title IV Compliance**

**Evaluation Items:**

- The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program, including findings from any audits and program or other review activities by the USDE.
- The institution has addressed any issues raised by the USDE as to financial responsibility requirements, program record-keeping, etc. If issues were not timely addressed, the institution demonstrates it has the fiscal and administrative capacity to timely address issues in the future and to retain compliance with Title IV program requirements.
- The institution’s student loan default rates are within the acceptable range defined by the USDE. Remedial efforts have been undertaken when default rates near or meet a level outside the acceptable range.
- Contractual relationships of the institution to offer or receive educational, library, and support services meet the Accreditation Standards and have been approved by the Commission through substantive change if required.

The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations* and the *Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV*.

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(v); 602.16(a)(1)(x); 602.19(b); 668.5; 668.15; 668.16; 668.71 et seq.]

**Conclusion Check-Off:**

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative:**

The College provided audits and reports to substantiate that Title IV program requirements are met. Student loan default information was provided and in the ISER and verified using [collegescorecard.ed.gov](http://collegescorecard.ed.gov). 14% of students receive federal loans and 23% are paying down their debt, lower than the average of 47% and only 14 students are on federal loans mounting to only about \$25,000.

**STANDARD I**  
**MISSION, ACADEMIC QUALITY AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS,**  
**AND INTEGRITY**

**Standard I.A: Mission**

**General Observations**

Feather River College's mission statement is comprehensive and accurately describes its purpose, the population it serves and its commitment to student learning and achievement. The College demonstrates commitment to its mission and uses a variety of methods to demonstrate, evaluate, and promote alignment of college planning to fulfill the college mission. The team verified the mission is broadly communicated, understood and supported within the College through interviews and inspecting the various areas the mission is posted on campus. It is evident that faculty, staff, administrators and students know and understand the college's mission. The College offers programs that maximize its natural resources and location to attract, retain and facilitate academic success for students. While speaking with students during the visit, it was evident that many of them selected Feather River College because of its unique programs and the way the campus as a whole embraces its mission.

**Findings and Evidence**

The College provides evidence that the mission statement describes its broad educational purpose beginning with its Board Policy (BP 1200) which identifies its intended student population, types of degrees and credentials and commitment to student learning. The College utilizes its governance process to update the mission statement at least every three years or more often when needed. This process was most recently utilized beginning in September 2015 to include the baccalaureate degree. After review through the participatory governance process, including Academic and Classified Senates, the Board of Trustees approved the updated policy in January 2016. (I.A.1)

The College regularly utilizes data to determine how effectively it is accomplishing its mission. The College utilizes a variety of data for planning, including Institution-Set Standards, the Student Success Scorecard, data from Annual and Comprehensive Program Reviews and from the Campus Climate Survey and associated Focus Groups. Data from the various institutional processes are used to assess the mission as evidenced in the Student Learning Outcome Assessment Committee (SLOAC) Assessment Reports, the Year-End-Surveys (YES) and the Strategic Plan Annual Report. The College also documents use of external environmental data to determine the relevance of DE/CE programs and services for the community. (I.A.2)

The College's programs and services are aligned with the mission through the integrated planning process first utilized in 2009, as outlined in Administrative Procedure 3250. Alignment with the mission is ensured through the program review process including Annual Program Reviews (APR) and the Comprehensive Program Review (CPR). Program reviews serve as the basis for resource allocation through the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). SPC is comprised of college constituents as defined in AP 2510. The role of the committee is to prioritize resource allocation requests based on impact to student learning, retention and other mission-critical

criteria. The SPC has utilized its planning processes to support resource allocation for such things as development of associate degrees for transfer, adding additional degrees, certificates and training correlating with the local job market and adding the bachelor's degree in Equine and Ranch Management. (I.A.3)

The College offers transfer-level courses leading to degrees through correspondence education. The programs offered through correspondence education are three of the degree programs available to all students. The programs are appropriate to higher education, and culminate in student attainment of degrees. Evidence that DE/CE offerings align with the institution's mission was found in board policy and in the distance education plan for the College. (I.A.3)

The College ensures the mission is widely published in a variety of official publications on campus and includes the Strategic Plan, Educational Master Plan, college catalog, Faculty Handbook and the College website. The mission is displayed prominently on campus in the administrative buildings, library and student center. (I.A.4)

### **Baccalaureate Degree**

The College's mission was revised and approved in 2015 to include the Baccalaureate Degree which aligns with the purpose of the College's mission, vision and goals and is documented in Board Policy 1200. The six-month baccalaureate report was approved in April 2017 by the ACCJC. (I.A.1)

The team verified that the baccalaureate data was assessed, analyzed and discussed. Current data focuses primarily on course success rates and retention, because at the time of the visit, this new program had not yet graduated a cohort. After the first cohort graduates in May 2018, the baccalaureate degree data and ISS should be clearly differentiated from the overall assessment of institutional outcomes. (I.A.2)

The Baccalaureate Degree is aligned with the mission, has undergone Comprehensive Program Review and is incorporated into regular Annual Program Reviews linking it to the integrated budget development processes. The strategic planning documents included budgeting of priorities derived from program review and verified the program's inclusion in the decision-making and planning processes based on student learning outcomes needs. (I.A.3)

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard.

### **College Commendation 1**

The team commends the College for bringing its mission to life by incorporating the natural environment into its educational activities and sustainability efforts, which promotes a family-like community that engages students and enriches their academic programs. (I.A.1)

## **Standard I.B: Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness**

### **General Observations**

The college has a systematic cycle of planning, assessment, and evaluation in place for its programs and services. It accomplishes this through key committees that generally reflect broad involvement and participation of its stakeholders. The College exemplifies collaboration by utilizing its committees for leading its various strategic planning goals and initiatives rather than relying mainly on college units to do so. This approach allows the College to focus on its overall priorities and achievement of its mission. The College's Quality Focus Essay (QFE) identifies areas for improvement in theme 2 for using SLO assessment effectively and in theme 3 for record-keeping and communicating decision-making.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The college's shared governance structure fosters dialog about student outcomes, student equity, academic quality, institutional effectiveness and continuous improvement of student learning and achievement. For example, such dialog occurs around comprehensive program reviews (CPR) and Annual Program Reviews (APR) each year for the purposes of improving institutional processes and student learning. In accordance with the SLO Assessment Plan, the College distributes annual assessment reports of student learning. The team noted that some committee minutes are not recent, so the extent of dialog in those committees is unclear. Evidence that dialogue about the outcomes, goals, and areas of focus for continuous improvement of correspondence courses occurs broadly and regularly was found in the minutes of institution level committees including the Academic Senate, the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee, and the Council of Instruction. (I.B.1)

The College's processes for defining and assessing student learning outcomes for its instructional programs and student and learning support services systematically assess every course at least once every four years. CWSLOs are assessed indirectly via student exit surveys and more directly via faculty-created rubrics. The APR and CPR allow for reflection on things that are going well and improvement areas with regard to programs and services, as well as for driving planning and budgeting. Theme 2 in the College's QFE aptly recognizes the need to refine its CPR reviewer template and reporting on course-level assessment. The Student Services Matrix serves to identify how outcomes data can help determine improvements in program delivery. Review of institutional plans and minutes demonstrate that the College has stated measurable goals and objectives that guide decisions regarding its priorities related to DE/CE and that its priorities are derived from CCCCO Scorecard data in combination with analysis of internal data. (I.B.2)

FRC established institution-set standards for student achievement and regularly assesses how well it addresses them for continuous improvement. It accomplishes this via COI and formal board presentations at least annually. In addition, the College annually documents its interaction with the board for the CCCCO Scorecard metrics. The ISER describes how FRC generally performs well with respect to student achievement and its efforts to create a supportive and effective learning environment. In the 2017-18 year, the College is examining stretch goals for the ISS. (I.B.3)

An example of assessment data being used to evaluate instruction strategies, course materials, assessment mechanisms and course improvements for student learning is a lengthy survey using Survey Monkey for SLO reporting. The Strategic Plan Annual Report presents and broadly communicates outcomes from committees across the College; however, the report does not include updates for evaluating the college's shared decision-making committees. Another example provided was disaggregation of data by gender and ISP that was presented to the board during 2016-17. The Equity Plan addresses underserved groups to narrow achievement gaps for underserved students. (I.B.4)

Programs utilize CPR and APR for the purposes of improving institutional processes and student learning. The planning cycle commences each August with an Institutional Day; program reviews then lead into the Strategic Planning Committee's prioritization of resource requests from APR/CPR for budgeting the process, which in turn identifies budget priorities, all of which indicate an effort to align program review, planning and budgeting processes. In accordance with the SLO Assessment Plan, the College distributes annual assessment reports of student learning. The college's evaluation of progress of correspondence students on the achievement of goals and objectives are documented in institutional plans and meeting minutes. Interviews with college employees confirmed that the institution regularly evaluates the progress of students in courses and/or programs offered in correspondence mode. (I.B.5)

The College disaggregates data for analysis and identification of achievement gaps, which is best demonstrated through the Incarcerated Student Program. The ISP program serves hundreds of students from an underserved population who are willing to take an active role in their education, which is a great opportunity for social change. The College identified a low success rate and institutional barriers for both students in the ISP program and the College. The College utilized a problem-solving model to identify the gap and undertook a reorganization of the service. The College then instituted ISP-specific education plans to better guide students combined with student progress reports, increased in-person teaching and tutoring and offered professional development. Using extensive curriculum review processes the SLOAC, Curriculum and Program review work significantly changed pedagogy and practices that served provide an exemplary model that resulted in subsequent updates to many aspects of the college-wide curriculum. This problem-solving approach ultimately increased the success rate for this subpopulation and shows good results in also increasing on-campus success. The current data show the achievement indicators for students taking courses through correspondence mode as higher than for students using other modes of instruction. (I.B.6)

Some key policies and procedures have not been reviewed and updated since 2010 and 2011; however, in 2016-17, the board set a goal to review of all policies and procedures; approximately one-third have been reviewed as of last fall. (I.B.7)

The college annually reviews programs and sets goals as a part of its planning process and communicates them. Constituents receive an Annual Report on Assessment of Student Learning, once a year, in addition to a Strategic Plan Annual Report, ACCJC Annual Report with progress on the ISS and progress on the annual CCCCO Scorecard metrics. Institutional Day, in August, kicks off the planning process with a look ahead to college goals and campus climate-related activities. Broad discussion of gaps and documentation of improvement is not clearly indicated;

however, QFE theme three is centered on improving effective shared governance and communication related to planning. (I.B.8)

Institutional planning processes are described in Board Policy 3250 & Administrative Procedure 3250. The college has a systematic cycle of planning, assessment and evaluation in place for its programs and services. It accomplishes this with a small number of key committees that generally reflect broad involvement and participation of its stakeholders. The College utilizes these committees for leading its various strategic planning goals and initiatives rather than relying mainly on college units to do so. Integrated planning and budgeting is driven by program review. Each May, progress on college goals is reviewed in the Strategic Plan Annual Report, along with the results of assessment efforts via the Annual Report on Assessment of Student Learning, and budget strategy funding recommendations from the President. QFE theme three is centered around improving effective shared governance and communication related to planning. (I.B.9)

### **Baccalaureate Degree**

The baccalaureate upper division work includes student learning outcomes aligned to the mission and communicated in the catalog, in a program packet and as a link on the baccalaureate degree webpage. The team interviewed faculty and students and examined documents to confirm that the student learning outcomes and assessment are rigorous and represent upper division standards. Students reported that the research methods class challenged them to hypothesize and apply key knowledge to environmentally and socially important issues. (I.B.2)

The College has institution-set standards (ISS) for the baccalaureate program that are identical to the associate degree program in agriculture. A plan exists to assess program performance using course success and program completion after the first cohort graduates. Current data on course success are high and meet the set standards. The baccalaureate program ISS should be separately defined and assessed for baccalaureate programs to distinguish them from associate degree programs. Although this was not apparent in the ISER, data was presented to the team by the college researcher. The Baccalaureate Degree institution-set standards should be published.. (1.B.3)

The SLOAC committee and Comprehensive Program Review regularly evaluates policies and practices for the baccalaureate degree. The team reviewed the CPR and ISS for the Bachelor's degree which report the unique aspects and requirements of the baccalaureate program in relation to learning and student support services and resource allocation and management. (1.B.7)

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard.

### **College Recommendation 1 (Improvement)**

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the College develop a formal, systematic, and comprehensive process to do the following:

- evaluate policies and practices,
- document and communicate the evaluation results,
- use the results for improvement, and

- communicate the improvement actions taken. (I.B.7, 8, 9, I.C.5)

**College Commendation 2**

The team commends the College for its social justice work that serves disproportionately impacted incarcerated students. The faculty and administrators collaborate in creative ways for the development of innovative pedagogy that has resulted in a significant increase in student success rates in a challenging and constrained environment. (I.B.6)

## **Standard I.C: Institutional Integrity**

### **General Observations**

The College has made efforts to clearly and accurately provide information through the development of a new website. The mission, learning outcomes, educational programs and student support services are communicated to the public via catalog, web pages, program packets, syllabi and additional printed materials. Student Services SLOs are listed in the catalog. The Communication Committee oversees the integrity of the information across all publicly reported information. The College's Quality Focus Essay (QFE) identifies areas for improvement in theme 2, effectiveness of using achievement and student learning outcome assessment data to improve student success and close performance gaps for all student populations, and in theme 3 record-keeping and communicating decision-making.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Policies related to academic honesty, acceptance and transfer of credits and acquiring transcripts are included in the catalog. The team confirmed the requirements for programs, general education, the baccalaureate degree, graduation and transfer, and found them to be mostly clear and easily accessible. Grievance and complaint processes included a promise of "prompt and equitable" treatment. Information regarding requirements such as admissions, general tuition, baccalaureate tuition, athletics, fees, catalog rights, course repetition, dual/concurrent enrollment, academic renewal, grade changes and refunding fees were also clear and accessible in the catalog. Catalog descriptions of enrollment priority and other requirements related to various programs such as TRiO, DSPS, CalWORKS, Foster Youth and Veterans services also met the standard of precision and accuracy. According to the Catalog Committee minutes, the committee tracks the clarity, accuracy and integrity of information related to its mission statement and the team found that this information is generally consistent. (I.C.1, I.C.2)

The College communicates learning outcomes, educational programs and student support services with various degrees of success. The team examined the catalog, the webpage, Catalog Committee minutes and additional documents to determine the integrity of the publications. The College produces a two-year, printed and online catalog, maintains a newly designed website, and makes additional printed information available to students. Some of these printed materials are not consistent with other College materials and should be examined and aligned. An example is a document provided to students in the Incarcerated Students Program (ISP), which contains useful information for incarcerated students but is not consistent with other College documents. In addition, the ISP materials regarding all elements of the program should align with all College documents to maintain integrity and standards. The team noted that a copy of the college catalog is placed with the educational coordinators at each of the correctional institutions in which students participate in coursework provided in correspondence mode. Students may access the catalog by asking the on-site coordinator. According to the Catalog Committee minutes, the committee ensures precise, accurate, and current information on all facts, requirements, policies, and procedures listed in the "Catalog Requirements." (I.C.2)

In the catalog, each department lists student learning outcomes but the catalog is unclear regarding specific outcomes for certificates versus degrees, which may make it difficult for students to understand the outcomes associated with each program. (I.C.2)

The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOAC) manages the assessment plan and produces annual reports that include data reporting and analysis of actions undertaken based on the results of program student learning outcomes and collegewide student learning outcomes. The annual SLOAC report is available on the college's Institutional Research website and also includes rubric development documents, assessment tools, and SLO data. Collegewide SLOs (CWSLO) and assessment are easily found. The student services SLOs (SSSLO) are accessible and the assessment report indicates that these are cross-walked to collegewide SLOs and SSSLOs. Matrices linking course and program assessment to CWSLOs were made available to the team. Assessment tools for SSSLOs include the Campus Climate survey, Focus Groups, and the YES Survey. The team also verified, in the College catalog and on its website, that the College appropriately describes its certificates and degrees in terms of their purpose, content, course requirements, and expected learning outcomes. (I.C.3, I.C.4)

An examination of minutes and institutional documents showed that policies, procedures and publications are reviewed in Cabinet. College policies and revisions progress from a Senate review process to Cabinet for approval or are begun when the CCLC distributes proposed modifications. There is no regular or systematic review of policies and procedures; however, the college tracks modifications. Interviews and documents provided at the visit revealed improvements in program review and integrated planning. Board minutes indicated that board policies are reviewed and updated at board meetings. (I.C.5)

The catalog and website show accurate costs for courses and programs and other required expenses. The costs outlined in the college catalog describe fee amounts and explain information regarding specific fee waivers and refund processes. The Admissions and Records web page has a fee chart, which matches the College catalog. The Financial Aid webpage offers information to current and prospective students regarding the cost of education at FRC. (I.C.6)

Board Policy 4030 address academic freedom for all constituents, and other board policies address free speech parameters for students, members of the public and employees, as well as the use of College facilities for public forums. These policies are included in the catalog, the faculty handbook and on the College's website. (I.C.7)

Board Policy 4245 addresses academic integrity and sets guidelines for student responsibilities and expectations regarding behavior, processes for student complaints and hearing procedures for adjudicating claims of academic dishonesty. The Student Code of Conduct is defined in AP 5500 and BP 4245, which outlines the administrative processes for determining action if a student is accused of violating the Code of Conduct (I.C.8)

Board Policy 4030 defines the freedom and responsibility of teaching and delineates between personal opinion and factual information for all constituents. Interviews with faculty confirmed adherence to the policy. (I.C.9)

The College has none of the specialized conditions and programs referenced in I.C.10, 11 and 14 and as such, are not applicable. The College has complied with Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, annual reports, substantive change proposals and follow-up reports.

(I.C.12)

The College demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies, and compliance with regulations and statutes. It describes itself in consistent terms to all of its accrediting agencies and communicates any changes in its accredited status to the Commission, students and the public. The College makes accreditation information publicly available through the catalog and the webpage. (I.C.13)

### **Baccalaureate Degree**

The catalog, web page and program packet clearly and accurately address learning outcomes, program requirements and student support services. Student support is broadly available and students reported that the dedicated counseling and faculty support for the baccalaureate program are outstanding. Prerequisites and course mapping are easily accessible and clearly stated. Required courses, general education and electives are displayed in the course catalog and online. Students also reported that access and availability of required courses, although initially challenging, has improved as the program has evolved. (I.C.1)

The Baccalaureate degree information is clear and accurate representing the College's mission. All requirements for the baccalaureate degree, such as admissions criteria, enrollment processes, academic requirements, prerequisites and fees are accurately communicated in the catalog, webpage and program packet. (I.C.2)

Baccalaureate-level student learning and student achievement data are used to communicate academic quality and achievement. Currently the program is too young to have completion data to report, as the first cohort are graduating May 2018. Evidence on course success was provided to the team. In the future, baccalaureate ISS should be separately reported. (I.C.3)

The purpose, content, course requirements and learning outcomes of the baccalaureate program are clearly described. There is a descriptive graphic of baccalaureate course requirements online that links to SLO, unit and assessment information visually displaying alignment with this Standard. (I.C.4)

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard.

### **College Recommendation 1 (Improvement)**

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the College develop a formal, systematic, and comprehensive process to do the following:

- evaluate policies and practices,
- document and communicate the evaluation results,
- use the results for improvement, and
- communicate the improvement actions taken. (I.B.7, 8, 9, I.C.5)

**College Recommendation 2 (Improvement)**

In order to improve effectiveness, the team recommends that the College ensure that all documents provided to students in the Incarcerated Students Program are aligned with the College catalog. (I.C.2, I.C.5)

**College Recommendation 3 (Improvement)**

In order to improve effectiveness, the team recommends that the College ensure program student learning outcomes for specific certificates and degrees are listed in the catalog and are available to current and prospective students in a clear and accessible way. (I.C.1, I.C.3, I.C.4)

## **STANDARD II STUDENT LEARNING PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **Standard II.A: Instructional Programs**

#### **General Observations**

The College's broad instructional and support services align with the mission and are appropriate to higher education. Feather River College incorporates broad general education requirements in all programs wherever they are taught and assesses educational quality, outcomes and student achievement and makes the results available to the public. The College's Quality Focus Essay (QFE) identifies areas for improvement in theme 2, effectiveness of using achievement and student learning outcome assessment data to improve student success and close performance gaps for all student populations and in theme 3, record-keeping and communicating decision-making.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

The College's associate degree programs and baccalaureate offering lead to degrees in areas consistent with its mission. The College, programs and courses offered contain stated learning outcomes. The College's performance is captured annually through the Chancellor's Office's Student Success Scorecard. These results are publicly available and presented to the Board of Trustees annually. The team verified that the College ensures the transferability of courses and programs through formal articulation processes such as the C-ID course alignment project, the development of standardized associate degrees for transfer (ADTs), and in working with peer departments at colleges within the California State University, University of California, and the University of Nevada, Reno. (II.A.1)

The College and departments have identified SLOs, and course-level outcomes are found on all course outlines of record and syllabi. An examination of course outlines and class syllabi show some variation in consistency. Little evidence was available to support that course SLOs are used to improve instruction. Examination of the College's documents housed in its SharePoint document management system confirmed that SLOs are created for courses and programs. The College recently instituted an SLO data collection tool using SurveyMonkey to document the assessment of SLOs for some courses. The team examined several course-level SLO reports and found that most reports considered attendance and participation as a demonstration of student performance and a means to assess outcomes. The team interviewed faculty who noted that the new documentation strategy is an improvement. The College's processes ensure instruction meets accreditation standards, including curriculum review, program review, and assessment of student learning outcomes. Faculty and the college curriculum committee are responsible for reviewing curriculum. The College's SLO assessment timeline includes review by the SLOAC committee. The annual SLOAC report on comprehensive program-reviewed SLOs is available online. Program SLO assessment results are posted in the SharePoint document management system. While the office of instruction communicates timelines for the review of curriculum and SLOs to faculty, they are not published for the campus. Annual reports disseminate the results of college-wide and program SLO assessments, but it is unclear how they drive or are integrated into planning. Comprehensive program review includes outcomes assessment and

recommendations to prioritize resource allocation. These are included in the annual plans and used by the strategic planning committee to prioritize budget allocations. While interviews and discussions with college personnel demonstrated that learning and institutional decisions are being made, the loop between learning and institutional decisions has not been clearly described in the ISER or in formal documents. (II.A.2, II.A.3)

FRC clearly shows the different levels of curriculum through a flow chart of basic skills courses as well as descriptions of baccalaureate level coursework. Students at basic skills level are supported through various student services and support strategies, including a summer bridge program for English and math. (II.A.4)

The team reviewed course outlines, program components, catalog and web materials and found that that degrees and programs at FRC are consistent with American higher education standards concerning time, units and sequencing. (II.A.5)

FRC has a two-year catalog and schedules courses in ways that allow students to graduate within a reasonable amount of time. The college disseminates a graduation survey which provides student opinion information about time to completion. (II.A.6)

The College's strategic plan recognizes an ongoing demand for varied instructional methodologies, including noncredit, online and correspondence education. The College utilizes the plan to consider and evaluate educational delivery and alignment with its mission. The College employs a variety of delivery modes to support instruction of a diverse and changing student population as exemplified the ISP and baccalaureate curriculum. The College provided these disaggregated data to the team as a component of its equity planning and strategies. The team noted extensive curricular work that improved outcomes to the disproportionately impacted ISP population, which increased success rates. The team reviewed significant evidence of student achievement for online and ISP programs. (II.A.7)

The College requires no department-wide testing. (II.A.8) Units of credit are consistent with higher education policy and federal standards. Units are determined using strict policy reviewed by the curriculum committee as well as held to standards by Course Identification Numbering System (C-ID) and Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) requirements; this means the courses are aligned to four-year institutional rigor and standards. The College has established and published guidelines for the transfer of credit. (II.A.9, II.A.10)

FRC has a clearly developed General Education program which is consistent with ACCJC standards and typical higher education institutions. The SLOs relate to the program level, as well as communication, information and quantitative competency, as well as analytic inquiry skills, diversity and ethical reasoning. The College annually reports results of college-wide learning outcomes assessments. All degrees appropriately emphasize the appropriate level of student learning, (II.A.11, II.A.12)

FRC degree programs clearly describe the required courses, which are defined in the college catalog and on the college website. CTE programs maintain advisory committees that focus on industry standards to help determine course sequences, learning outcomes and appropriate career

competencies. The team reviewed evidence that discussions in advisory committee meetings specifically addressed SLOs. The College's ISER documented licensure data in the beginning of the report. (II.A.13, II.A.14)

The College has a defined procedure, AP 4021, to review programs that may need improvement or face discontinuance. The procedure requires a detailed plan and timeline for discontinuance to minimize impact to students. No examples of discontinued programs were available since the implementation of the procedure. (II.A.15)

Comprehensive program reviews effectively encompass instructional programs, courses, correspondence education, CTE and learning outcomes. The curriculum process includes a review of instructional courses and programs. The College employs an assessment plan for college-wide and program level learning outcomes. The board receives an annual report which includes learning outcomes, and learning outcomes also become part of the comprehensive program review for each program. The program review plan is available and indicates comprehensive program review occurs every four years. (II.A.16)

### **Baccalaureate Degree**

The Equine Studies and Ranch Management degree aligns with the institutional mission and was built in conjunction with an existing associate award that represent one-third of the annual awards given by the college. The program shares facilities, resources and numerous other components with the Agriculture program, benefiting both the baccalaureate and associate programs. (II.A.1)

Research and review of industry standards and similar courses at other institutions resulted in the development of SLOs. The team reviewed meeting minutes with CSU Chico and UC Davis faculty. The resulting data was a compilation of knowledge and skills recurring in agriculture jobs, which were organized into areas under which the coursework was developed and outcomes defined. There is a distinction between the baccalaureate outcomes and lower level-certificates and associate degree in Equine Studies. Even though each department shares SLOs, the baccalaureate level is evaluated at a more rigorous level. Evidence from student interviews, CPR documents and the SLOAC committee input provided evidence of compliance. (II.A.3)

The Bachelor of Science in Equine Studies and Ranch Management follows standard American higher education practices with regards to length of the baccalaureate, which is eight semesters, and 64-65 of the 120 units are upper division. The breadth and depth through lower- and upper-division general education courses, totaling 48-49 units, is clearly described in all materials. The course sequencing is aligned to similar four-year university programs and with the Department of Agriculture competencies. The College clearly reflects the differentiation of coursework at lower and upper division and ensures adequate units are at the baccalaureate level in courses that represent upper division rigor. (II.A.5)

The College schedules baccalaureate courses to ensure that students will complete those programs in a reasonable period of time. Students in the current graduating class reported that the school worked very hard to make all electives and required courses available. According to the research office, some current students are graduating on time, two years after the program's

inception, and others are graduating in the subsequent summer or fall. (II.A.6)

The College based the baccalaureate degree and the course credit on student learning outcomes that were developed in conjunction with four-year colleges offering similar programs in higher education, with particular emphasis on upper-division courses. (II.A.9)

The team reviewed documents and webpages to confirm that FRC has clear admissions requirements and transfer of credit policies in the catalog. A committee is tasked with applicant acceptance and validation of completion of the minimum required semester units, prerequisites, experiential activities and general education. A dedicated counselor helps students determine the area of focused studies (e.g. cattle, equine, environmental, etc.) and prepares comprehensive education plans. The students reported exceptional hands-on and practical experience of great value. (II.A.10)

Student learning outcomes in the baccalaureate program are consistent with generally accepted norms in higher education and reflect the higher levels expected at the baccalaureate level. The baccalaureate upper division work includes student learning outcomes, aligned to the mission and communicated in the catalog, in a program packet, and as a link on the baccalaureate degree webpage. The team interviewed faculty and students and examined documents to confirm that the student learning outcomes and assessment are rigorous and represent upper division standards. Student work in upper division research methods class revealed projects and writing that are consistent with higher-level critical thinking applied to real life settings with high expectations. Student interviews, student work and examination of documents indicate that communication competency, information competency, quantitative competency, analytic inquiry skills, ethical reasoning, the ability to engage diverse perspectives and other program-specific learning outcomes are addressed at upper division levels. (II.A.11)

The appropriate units for lower and upper division baccalaureate degree general education units were verified, in addition to nine semester units of upper division general education coursework. The general education requirements are representative of major subject areas for general education based upon the CSU breadth requirements, which are representative of common four-year public institutions. (II.A.12)

The Equine Studies and Ranch Management course requirements focus on one area of inquiry, including key theories and practices appropriate to baccalaureate-level programs. Documents showing collaboration with four-year universities to establish the program, interviews with faculty, observation of courses and interviews with students validate that the college meets this standard. (II.A.13)

Discussion with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and evidence of research into the potential employment fields validate that this CTE baccalaureate degree was designed with consideration of employment standards. The college intends to do a follow-up employment survey to track relevance and alignment to employment. (II.A.14)

## **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard.

**College Recommendation 4 (Improvement)**

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the College improve upon its existing processes to develop a formal, systematic, and comprehensive plan to do the following:

- assess student learning outcomes,
- document and communicate the assessment results,
- use the results for improvement, and
- communicate the improvement actions taken. (II.A.2)

## **Standard II.B: Library and Learning Support Services**

### **General Observations**

The Library and the Instructional Resource Center provide a central meeting place where students can receive a variety of services to promote their educational advancement. The Library has created a welcoming space for students, both at the main campus and online. The Instructional Resource Center has a warm and friendly environment that meets the needs of students by providing tutoring in a wide variety of subjects and providing workshops on writing. Both are strong programs, undergo routine evaluation, and make changes based on the data.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The library's collections have the quantity, currency, depth, and variety needed to make students successful. The ebook collection and online databases provide the most current resources. The team found that approximately 77 percent of print materials are over 20 years old. The library provides reference assistance in person, over email, and the library has received funding to implement QuestionPoint, a 24/7 online reference service. The library director worked with instructional faculty to develop a collection of materials for the baccalaureate program and articles for the Incarcerated Student Program. The Instructional Resource Center offers a host of services such as peer-to-peer tutoring and instructional sessions to provide support to students. (II.B.1)

The institution provides library and other learning support services to students accessing courses through correspondence mode to the extent authorized by the specific correctional institutions in which students reside. Faculty, administration, and support staff associated with the Incarcerated Student Program work with the management of each institution through the designated educational contact to define appropriate and allowed supportive services. In some institutions, tutoring services have recently been provided by the College while other correctional institutions restrict the interactions of incarcerated students to correction staff. The College has recently created videos of supplemental instruction and packets of materials that would otherwise be available to students through direct access. (II.B.1)

The library requests instructional equipment funds for library material and ranks highly amongst other disciplines on campus to receive funding. The library receives requests from faculty for resources by using an online request form. The library, which receives input from faculty, reviews its collection of library materials and removes items from the collection that are no longer necessary. (II.B.2)

The Library and Instructional Resource Center assess their programs through annual and comprehensive program reviews. Both programs assess student learning outcomes, review the assessment results, and use the results to improve. Student learning outcomes results also inform the library with regard to collection development. (II.B.3)

The library maintains contracts for its integrated library system from the Library Corporation, the Council of Chief Librarians for periodical and ebook databases and the NorthNet Library System for inter-library loans. (II.B.4)

**Baccalaureate Degree**

Review of the college documents and learning support services indicate a strong ability to support the baccalaureate degree program. Resource purchases in the library and other program equipment and supplies indicate adequate materials have been obtained to support this program. (II.B.1)

**Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard.

## **Standard II.C: Student Support Services**

### **General Observations**

Overall, Feather River College's Student Support Services efforts meet the standards. The Institutional Self Evaluation Report, along with evidence provided and supplemented by interviews conducted as part of the site visit, provided information to evaluate the College's responses to the standards.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Feather River College offers an array of services designed to meet the needs of its student population, including correspondence education students. Through regular meetings and discussions, reviews of data, and collection of survey information, the College evaluates support services provided to students ranging from an extensive new students orientation program to educational planning and student activities. Minutes from the Student Services Committee and from the Council on Instruction document discussions about making a survey available to incarcerated students using pen and paper. As observed during the site visit, the Student Services Council is comprised of key leaders offering student support services as well as representatives from Instruction and Athletics. (II.C.1)

Student Services programs participate in the college's program review process by completing Comprehensive Program Reviews (CPR) every four years and Annual Program Reviews (APR). As confirmed during the site visit, an annual, year-end Student Services retreat is held in which all programs review their work for the year, record progress and identify ongoing needs in a Student Services Matrix. Student Services has developed student learning outcomes that are mapped to the college's student learning outcomes. During the site visit, the team observed that Student Services measures its student learning outcomes by documenting data (e.g., numbers served), reviewing data from external sources (e.g. ARCC reports), and compiling responses to surveys from various activities (e.g. Orientation and Advising surveys). The "Findings and Conclusions" section of the report documents plans to continue to improve outcomes. This report is presented to the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOAC) and is available on the College's SharePoint system. (II.C.2)

Providing equitable access to appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students not physically in attendance at the college campus is a challenge. The provision of services to students in the Incarcerated Student Program (ISP) is difficult due to necessary restrictions as well as physical distance. During the site visit, interviews and documentation revealed that in-person orientations occur at the larger, geographically close prisons. ISP staff maintain communication with students through mail correspondence, providing them with progress reports and term end grades, receiving and responding to communication requests, and providing updates to the students' educational plans upon completion of coursework. Providing accommodations to inmates with disabilities remains a challenge. If a student believes he/she needs assistance or an accommodation, students can complete a Student Communication form requesting information or assistance. Inmates are eligible to apply for and receive a Board of Governors Fee Waiver (Promise Grant). Site coordinators (prison employees) located at the prisons act as liaisons between the inmates and the College. (II.C.3)

The college offers many co-curricular programs, including student clubs, student activities and a robust intercollegiate athletics program as documented in the self-evaluation and observed during the site visit. Board Policies and Administrative Procedures, along with the Associated Students Government Constitution, detail the student governance structure, including the election of officers. Co-curricular programs and athletic programs align with the College's mission. The Chief Student Services Officer supervises the Associated Students Government. Standards of Conduct and a Student Athlete Handbook, which includes a Student Athlete Code of Conduct, are in place. The director of athletics oversees the athletics budget and athletics program to ensure alignment with the College's policies, procedures, and standards of integrity. The College has control of club and activity programs. (II.C.4)

Advising functions are maximized by providing services through a collaborative approach linking different programs within Student Services. Student Education Plans (SEP) are placed into a shared drive so that all advisors and counselors can access students' plans and advising-related notes. Students enrolled in special grant and categorical programs (EOPS, TRiO) receive additional advising and orientation services through their respective programs. (II.C.5)

Advisors and counselors meet regularly to share information and to plan for the provision of advising and orientation services. As part of the Advising Task Force meeting during the site visit, advisors demonstrated how they plan, implement and review advising functions such as transfer, orientation, and implementation of multiple measures. They are afforded opportunities to attend meetings and conferences to stay current. (II.C.5)

As verified during the site visit, approximately 75% of new students attend orientation. During orientation, students receive required information and participate in workshops ranging from financial aid to student activities. The Week of Welcome (WOW) follows orientation and provides a week-long series of activities designed to assist students in learning about services and programs offered by the college. A Day in the Mountains (DITM) is another program effort to assist students in their onboarding process to the College. By participating in DITM, students receive priority registration, meet with faculty in the program area for group advising, meet with advisors and register for classes. Abbreviated education plans are completed as a part of this effort. (II.C.5)

The college has board policies related to admissions, prerequisites, counseling, and transfer that guide how services are provided and how outcomes are measured. The college's approach to assessment and placement is being amended to comply with statewide issues related to the rescission of Common Assessment and the implementation of a mandatory process for utilizing multiple measures. As presented during the site visit, advisors are working with research to review multiple measures placement results and success rates and control for bias in the assessment process. (II.C.6, II.C.7)

Paper records are securely stored and compliance with Education Code is maintained. Electronic records storage is secure and in place along with security measures related to access to the college's student information system. These were both verified during the site visit. (II.C.8)

**Baccalaureate Degree**

The program requirements are clearly communicated on the website, in the catalog and other publications; this was confirmed through interviews with students. The College has adopted and adheres to admission policies consistent with its mission that specify the qualifications of students appropriate for its program. (II.C.6)

**Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard.

**College Commendation 3**

The team commends the College for engaging students in college life through creative Student Services efforts. The College maximizes its advising functions by collaborating across departments in order to orient and engage students in the life of the college, culminating in a familial atmosphere that fosters inclusion. (II.C.5)

## **STANDARD III RESOURCES**

### **Standard III.A: Human Resources**

#### **General Observations**

The College assures the quality of programs and services by employing qualified staff in all functions. The commitment to hiring a sufficient number of qualified personnel is evidenced in processes that ensure jobs and personnel are evaluated based on programmatic needs. Minimum qualifications conform to documented minimum qualifications relative to the employee group, and applicant pools are evaluated for demographic composition for all employee groups. College policies and procedures, especially those pertaining to personnel matters, are regularly reviewed and revised through the College's governance structure.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

FRC has well-defined policies and procedures for hiring qualified faculty, staff and administration and an administrative procedure to address hiring for all employee groups. The job descriptions, hiring processes and hiring committees are formulated with input from appropriate constituencies and reflect programmatic need. Appointed committee members, including members from constituency groups, utilize the job description to develop interview questions that apply to the qualifications of the position and programmatic needs. (III.A.1)

Faculty job descriptions specifically mention curriculum development and assessment of student learning as job duties. Faculty teaching in the baccalaureate program are required to hold a master's degree relevant to the discipline in order to teach upper division coursework. A list of faculty teaching in the baccalaureate and their credentials was provided. (III.A.2)

As a small college, FRC employs few academic administrators; however, those administrators are required to hold the minimum qualifications for their positions as defined in the Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges. Those requirements are clearly stated in job announcements. (III.A.3)

All employees must hold degrees required for their positions and those degrees are from institutions accredited by recognized U.S. accrediting agencies. A process is in place to determine equivalency per Administrative Procedure 7211, and signature forms for adjudicated requests for equivalence were provided to support the process. (III.A.4). The College utilizes formal, timely and documented evaluation practices for all employee groups as well as the Superintendent/President. (III.A.5)

Feather River College employs 25 full-time faculty; all full-time and associate (part-time) faculty are required to meet minimum qualifications to teach in their disciplines. Per Administrative Procedure 7121, the Council on Instruction reviews staffing needs annually and provides a ranked list of full-time faculty positions to the Academic Senate, which in turn provides a recommendation to the Superintendent/President and the Board of Trustees (III.A.7).

Associate (part-time) faculty teaching for the College receive an orientation every semester prior

to working with FRC, are evaluated on teaching methods and student reviews, are encouraged to participate in campus governance, and are provided professional development opportunities. (III.A.8) The College maintains a sufficient number of staff to support its operations. The College conducts a review of its organization's vacancies and staffing needs regularly by updating administrative procedure 3100 regularly and through needs identified in program review. (III.A.9)

The College maintains a sufficient number of qualified administrators to support its mission. In spring 2017, the college hired a new chief student services officer to fill the vacant position. In fall 2017, the college hired an assistant dean of instruction to direct distance education programs and to oversee Instructional Service Agreements. Similarly, the college created a SSSP/Equity director position in response to new categorical funding and relevant initiatives on campus. (III.A.10)

The College maintains and makes public legally required board policies and administrative procedures pertaining to personnel. The college reviews board policies and administrative procedures using shared decision-making structures; records and a matrix are available on the college's website, which demonstrate the recency of each policy and procedure and the status of each. Many policies and procedures have not been reviewed in several years. (III.A.11)

In support of its mission and Board Policy 7100 Commitment to Diversity, the College's practices support equity and diversity. The EEO Advisory Committee developed an EEO Plan, and each hiring committee has an EEO representative, ensuring compliance with the EEO plan. The team reviewed a list of personnel trained in EEO compliance, and documentation showed that employee diversity is an element in hiring. The College aptly recognizes the distinction between EEO and diversity, having both an EEO Committee and a separate and distinct Diversity Committee. The Diversity Committee promotes and supports cultural awareness by hosting many events and opportunities for dialog between FRC's diverse faculty and student populations. (III.A.12)

The College maintains a written code of professional ethics for all of its personnel in its board policy and administrative procedure 3050; however, the documents were last approved in 2005. An interview with the Director of Human Resources revealed that the policy and procedure were reviewed recently and no changes were needed. (III.A.13)

The College supports professional development for all employee groups. The Professional Development Committee develops institutional- and employee-specific training activities, typically as part of a Flex day agenda of workshops. The College distributes a Professional Development Needs Assessment Survey each spring to all campus constituents soliciting feedback on activities and suggestion for additions to existing professional development tracks. In interviews with the Professional Development Committee, College staff provided many examples of offerings developed based on the needs assessment surveys as well improvements made to offerings based on feedback and evaluations of workshops and events. The committee has established a practice of using student learning outcomes as part of the evaluation of professional development offerings and using that data to make improvements. (III.A.14) Administrative procedure 7245 and each collective bargaining agreement includes provisions for

storage, access, composition, and use of personnel files. Personnel files are kept in a secured location. (III.A.15)

### **Baccalaureate Degree**

A review of each faculty member's credentials and job descriptions for the program verified appropriate job responsibilities. A list of current faculty and their qualifications confirmed that all baccalaureate faculty have a master's degree. (III.A.1, III.A.2)

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard.

### **College Commendation 4**

The Professional Development Committee and the Diversity Committee have worked to exceed the standard by providing practical and inspirational professional development opportunities based on campus-wide and department-level need resulting in a culture of openness and inclusivity by sponsoring many events that raise awareness of different cultures and walks of life. (III.A.14)

## **Standard III.B: Physical Resources**

### **General Observations**

The hands-on nature of many of the College's academic programs and the natural environment within which the College is situated lends itself to unique physical and safety issues. The College utilizes its physical resources, facilities and natural environment to enhance achievement of its mission, including most recently the development of a Bachelor's Degree in Equine and Ranch Management. Within this natural environment, the College offers safe and sufficient physical resources at all locations where it offers courses, programs and learning support services. Additionally, the College developed "The Pines" and "The Meadows" residence halls in support of its enrollment management strategies. The College's short and long-range facilities management and planning practices support its mission and ensure the maintenance of safe and effectively utilized facilities and equipment.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The College has replacement and maintenance plans for equipment and evaluates its facilities on a scheduled basis. The Facilities Department maintains and evaluates facilities and other physical resources with planning support from the Facilities Committee and the Safety Committee. The College evaluates the safety and sufficiency of its facilities; however, the College has not reviewed board policies and administrative procedures regarding campus safety and capital construction in recent years. (III.B.1)

The College provides adequate facilities for its programs and services, and bases its building plans and maintenance priorities on the program and services needs; these needs are determined through a program review process and the creation of a Facilities Master Plan. During the visit, the College provided examples of facility needs identified in program review and a recent presentation regarding progress on the most recent facilities plan. (III.B.2)

The College plans and evaluates its facilities and equipment on a regular basis, taking utilization and other relevant data into account. The College provided maintenance logs, completed building inspection forms, vehicle inspections, space inventory and room utilization documentation during the visit. The College also provided examples of consistent building inspections and vehicle maintenance and inspections. During interviews with the Facilities Director and members of the Facilities Committee, the team learned that a large-scale relocation and renovation of buildings dubbed "The Big Move" resulted in a more efficient use of space to support the mission, academic programs and long-range planning. (III.B.3)

The College utilizes program review processes for long-range capital projects and to support physical resource priorities. The College works with an architect to develop formal project proposals (FPPs) that are submitted to the Chancellor's Office as part of its five-year capital outlay funding priorities, with the most recent FPP approval being a Learning Resource Center funded by a state general obligation bond. The College maintains sites that pertain directly to the baccalaureate degree, and the College has submitted a substantive change review to ACCJC as a condition of having the baccalaureate degree. The College has technology infrastructure to support its distance education program. The College makes short- and long-term plans that include elements to determine the total cost of ownership. Administrative Procedure 6600

Capital Construction specifies that the total cost of ownership be included in planning as do the criteria utilized in technology planning. (III.B.4)

**Baccalaureate Degree**

Observation of the facilities confirm adequate, well-designed and well-maintained resources, such as the equine veterinary hospital. Facilities planning and usage support the intention of the program, incorporating unique resources, such as acreage, horses and cattle. Facilities and resources provide a unique environment for hands on care, feeding and breeding experiences for students. (III.B.3)

**Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard.

## **Standard III.C: Technology Resources**

### **General Observations**

The College recognizes the need to maintain currency in relevant technology areas and ensures sufficient campus technology resources to meet its mission. The visiting team verified this by reviewing evidentiary documents and conducting interviews with staff and members of the Strategic Technology Committee. The College assures adequate technology through the College's Technology Plan and a functioning governance committee with technology responsibility, the Strategic Technology Committee (STC). This committee appropriately represents constituent groups and informs the college of campus-wide technology needs. Technology resource needs are identified through the integrated planning processes through department Annual Program Review (APR) and the Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) processes.

### **Findings and Evidence**

FRC maintains sufficient campus infrastructure for technology resources and qualified IT professional staff provide support. The department participates in the institutional planning processes, regularly completing the program reviews required of other programs and services. The program reviews have resulted in the identification and implementation of technology resources to improve student learning. (III.C.1)

The Strategic Technology Committee (STC) has constituency representation and is charged with advising the chief technology officer on technology-related issues and technology resources necessary to meet the institutional mission. The STC also works with other governance groups to inform professional development needs relative to information technologies. The College has a prioritization system for technology needs and necessary funding through the STC and the program review process. Direct results of the program review process include the implementation of a new Learning Management System, improved the Banner implementation, added positions to support technology implementation and improved connectivity for staff and students. IT staff maintains an inventory of staff computers, student labs and classroom technologies. Along with the inventory, technology-related priorities, including updating and replacing technology, are identified in matrix, appropriately identifying the criticality of specific projects. (III.C.2)

FRC has one physical location where it offers courses, programs and services. (III.C.3) Training is provided to all faculty, staff and administrators as new technologies are implemented, and said training is coordinated through the Professional Development committee in concert with the Strategic Technology Committee. (III.C.4) Technology use for both students and employees is guided by relevant policies. (III.C.5)

### **Baccalaureate Degree**

Interviews with relevant stakeholders and direct observations confirm adequate technology services, support, facilities, hardware and software to support the Baccalaureate degree, which has not identified extensive technology needs. (III.C.1)

## **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard.

## **Standard III.D: Financial Resources**

### **General Observations**

FRC utilizes sufficient resources to support student learning and achievement, maintains a balanced budget and achieves a strong beginning fund balance. The College has an internal goal to maintain a 10% reserve at minimum for financial uncertainties, but has grown fund balances in recent years to plan for future economic challenges.

The College's Budget Committee includes representatives from constituent groups as well as college executives. The Budget Committee advises the Superintendent/President regarding the overall budget and program allocations. Also informing the College's budget is the Annual and Comprehensive Program Review processes. The Strategic Planning Committee analyzes program reviews and prioritizes budget requests, providing recommendations to the Budget Committee. Members of constituent groups and key members of various committees validated that budget information is credible and regularly disseminated.

### **Findings and Evidence**

FRC has sufficient resources to support student learning and achievement as noted in its mission, and manages its resources with integrity. The College maintains a minimum reserve of 10% as a practice and its beginning fund balance is beyond their intended minimum reserve. The College has grown its reserves significantly over the recent years, with input from the Budget Committee. The reserves, currently over 30%, are set aside for future potential economic downturn. Revenues are comprised of general purpose dollars as well as grant funds, categorical funds and support from the College Foundation. (III.D.1)

FRC's board policies and procedures ensure fiscal oversight and sound financial practices. The College's mission and goals are linked to planning and resource allocation. The College leverages its integrated planning model to ensure that resource allocation supports programmatic needs through the program review process. All programs and services within the College participate in the program review process, which includes both an Annual Program Review (APR) and Comprehensive Program Review (CPR). Budget requests are submitted through the program review processes. The Strategic Planning Committee evaluates and prioritizes requests using agreed upon criteria. Ultimately, the Budget Committee makes funding recommendations to the Superintendent/President, pending State resources. (III.D.2)

This integrated planning approach allows for constituent participation through a variety of committee reviews, all of which have constituency representation. The Budget Committee meetings regularly, and its meeting schedule is documented in the Governance Handbook and in a campus-wide meeting schedule. Budget Committee meetings and are open to interested parties to observe and participate; representatives from the committee communicate budget information to their respective constituency groups. (III.D.3).

The College is realistic about its available financial resources and the expenditure pattern of delivering its services. This is evidenced by a reserve that has grown to 31%, beyond the 10%

institutional goal. The Budget Committee reviews revenues and expenditure patterns to ensure constituency participation. (III.D.4)

To ensure college resources are managed with integrity, the College's financial statements are audited annually in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and in compliance with the Contract District Audit Manual posted on the System Office website. The College has relatively few audit findings and addresses findings quickly. Along with the annual audit, quarterly and annual fiscal reports are reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees. When findings have been noted in the annual audit, the findings have been communicated to appropriate departments and the Board of Trustees and findings are resolved quickly. (III.D.5, III.D.6, III.D.7)

The Colleges utilizes a known and reputable enterprise information system, Banner. The system's layered security approach encrypts all data to ensure data security. The system also includes an audit tool to identify attacks to the system. The Business Office utilizes information from the annual audit process to review internal controls including access to processes, segregation of duties and appropriate levels of authority within the system. (III.D.8)

The College maintains sufficient cash flow and reserves to ensure fiscal stability and address risks. The College manages cash flow within its own reserves, avoiding the use of tax revenue anticipation notes or other short term borrowing instruments. The College intends to maintain a 10% reserve but over time, has accumulated additional cash on hand to address contingencies and the potential future economic downturns. (III.D.9)

Delineated in the policies is an annual review of the financial statements by an independent external auditor. The Business Office regularly reviews grants and external funding. With regard to the Foundation operations, the FRC Foundation is an independent, tax-exempt corporation with oversight by a governing board that includes FRC Trustees. The Foundation's finances are audited by an independent external auditor. The College regularly reports its financial condition to the Board of Trustees and fiscal information is widely disseminated and available to campus constituents. (III.D.10)

FRC enjoys a balanced budget and growing reserves. The College has been cognizant of future liabilities related to PERS and STRS, setting aside funds in anticipation of the liability. The College has one small long-term debt obligation that it manages with annual payments. The College has completed an actuarial assessment of Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) obligations. The OPEB obligation is small relative to the College's resources. (III.D.11, III.D.12, III.D.13)

The team verified that FRC does not have any active debt instruments. Interviews with the foundation and FRC, as well as a review evidence provided, confirm that the Feather River Foundation supports FRC with integrity and is audited annually by an independent corporation. Further, the team verified that grants are administered in the Business Services department and a project grant director manages the efforts and activities of each specific grant to ensure consistency with the intended purpose of the funding source. (III.D.14)

The team verified that the College successfully monitors manages student loan default rates through various strategies, including proactive communication and education and through third party default management services. (III.D.15)

Utilizing established processes and authority structure, the College engages in agreements with external entities that appropriately serve its mission and goals. The team verified that the College exercises appropriate control over these contracts. (III.D.16)

### **Baccalaureate Degree**

Because the Bachelor's program was developed to extend the already popular and well-developed associate program, many of the resources are shared and mutually beneficial which contributes to the stability of both programs. The financial resources allocated to the baccalaureate program are sufficient to support and sustain program student learning and effectiveness. (III.D.1)

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard.

## **STANDARD IV LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

### **Standard IV.A: Decision-Making Roles and Processes**

#### **General Observations**

Feather River College (FRC) is a small, rural college with a flat organizational structure. Administrators, faculty and staff serve in multiple roles. The Academic Senate, Classified Senate and Student Governance are central to the governance process. FRC uses informal communication to encourage institutional excellence and documents formal decision-making in meeting minutes, campus-wide emails and the CEO's newsletter. The College's Quality Focus Essay (QFE) identifies areas for improvement in record-keeping and communicating decision-making.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

Administrators support a culture of evidence, strategic planning and continuous improvement, and actively engage faculty, students and staff in the decision-making process. Systemic processes are outlined in the Shared Governance Handbook, Administrative Procedure 2510 and in the Decision Making Flowchart. Interviews with faculty, staff and administrators support a culture of inclusion in decision making through both committees and informal communication. Interviews with campus staff revealed an understanding of the decision-making process and active participation from faculty and staff. (IV.A.1)

The roles of faculty, staff, students and administrators in planning and decision-making are clearly defined in Administrative Procedure 2510, and include the authorization for administrators, faculty, staff and students to participate in decision-making. (IV.A.2)

Faculty and administrators have clearly defined roles in governance, policy revision, planning and budget as outlined in Administrative Procedure 2510 and in the Shared Governance Handbook. Minutes document participation from both faculty and administrators, and interviews with staff validated participation. (IV.A.3)

The responsibility for recommending curriculum and student learning programs is clearly defined. The Council on Instruction reviews new programs before they are sent to the Curriculum Committee for review. All other curriculum is reviewed by the faculty division chair before being sent to the Curriculum Committee. (IV.A.4)

Appropriate staff with expertise and responsibility for decision-making have the opportunity to participate in strategic planning. The Shared Governance Handbook defines governance committees' purpose, reporting structure, deliverables, meeting schedule, communication plan, goals and membership. (IV.A.5)

Governance committee members are responsible for reporting back to their constituents; any individual may provide input during public comment at the start of each committee meeting. Although governance practices are consistent and clearly documented in procedures, there are

inconsistencies with the storage and access to committee minutes and materials, which has been identified as an area for improvement in the QFE. The College also identified a need to improve communication regarding the decision-making processes and decisions. The QFE states that the college is implementing a central repository for storing and sharing meeting minutes, which will improve constituents' understanding of the governance process, provide clarity and improve communication across the campus. (IV.A.6)

In 2016, the Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the resource allocation process and recommended improvements to the APR form so it is better linked with the budget request form. During Institution Day in January 2018, the college conducted a Shared Governance Communication Survey; the results were published in the CEO's campus-wide newsletter. Interviews with staff and committee minutes indicate that committees evaluate their performance at the end of each year through dialogue and make recommendations for improvement in the following year. Although evidence indicates that the governance process is evaluated, there is no formal process for ensuring ongoing evaluation and the use of evaluation for improvement. (IV.A.7)

### **Baccalaureate Degree**

Interviews and examination of documents confirmed baccalaureate program and employees representation in the shared governance processes. Purchasing documents, curriculum documents, SLOAC and strategic planning minutes indicate that the faculty and academic administrators assigned to the baccalaureate program make recommendations to appropriate governance and decision-making bodies about the curriculum, student learning programs and services for the program. (IV.A.4)

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard.

### **College Recommendation 5 (Improvement)**

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the College develop a formal, systematic, and comprehensive process to do the following:

- evaluate committee effectiveness,
- document and communicate the results,
- use the results for improvement, and
- communicate the improvement actions taken. (IV.A.7)

## **Standard IV.B: Chief Executive Officer**

### **General Observations**

The Superintendent/President is actively engaged in the College and provides leadership in budgeting, organizational structure, and planning, as well as in selecting and developing personnel and assessing institutional effectiveness. The president reports to the Board of Trustees. The team found ample evidence that the president leads campus-wide discussions on critical issues such as curriculum, community engagement, facilities planning and environmental sustainability issues. The president is knowledgeable as it relates to campus, local and state matters and maintains regular communication with the campus and community via a comprehensive monthly newsletter. The newsletter highlights issues at the local and state level the accomplishments of students and staff.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The team confirmed that the CEO has primary responsibility for the quality of the College. The Board delegates executive responsibility to the Superintendent/President through Board Policy 2430. Randomly selected minutes as well as a sampling of monthly newsletters demonstrate the CEO regularly communicates institutional values, goals and other relevant information to internal stakeholders. Review of minutes from committees on which the CEO is a designated member confirmed the CEO's expressed focus on student success and use of data to inform decision-making across the College. (IV.B.1)

Board Policy 3100 directs the Superintendent/President to establish organizational charts showing lines of responsibility and reflect the general duties of employees. Board Policy 3110 spells out the basic concept of administrative organization and provides guideline for administrative structure and general duties of administrators. Minutes from Cabinet meetings in 2015 and 2016 document the evaluation of organizational structure and recommendations from members of the Cabinet; revisions to Administrative Procedure 3100 reflect modifications discussed in the aforementioned minutes. Responses to questions in interviews and casual conversations garnered descriptions of an organizational structure as shown in the administrative procedure. (IV.B.2)

Board Policy 3250 documents the parameters for identification and tracking of strategic and operational planning. A thorough review of agendas and meeting minutes from various committees and board meetings demonstrate use of the procedures. Minutes from the Strategic Planning Committee, and shared governance groups document the establishment of institutional standards for student achievement in course success, persistence, retention, program completion, and attainment of student learning outcomes. (IV.B.3)

Evidence that evaluation and planning rely on high quality research and analysis of external and internal conditions was found in the institutional level plans and in research reports provided by the institutional researcher. Evidence that the Superintendent/President ensures reliance on high quality research and analysis was found in minutes of the institution level committees of which the president is a member as well as in Board meeting minutes. (IV.B.3)

The Superintendent/President ensures that educational planning is integrated with resources planning and allocation to support student achievement. Administrative Procedure 3260 compels the integration of educational planning and allocation of resources in support of student achievement and learning. The Superintendent/President is a designated member of the budget committee, the strategic planning committee, and holds delegated authority over fiscal decisions by Board Policy 6100. Evidence that the Superintendent/President ensures allocation of resources supports and improves learning and achievement was seen in the Superintendent/President's budget memo and in documentation of reports to the Board of Trustees and groups from the communities being served. (IV.B.3)

Administrative Procedure 3260 tasks the Superintendent/President's staff leaders with reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of program review mechanisms each summer and with making recommendations for improvements as necessary. The procedure also defines evaluation of planning and implementation efforts at all levels of the College. (IV.B.3)

Board Policy 3200 assigns the Superintendent/President primary leadership role for ensuring the district complies with the accreditation process. The Superintendent/President exercises the institutional primary leadership role as Chair of the Steering Committee. The Superintendent/President also exercises primary leadership through membership on the Budget, Cabinet, Facilities, Sustainability Action Team, and the Strategic Planning Committee. (IV.B.4)

The Superintendent/President assures the implementation of statutes as authorized in Board Policy 2410. Administrative procedures document how institutional practices are consistent with statutes, regulations, and governing board policies. The Superintendent/President guides the creation and approval of institutional plans that document goals, standards, and expectations for practices that are consistent with the institutional mission and policies, including effective control of budget and expenditures. (IV.B.5)

Minutes from Board meetings and retreats confirmed that the Superintendent/President works and communicates with members of the Board Trustees and with the communities served. Subsequent activities arising from documented communications with the Board provide indirect evidence of the Superintendent/President's effectiveness in working and communicating with the Board of Trustees. (IV.B.6)

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard.

## **Standard IV.C: Governing Board**

### **General Observations**

The Feather River College Board of Trustees is comprised of five members elected at large with the authority and responsibility for policies to assure financial stability and quality student learning and achievement. Board meetings are regularly scheduled and are open to the public. Evidence provided, including board policies, minutes and interviews, indicate that the Board's actions support the College's mission through effective participatory governance. Decision making is based on improving educational opportunities and financially sound practices. The FRC Board of Trustees follows its code of ethics and understands that its primary role is in setting policy.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Board Policy 2510 Participation in Local Decision Making delineates that the board is the ultimate decision-maker in those areas assigned by state and federal laws and regulations. Board Policy 7150 Evaluation of Administrators/Managers establishes an evaluation system to ensure the continuous quality improvement of the College and the personal and professional development of administrative personnel. Board Policy 2715 Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice identifies standards of excellence, which are supported by the College's mission and goals. While on site, the College produced an Administrative Policy Master Index, Cabinet Policy Tracking Document and schedule of policy reviews. (IV.C.1)

Interviews with the CEO and members of the board demonstrate that the board acts as a collective entity and has authority over and responsibility for policies to assure quality student learning and achievement and financial stability. (IV.C.2)

CEO Selection is identified in Board Policy 2431 CEO Selection. BP 7150 Evaluation of Administrators/Managers clearly identifies the process for evaluating the CEO. Evidence provided by the College includes the present CEO's job announcement, interview questions and notice for community input. Although the board policy for hiring the CEO meets the Standard, the team recommends the College consider adopting an administrative procedure to document the CEO search and selection process. (IV.C.3)

The board is an independent policy-making body and establishes policy to uphold quality, integrity and fiscal responsibility. Board Policy 2100 establishes specified trustee areas to provide appropriate representation within the district, and trustees are elected at large by the voters. Opportunities for open comment are provided to members of the public as outlined in Board Policy 2345. Board Policy 2010 clearly defines the board size, duties, responsibilities, structure and operating procedures. (IV.C.4)

The Board has the ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity, which is documented in BP 2715. Interviews with trustees confirmed the board's understanding of their role and responsibilities, an awareness of institutional set standards, and that its decisions are not subject to outside influence. (IV.C.5)

All required board policies and accompanying procedures are board approved in the Policy Handbook and are available for public view on the Board of Trustees web page. (IV.C.6) The College's website also contains board policies, and a review of board minutes provides evidence that its actions are consistent with its policies. (IV.C.7)

Board minutes indicate that the board regularly reviews key indicators of student learning and achievement as well as institutional plans for improving academic quality including reviews of curriculum, annual program reviews, the educational master plan, the strategic plan, the Student Success Scorecard, Institutional Set Standards and the Student Equity Plan. (IV.C.8)

As evidenced in board minutes, the board regularly attends training and reports what they learned at the annual board retreat. The CEO prepares a New Trustee Orientation binder for new trustees and meets one-on-one with new trustees. The CEO invites guest speakers to provide relevant training at annual board retreats and study sessions. Board Policy 2100 and Board Policy 2130 include term limits and staggered appointments to ensure continuity. (IV.C.9)

The board has a policy for regular board evaluation. The board engages in a self-evaluation in June of every even-numbered year, which is outlined in Board Policy 2745. The board evaluation assesses board effectiveness in promoting and sustaining academic quality and institutional effectiveness. The full board participates in the evaluation, the results made public and used for improvement. The most recent self-evaluation was conducted in June 2016. (IV.C.10)

The board has a clearly defined code of ethics and conflict of interest policy, as defined in BP 2715; AP 2715 identifies the process for handling violations of the board's code of ethics. Board members adhere to the policies, and board members do not have employment or other personal financial interest in the college. (IV.C.11)

Board Policy 2430 establishes a policy that delegates full responsibility to the CEO for administering policies and executing all decisions requiring administrative action. The CEO is authorized to delegate duties, but is responsible to the board. The board establishes clear expectations for the CEO. A review of board minutes and interviews with the CEO provide evidence that the CEO establishes annual goals and performance objectives, which are communicated with the board. (IV.C.12)

Evidence in board minutes and CEO board reports indicate that the board is informed about eligibility requirements, accreditation standards, commission policies, accreditation process, and the college's accreditation status. The board participates in accreditation training and the accreditation process, including the self-evaluation, as evidenced in board minutes. (IV.C.13)

## **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard.

## **College Recommendation 6 (Improvement)**

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the College adopt a procedure to document the CEO selection process. (IV.C.3)

## Quality Focus Essay Feedback

FRC's Quality Focus Essay was developed through a participatory approach that included all college constituents. The QFE identifies activities, responsible parties, a timeline, intended outcomes, and related standards. In some cases, the activity timelines may be a bit aggressive, and FRC may consider extending the timelines for some to ensure that they can complete all activities. The improvement areas are identified by three themes.

FRC addresses Theme 1, "Stabilization and growth of enrollment, with a focus on on-campus enrollment," by diversifying the student populations it serves to include traditional students, incarcerated students, international students, concurrently enrolled students, and residential students. The QFE documents the difficulties the College is facing with regard to enrollment. While the self-evaluation indicates that FRC has sufficient resources and sound processes to effectively achieve its educational mission, there are some challenges with aging buildings and obtaining sufficient physical resources.

Although enrollment growth may not be a typical QFE improvement area, even slight shifts in enrollment can have a significantly negative impact on a small, rural college. The activities detailed in the essay contain specific strategies that may prove successful as a means to generate a new, stable, enrollment of new students. The team agrees that the development of a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan that identifies potential enrollment and target strategies is prudent.

FRC appropriately identifies the need to improve their student learning outcome assessment processes in Theme 2, "Effectiveness of using achievement and student learning outcome assessment data to improve student success and close performance gaps for all student populations." However, the QFE lacks details pertaining to these proposed improvements. The goal to develop a clearer relationship between "course-level and college-wide SLOs" through a stable database platform holds promise; however, the process to improve achievement, especially for "marginalized and vulnerable student populations" is not as clear.

FRC acknowledges difficulties with internal communication, as summarized in Theme 3, "Communication among shared-governance committees and clarity in decision-making processes." The team found a need for a formal, systematic, and comprehensive process for sharing information, decision-making and clarifying the governance processes. The team encourages the College to more clearly delineate actionable tasks in order to accomplish the activities described in the QFE.