

EVALUATION REPORT

LOS ANGELES PIERCE COLLEGE

6201 Winnetka Avenue
Woodland Hills, California 91371

A Confidential Report Prepared for the
Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

This report represents the findings of the Evaluation Team that
visited Los Angeles Pierce College on March 20-22, 2001

Dr. Constance M. Carroll, Team Chair

LOS ANGELES PIERCE COLLEGE

MARCH 20-22, 2001 COMPREHENSIVE VISIT

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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

DATE OF VISIT: March 20-22, 2001

INSTITUTION: Los Angeles Pierce College

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Originally established by the Los Angeles Unified School District as an agricultural junior college, Los Angeles Pierce College is now a comprehensive community college in the Los Angeles Community College District, which comprises a total of nine community colleges. Because of its agricultural beginnings, Pierce College enjoys a campus in the West San Fernando Valley of 427 acres, much of which is still utilized as a farm or agricultural teaching laboratory.

Pierce College has had a recent history of enrollment instability and serious enrollment decline over the past twenty years, having reached the highpoint of 23,798 students in 1975 and fallen to the level of 13,078 students in 1998. With enrollment losses came revenue losses, a situation further compounded by California's entry into a severe recession, which considerably deflated the State's investment in community colleges and had a critical impact upon institutions serving urban populations. Pierce College's well-earned academic reputation as a successful transfer institution where excellent instruction occurred endured throughout these years of decline. The loss of students, however, was attended by additional financial losses, as well as a high administrative turnover, deterioration of facilities, and a loss of institutional confidence in the College's future.

As the institution languished during this period, the community surrounding it changed in major ways, bringing new economic directions to the area and an increasing diversity to the College, further challenging the institution's responsiveness. A sharp decrease in the White student population, from 91% to 43%, was accompanied by increases in the Hispanic student population, from 4% to 22%, in the Asian student population, from 2% to 19%, and the African American student population, from 2% to 6%. Such dramatic changes would challenge any institution bent upon implementing an inclusive mission, but would definitely present major hurdles to an institution laboring with the problems of decline.

During March 20-22, 2001, a ten-member Evaluation Team, augmented by a

team assistant, visited Pierce College and conducted a comprehensive evaluation to validate the College's 2001 Institutional Self Study for Reaffirmation of Accreditation. Because the Los Angeles Community College District was part of the Accrediting Commission's pilot project to conduct a District Office evaluation based upon a District Self Study, several members of the Team arrived two days prior to the visit in order to conduct that aspect of the assignment. The Team was well prepared for the validation of Pierce College's institutional self assessment, having thoroughly read the materials provided, including the Self Study Report, the report of the previous evaluation team, the College's Midterm Report to the Accrediting Commission, the Pierce College Catalog, class schedules and a host of other documents, from the annual budget to the Educational Master Plan.

During the evaluation visit, Team members interviewed members of the Pierce College administration, faculty, staff and student body, the District administration, members of the Board of Trustees, and others who could offer insight and perspective regarding the institution. In addition, Team members visited over 50 day and evening classes, both to show respect for the significance of the teaching-learning process within the College and to sample the quality of instruction. The Team scheduled an open time, as an additional opportunity for members of the College community to share information and concerns, and also attended a Board of Trustees meeting. This was an extremely thorough visit, which the College accommodated and supported through its cooperative efforts and hospitality.

As part of its validation process, the Team reviewed the report and recommendations resulting from the previous evaluation visit that took place in 1995, as well as the 1997 visit by a smaller team sent to validate the College's Midterm Report. The previous team, because of the institution's condition at the time, made 24 recommendations, pertaining to almost every accreditation standard. The 2001 Team found that Pierce College has made a concerted and earnest effort to address the previous recommendations, especially in recent years. Both the College's and the District's financial situations have completely turned around, from the deficits of the past to the ending-year balances of the present; student enrollment has significantly increased as the result of comprehensive enrollment-management plans; District/College efforts to decentralize and improve some services have been successful; planning has become a serious activity within the College; the administrative structure has been stabilized with permanent appointments, including the appointment of a much respected, dynamic College President; and institutional morale has dramatically improved. Although progress remains to be achieved in some areas, particularly in planning, Pierce College has made an admirable response to the recommendations of the previous evaluation team.

The Pierce College Self Study was well organized, well written and easy to

validate since it was supported by extensive documentation and by a well informed campus community. The Self Study also benefited from the multi-college district pilot project which led to collaboration among the three colleges being evaluated and also involved considerable information sharing between the District and Pierce College as each entity developed its own self assessment. There was extensive involvement of faculty, administrators and staff in the Pierce Self Study. Although student participation was not a successful aspect of the process, efforts to solicit student opinions via surveys did produce results. The College elected not to involve members of the community in the Self Study, which would have demonstrated the improvements in community relations, but this did not in the end detract from the document's utility as a reliable resource from which to ascertain this information.

Throughout the Institutional Self Study there is the leitmotif that "Pierce College is simply not the same place it was six years ago." The Team was able to validate this as a pervasive, accurate sentiment on campus. First and foremost, the excellent faculty and staff of the College have been joined by a new President, who has both galvanized support for new directions at the College and inspired the institution to invent a brighter future for itself. The Pierce College faculty has shared its expertise not only in the instruction they provide, but in the institutional history and collective leadership they have come forward to offer. The President has led the institution in permanently filling other key administrative posts on campus, assuring its stability in this area. A committed District Chancellor who has instituted a new vision for the District and a revitalized Board of Trustees that takes an active and appropriate interest in the welfare of the entire District, as well as Pierce College, have added to the cause of improved practices and morale at the institution. Working through channels of collegial governance, the leadership group has enabled the institution to realize its transformation.

Student enrollment, long the most serious problem at the College, has turned an important corner due to careful enrollment management through scheduling practices, the institution of a compressed, academic calendar, and successful marketing and student recruitment strategies. As a result, enrollment, which had reached its nadir of 13,078 students in 1998, had grown to 16,500 in the Fall semester 2000 and was running 20% ahead of the previous year in the Spring semester 2001 while the visiting Team was on campus. The College has plans to continue its effort to rebuild its enrollment, which is the foundation for both its continuing solvency and its financial advancement.

Largely due to increased enrollment, but also as a beneficiary of the improved condition of the California economy and its positive rewards for community colleges in recent years, the Pierce College budget has increased. The Team also found that the College has instituted sound financial management practices. The College, under the decentralized District budget system, closed the 1998-99

fiscal year with an ending balance of \$1.6 million, and is expected to produce a similar or larger surplus at the end of 2000-2001. Pierce College has been able to establish a Budget Contingency Reserve for unforeseen needs or emergencies, and has increased its flexibility for solving problems locally. The District has also moved into the realm of financial solvency, with a \$38.3 million ending balance at the end of 1999-2000, with \$18.5 of the balance consisting of the balances of Pierce and its 8 sibling colleges, and a Contingency Reserve at the 4% level.

The Team also found that Pierce College has made strides in its efforts to incorporate planning into its institutional culture. Instead of its practice of years past of reacting to situations or to funds available, the College now has an Educational Master Plan, a Program Review Process for its instructional programs and student services, a Facilities Master Plan, a goals and objectives process, a budget development planning process and other planning activities that propel the institution toward a well planned future. These processes, the Team found, were well informed by institutional research and data.

The Team was concerned, however, by the fragmented nature of the present planning efforts. There is a pressing need for these separate planning activities to be integrated, in a manner whereby all determinations flow from the educational plans of the institution. Of most concern to the Team is the need for Pierce College to focus its planning efforts on students, especially since student demographics have changed and the new configuration of students will require new strategies for student success and retention, new pedagogical methods and new support systems upon which the College needs to focus. The College is aware of this need, and has placed this goal on its immediate agenda.

In the area of facilities, Pierce College has made much progress. A new air-conditioning system has been installed; campus improvements have been made; the institution has entered into partnerships for accomplishing some necessary improvements; and a major decision has been made to retain the College farm for educational purposes, thus ending a tense and difficult speculation that has endured for decades. At the time of the Team visit, the entire District was preparing for a bond measure in the month following the visit. The bond measure, which would be initiated under Proposition 39, authorizing passage with a 55% majority approval, would bring \$1.245 billion to the District for facilities construction and improvements, including \$166 million for improvements at Pierce College. The Team applauds the vision and energy of this effort, which, if successful, will provide sorely-needed and state-of-the art facilities to a badly tattered physical plant. At the same time, the Team cautions both the College and the District to prevent the momentum of the bond and its aftermath from detracting or distracting the institution from its central purposes and planning needs, especially its focus on students.

The Team found the tremendous improvements at Pierce College commendable. The new President's leadership, dedication, respect for collegial governance and willingness to make difficult decisions have been welcome additions to the campus. The new Chancellor's vision and resolve have enabled the entire District to refocus energies and achieve success. The Board Committee on Accreditation and Planning has demonstrated support, and the entire Board has empowered College-based leadership and achievement through the decentralization effort. The Pierce College administration, faculty, staff and student leadership have also been major players in crafting the rejuvenated institution, through their willingness to find common ground in making difficult decisions and through their maintenance of superior instruction and services for students.

Major Recommendations

To assist Pierce College in its further development, the Team has identified the following overarching recommendations in the area of planning that warrant focused attention:

- 3.1 Now that the College has achieved a new level of financial and enrollment stability, the College should shift its planning and decision-making priorities to ensure that student educational needs and outcomes are the central focus, and that research and information about student characteristics, trends and outcomes are more thoroughly integrated into the variety of planning processes.

- 3.1 The College should develop a long-term plan for the use of its agricultural lands that supports fiscal viability through strategies such as community partnerships while ensuring that the primary functions of this unique resource remain focused on goals directly linked to the Educational Master Plan.

STANDARD ONE: INSTITUTIONAL MISSION

A. RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREVIOUS TEAM

There were no recommendations related to Standard One.

A. ANALYSIS, EVALUATION AND VALIDATION OF THE SELF STUDY

The Team observed that the College has a Mission Statement that identifies the uniqueness of the institution based upon its "educational purposes, its students, and its place in the higher-education community." The Mission Statement addresses the broad educational purposes of the College, the students to be served by the College, the types of programs to be offered, and the resources to support those programs. In addition, the Mission Statement informs the planning and decision-making processes at the College. Finally, the review process of the Mission Statement is not static: the College has revised the Mission Statement twice times within the past nine years, once in 1992 and again in 1999.

Pierce College's Mission Statement emanates from the District's Mission Statement. The Los Angeles Community College District Board of Trustees adopted the Pierce College Mission Statement presented by the Pierce College Council in 1999. The Mission Statement reveals the College's commitment to serving its communities by providing educational programs for students to transfer, to pursue occupational programs, and to continue "lifelong learning." Unlike the former Mission Statement adopted in 1992, the current Mission Statement broadly identifies the students to be served based upon their educational goals, not the diverse communities with special educational needs and goals. The current Mission Statement serves as the focal point for all planning at the College, as the planning documents have as their goal meeting the varied, educational needs of the increasingly diverse student body and communities served by the College. However, it is apparent that the College still needs to sharpen its focus and planning efforts to meet the needs of students.

An evaluation of the Mission Statement through the review of College documents and interviews with members of the College community validates the information presented about the Mission Statement in Standard One of the Self Study. Appearing in all official documents such as the College Catalog and Schedule of Classes, the Mission Statement serves as the "guiding principle" for the College in all of its planning. Some uncertainty exists, however, about how broadly the College community was involved in reviewing the draft mission statement. The Self Study simply notes that the Planning Committee distributed the draft mission statement. Some long-time members of the College could not recall the extent

to which the Planning Committee distributed the draft mission statement for review.

Although some members of the College community are uncertain about the extent to which the draft mission statement was reviewed by the College community, it is clear, nonetheless, that the College community has embraced the ideals and goals found in the Mission Statement.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS

None

STANDARD TWO: INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

A. RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREVIOUS TEAM

There were no recommendations related to Standard Two.

B. ANALYSIS, EVALUATION AND VALIDATION OF THE SELF STUDY

Pierce College represents itself accurately to all constituencies. The Schedule of Classes and the College Catalog are updated in a timely fashion. The recent conversion of the academic calendar to a 15-5-15-5-5 format. The addition of a full time Marketing and Public Relations Director position has helped increase the College's community image and communications within various segments within the District. This effort and College publications have been instrumental in assisting the College in rebuilding student enrollments.

The College operates under the policies adopted by the Los Angeles Community College District in the areas of academic freedom and integrity of the teaching learning process. Although the academic freedom policy has been adopted by the Board and the collective bargaining representatives, the District is endeavoring to include the Academic Senate in this process.

The 1995 Faculty Handbook has been under revision for more than two years. It is anticipated that publication of a revised Handbook will occur by the end of the Spring 2001 semester. The Faculty Code of Ethics, last revised in 1995, is posted on the College's Website.

The Los Angeles Community College District has an adopted District policy regarding campus conduct as it applies to faculty, administrative and support staff. It is published in the Pierce College Catalog and Schedule of Classes. The College acknowledges the need to disseminate such information to new employees, which will broaden and improve faculty and staff understanding of this policy.

The Student Code of Conduct is included in the Schedule of Classes. 45% of the faculty include the Student Code of Conduct in their course syllabi.

The College has in place policies and practices related to the issues of equity and diversity. With recent increases in student enrollment and anticipated faculty retirements, an increase in hiring is expected in the next few years. The College has reassigned equity and diversity duties from the Dean of Academic Affairs to a part-time Affirmative Action officer in the Spring of 2001. Affirmative action workshops for faculty and staff are being scheduled for the 2001-2002 academic year. It is important that Pierce College continue this emphasis in order to assure progress in this area of employment practice.

The College has made an effort to incorporate athletic opportunities for students, offering 9 athletic programs. It is adding another sport, Women's Soccer, in the Fall 2001 semester. Leadership is uneven, however, since most of the head coaches are part-time and hold other non-college jobs. Although the College's athletic programs are offered on a basis of honesty and integrity, the coaching situation is in need of attention.

The accreditation process is well organized at the College level. Personnel from the entire campus community are assigned appropriate committees. The current accreditation process was coordinated with two other colleges within the Los Angeles Community College District. These activities contribute to a good relationship with the Accrediting Commission.

Pierce College attempts to review policies, practices and publications on a regular basis. There will be a concerted effort to have administrative personnel more involved in statewide and District issues in order to enhance campus knowledge of key public policy issues impacting community college education.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

None

STANDARD THREE: INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

C. RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE PREVIOUS TEAM

#1 It is recommended that by the end of the 1995-96 academic year, the College review its Master plan goals and objectives to establish priorities and to develop an action plan of activities that includes measurable goals and activities that are tied to timelines, with specific reference to individuals and/or groups responsible for carrying out the plans.

The visiting team verified that the College has responded to this recommendation by updating its Master Plan in 1997 and again in 2000-2001. The Master Plan that was approved by the Board of Trustees in December 2000 included collegewide goals as well as related and measurable objectives, with timelines, for each administrator and department of the College. Additionally, both a Facilities Master Plan and a Technology Master Plan have been developed. The Facilities Master Plan is comprehensive and includes priorities for its recommendations.

D. ANALYSIS, EVALUATION AND VALIDATION OF THE SELF STUDY

Both the Pierce College Research Office and the District Research and Reporting Unit (DRRU) provide extensive amounts of information that is helpful in planning. Examples of such support include the Background Data section of the 2000 Educational Master Plan, measurement of progress towards Partnership for Excellence (PFE) goals, staff and student surveys for the Self Study and other surveys, and data that is used for program review. One full-time faculty member and a student worker staff the Pierce College Research Office. Other departments, such as Admissions and Records, also provide reports that are used for planning. Also, both the District and the College maintain Websites with research information.

In regard to college planning, the Pierce College Council (PCC), the group responsible for major College participatory decisions, has been very active. A portion of this group, with leadership from the Academic Senate President and administrators responsible for the master plan, has created the set of new plans and refined the planning processes.

A comprehensive planning process and set of integrated plans has been completed over the last two years. A new Educational Master Plan, Technology Plan, Facilities Plan, and set of Financial Strategies, and an initial Student Success Plan are in evidence. The Master Plan and Master Plan process include the integration of goals from across the College. That is, overall College goals, from the Educational Master Plan, guide the priorities of the President, individual administrators, and departments. Department goals are generated annually with College goals in mind, and department goals are becoming more closely

integrated into College goals, representing a cyclic process. Additionally, department goals are linked to program review in that they result from the recommendations developed within each department's program review process. Planning and resource allocation are somewhat linked with department goals, and are instrumental in some resource allocation decisions, such as Block Grant distribution. Some Partnership for Excellence funds will be allocated to support the Student Success Plan that is expected to be finalized at the end of this academic year.

The College evaluates its progress towards its mission and programs through an established academic department program review process and measurement of Partnership for Excellence goal progress. When Master Plans have been updated in the past, an informal review of past progress has reportedly been part of the updating and revising process. Measurable objectives are included in the new Educational Master Plan.

The College is to be commended for its accomplishments in the areas of program review, institutional research, and comprehensive, integrated and broad-based planning. The plans recently developed and implemented have resulted in renewed levels of success and confidence for the College and its faculty and staff. The effectiveness of planning is enhanced through the integration of the many planning activities.

The delineation of institutional research responsibilities between the College and DRRU has changed with the District's "decentralization" initiative. The visiting Team validated the Self Study's assertion that all of the recommendations made by the District Administrative Organization Ad-Hoc Task Force relative to institutional research have not been implemented. Uncertainty about distribution of responsibilities remains, and those recommendations and the work of that task force need to be re-visited.

Pierce College faculty and staff commented also that there is a lack of consistency in the databases used for reporting and research purposes, and that this situation complicates both planning and decision making and compromises efficiency.

Some critical features of the College's planning effort are not yet completed, including the Student Success plan, the linking of student demographic and outcomes information with plans, and human resources planning. As described in the Self Study, the ethnic distribution of Pierce students has changed from nine percent ethnic minority in 1975 to over 57% ethnic minority currently, with 31% of the students coming from non-native-speaking homes. Many other changes reflecting students' educational needs, including the large amount of enrollment growth, have also occurred.

While a few new disparate programs have been implemented, these new student

trend statistics have yet to be specifically and comprehensively addressed in plans or in planning processes linked with long-term human resources planning and commensurate program, curriculum, pedagogy, and institutional "climate" changes. Moreover, much of the information used for planning thus far reflects administrative concerns and environmental scanning and is not directly student-focused. Much of the student outcomes research and information available emphasizes only transfer student success. Additionally, while the Self Study mentions that new modes of educational delivery have been implemented, the visiting Team observed that the traditional lecture method is the primary delivery mode. **Now that the College has achieved a new level of financial and enrollment stability, the College should shift its planning and decision-making priorities to ensure that student educational needs and outcomes are the central focus, and that research and information about student characteristics, trends, and outcomes are more thoroughly integrated into the variety of planning processes.**

A related fact is that the College's faculty reflects little change, representing little diversity and experiencing few additions in recent years. Many of the existing college plans focus on facilities, increasing a declining enrollment, and stabilizing the financial status of the College, issues that needed immediate attention. There is a need to re-direct planning, as well as academic and student services program review, to link student learning needs and outcomes assessment, with human resources, curriculum, and pedagogy planning.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Team recommends:

- 3.1 Now that the College has achieved a new level of financial and enrollment stability, the College should shift its planning and decision making priorities to ensure that student educational needs and outcomes are the central focus, and that research and information about student characteristics, trends, and outcomes are more thoroughly integrated into the variety of planning processes. (Standards 3A.1, 3B.2, 3C.1)

STANDARD FOUR: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

A. RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREVIOUS TEAM

#2 It is recommended that by December 31, 1995, the College identify academic and student service programs for evaluation, and complete an informal review by the end of the 1998-99 academic year.

The College has formally reviewed all instructional departments and student services units, and continues to do so on a regular five-year cycle. Vocational programs are reviewed every two years. An updated "Guide for Instructional Program Review" defines the process and provides guidelines for action and implementation of recommendations.

#3 It is recommended that the College form an enrollment management and scheduling committee that, beginning with the Fall 1996 semester, will be responsible for planning, coordinating, and making recommendations regarding enrollment management, scheduling, as well as assisting the College with the setting of FTES, WSCH and WSCH/FTES targets.

Pierce College has responded thoroughly to the need for enrollment management. Using data from the District Office and the College's own studies, the College has instituted an array of changes. All departments and disciplines now have FTES targets, and the College has a target percentage for overall growth. Every department and program have created a written list of goals.

The largest changes come in the form of "block" scheduling and a new academic calendar. College faculty, staff, and administrators feel this change is the dominant, though not the only, causal factor in recent increases in enrollment. Scheduling patterns have been reviewed and changed as needed, and evaluation of scheduling patterns is now an integral part of program review.

Disciplines with support laboratories are examining ways to revise outlines so that labs may collect credit WSCH. The feasibility of this is being considered, and, thus far, no outline revisions have come to the Curriculum Committee.

Research into demographic changes and student trends appears to be ongoing. Marketing efforts have been carefully planned and targeted, and appropriate resources have been devoted to them. The approach is comprehensive. Advertising on radio and television has targeted a young, local audience: a local TV cable provider's service area roughly coincides with that of the College, and ads have been presented during programs that attract a targeted audience. Strategies to make the College look attractive to potential students have also been employed. The new calendar, for instance, was designed to make the fall starting date later, and therefore more attractive, than that of competing institutions. The College has clearly committed intelligence as well as financial resources to promoting itself.

Outreach to feeder high schools has taken the form of expanded recruitment and concurrent enrollment. High school students are increasingly aware of, and sometimes participants in, what the College has to offer. However, some academic departments have questioned whether the concurrent courses offered

in high schools meet the high standards of the College.

The College's "more comprehensive basic skills and remedial program" is more comprehensive in some areas than others. English as a Second Language offerings have been expanded. Outreach to community based organizations is good, but may be less effective for the College's students than development of basic skills delivery on campus.

Special programs appear to be expanding, and they address a broad range of students, from Honors students on a "fast track" to transfer, to seniors taking courses for personal development.

Overall, these efforts at increasing enrollment and improving scheduling have been successful.

#5 It is recommended that Pierce College seriously look at its graduation requirements, including both developing and implementing general education criteria consistent with Title 5 guidelines for degree-applicable courses, by January 1996.

In the Fall semester 1996, the College Curriculum Committee formed teams to review all general education courses and refer those not in compliance back to their respective departments. Appropriate changes were made at the department level, and the courses in question went back through the Curriculum Committee. The changes were reflected in the College Catalog by the 1997-98 academic year.

#6 It is recommended that the local Curriculum Committee Handbook be completed and widely disseminated by January, 1996.

The Curriculum Committee has updated the Curriculum Handbook, which is on the College's Website, for use by the College community.

#7 It is recommended that by Fall 1996, the College strengthen its commitment to provide education extending beyond the transfer courses, such as basic skills, vocational programs and certificates, JTPA, GAIN, SBAC, School to Work, and Tech Prep.

Pierce College has taken steps to strengthen its commitment to its non-transfer educational programs, although some steps have been larger than others. The Vice President of Academic Affairs has reorganized that area, grouping vocational programs under one dean to serve the needs of those programs more efficiently. The College has hired a professional grant writer to seek funding for programs; the College has in recent years received less grant money than competing institutions in the area. As a result of offering contract education to

local businesses, the College has been able to generate funds and to establish useful connections to business and industry. One involved business has contributed grant money to one of the College's academic programs.

The College has begun to develop connections with community-based organizations to provide remedial and ESL classes as well as to provide focused attention on the basic skills programs on campus. However, the College has not as yet provided a coordinated approach to developing the basic skills programs.

#8 It is recommended that by Fall 1996, the needs of the growing population of ESL and underprepared students be reflected in the curricular offerings and support services of the College.

English as a Second Language offerings have been expanded, including courses aimed at lower levels of English proficiency and courses offered through other programs, such as EOPS and Community Services. There are a variety of basic skills courses and labs available, but these have not been expanded to the extent that ESL offerings have.

B. ANALYSIS, EVALUATION AND VALIDATION OF THE SELF STUDY

Consistent with its clear Mission Statement, Pierce College offers a broad array of high quality educational programs. A recent survey testifies to students' satisfaction with the College's offerings, and an impressive rate of university transfer is evidence of the programs' quality. Although the College should prepare more thoroughly for the effects of future demographic changes, the College does, in fact, monitor the needs of its students.

Programs appear well designed and are offered in a regular, predictable manner. Student schedule planning is aided by the fact that the Schedule of Classes includes the next four sessions (in the current issue, the Winter Intersession, Spring semester, and two Summer sessions). General Education requirements are appropriate and follow a coherent philosophy, stated in clear terms in the College Catalog. However, because of the centralized structure for approving and modifying general education requirements, the College has been unable thus far to address issues of computer literacy or diversity in general education patterns or unit requirements for graduation.

Pierce College offers degree programs in the traditional academic disciplines and vocational areas, as well as occupational certificates and certificates of achievement in narrowly defined skills areas, such as Payroll Accounting. Accelerated transfer is offered through the College's PACE program, and other special programs serve seniors (ENCORE and OASIS programs) and other non-traditional students, such as Welfare-to-Work students in the CalWorks

program. Community Services offers a broad range of community education courses in response to the interests and needs of the surrounding communities.

All programs have been subject to program review since the last accreditation review, some more than once. The program review process is clearly defined, and seems to be understood by the programs participating. Each program has generated a written set of goals, which are incorporated into the Educational Master Plan. This planning has presented both opportunities and challenges for the College.

Growth in enrollment has created some strains in the institution. The College has increasingly hired hourly adjunct faculty to accommodate demand for classes; this has affected some departments much more than others. Some classes are large. A limit of 40 students in a remedial writing class seems unlikely to promote individual attention or careful evaluation of students' writing. Nonetheless, students express satisfaction with the overall quality of instruction, and the enrollment growth has encouraged an atmosphere of optimism.

In establishing the effectiveness of its programs, the College points repeatedly to its high transfer rate. This rate is impressive, the highest among local colleges, and one of the highest regionally. However, by focusing on the transfer rate, the College may be measuring success too narrowly. Though it is an obvious source of pride and a legitimate measure of the institution's success, other indicators of institutional effectiveness need to be examined more closely.

Because the College has now strengthened its commitment to providing education extending beyond transfer courses, the College should develop and evaluate strategies to ensure that information about educational programs is communicated, used, and integrated into existing and planned research and the evaluation process. The development and use of this integrated information, which should include credit and noncredit basic skills and ESL programs, will further enhance the College's efforts to strengthen its commitment to providing education beyond transfer courses and programs.

A variety of programs funded by a number of different sources, in various locations on and off campus offer basic skills. This division may cause basic skills concerns to have less influence on planning and allocation of resources, and may prevent sharing of information and resources. The Vice President of Academic Affairs has begun a discussion about coordinating basic skills efforts collegewide, which seems like a step in a constructive direction.

A number of support programs and services provide basic skills. Current basic skills delivery appears good. The Learning Center and other providers appear to serve many students effectively in light of their limited resources. However,

more attention will need to be paid to basic skills in light of the changing nature of the student population. The Educational Master Plan demonstrates the College's awareness of an increasing population of potential students from nontraditional backgrounds and language backgrounds other than English. English as a Second Language offerings have been expanded appropriately, but many of these students will be underprepared in other ways, and ESL students who move into other classes requiring writing will have continuing needs for help.

Although the College provides appropriate opportunities and funds for faculty development, including adjunct faculty, observation of a large sample of classes suggests that instructors overwhelmingly rely on traditional lecture methods of instruction. Except in areas closely associated with technology, the use of technology in instruction appeared to be rare.

Distance education offerings are increasing, particularly Web-based Internet classes. The latter are all sections of courses also offered by conventional means, and conform to existing course outlines. The online classes were initiated by the instructors teaching them. The College has committed resources to the development of online courses, most notably reassigned time for the instructor who serves as Distance Education Coordinator. The Distance Education Coordinator—teacher of an online course himself—assists other instructors in the development of online classes, coordinates workshops for potential online instructors, and disseminates information on distance education and the progress of existing courses in a periodic Distance Education Report. There appear to be more opportunities to try new instructional methods than instructors ready to try them.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Team recommends:

- 4.1 Because the College has now strengthened its commitment to providing education extending beyond transfer courses, the College should develop and evaluate strategies to ensure that information about educational programs is communicated, used, and integrated into existing and planned research and the evaluation process. The development and use of this integrated information, which should include credit and noncredit basic skills and ESL programs, will further enhance the College's efforts to strengthen its commitment to providing education beyond transfer courses and programs. (Standard 4A.1, 4A.5, 4B.1, 4B.5, and 4D.5)

STANDARD 5: STUDENT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

The visiting evaluation Team was impressed with the quality, breadth and depth of services provided to the students of Pierce College. The responsiveness to student concerns and issues underscored the "student centeredness" of this group of professionals.

A. RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREVIOUS TEAM

#2 It is recommended that by December 31, 1995, the College identify academic and student service programs for evaluation and complete the informal review by the end of the 1998-99 academic year.

Program reviews were completed for all student service programs by the date specified. The program review process consisted of program descriptions, including a statement of goals and objectives; legislative mandates impacting goals; staffing; funding sources; program evaluation; student outcomes; student and staff satisfaction surveys; program strengths and weaknesses; and planning agendas.

A review team, composed of staff members from the College community, as well as participants external to the campus, validated the observations of the program under review, making commendations, as well as recommendations for improvement.

This process, for some programs, resulted in the allocation of additional personnel or fiscal resources and was viewed as a positive experience by all participating programs. This was the first opportunity for Student Services programs to participate in a standardized process of review, which was linked to the campus planning and budget process.

While this initial effort met the recommendation of the prior visiting team, an additional effort needs to be taken to develop the next program review cycle using a more structured evaluative process focused on measurable student outcomes.

#3 It is recommended that the College form an enrollment management and scheduling committee that will be responsible for planning, coordinating, and

making recommendations regarding enrollment management, scheduling, and curriculum balance, as well as assisting the College with the setting of FTES, WSCH, and WSCH/FTES target.

An enrollment management system has been implemented. The enrollment management agenda for the 2000-01 academic year is ambitious, and the implementation of this agenda is still in process. It includes such tasks as:

- Monitor student support services involved in Matriculation process.

Admissions and assessment are most closely linked to the enrollment management process. Admission regularly reports the number of applications processed and enrollment appointments extended to provide the College with an indication of application and enrollment trends. The Assessment and Matriculation office provides information to Academic Affairs regarding placement rates in English and mathematics, allowing department chairs the opportunity to make "real time" adjustments to class offerings based on student needs.

- Enhance program through Program Review.

A systematic process of program review has been implemented which includes a yearly procedure to formulate goals in support of that process.

- Review demographic information and student trends.

Demographic information is collected and student trends are reviewed. The College community is aware of the changes in the student population served by Pierce, but specific strategies as to how the College will respond to the changing community is still in the process of being developed. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the response is institutional in nature, and not the responsibility of a single campus program or service unit.

- Enhance marketing efforts for prospective students.

The efforts and progress made by the College in this area are commendable. Efforts to heighten the profile of the College within the service area have been effective, resulting in higher rates of new student enrollment.

- High school recruitment plan

The College is to be commended in this area. Outreach activities have been effective, making Pierce, for many high school students, the college of choice for their post-secondary education. This is particularly true for students who are first generation college students, without a parental history of seeking

education beyond a K-12 setting. It should be cautioned that institutional efforts to retain this "new" student population must equal the efforts used to recruit this group.

- **Basic skills and remedial programs**

Efforts to support the underprepared student are organized within specific discipline based instructional units, working in collaboration with individual student services offices. It appears that these efforts need to be better coordinated with consideration given to developing stronger lines of communication within these instructional and services areas to increase institutional effectiveness with this student population. Efforts to implement persistence studies to evaluate the progress of students from basic skills through goal completion must be implemented, especially in ESL. In addition, coordinated efforts in assisting students transition from the non-credit program into the credit program need to be enhanced.

- **Retention of current students.**

While retention reports are generated, specific institutional interventions need to be developed and implemented to increase student retention. Systemic interventions with probation students, basic skills students, and students who are undecided need to be strengthened by the Counseling department.

- **Establish new initiatives with four-year institutions.**

The College is to be commended for committing personnel and budgetary resources to this area. A new counseling position with responsibility for coordinating the College's efforts in transfer and articulation has been added to continue the excellent efforts already established in this area.

#8 It is recommended that by Fall 1996, the needs of the growing population of ESL and underprepared students be reflected in the curricular offerings and support services of the College.

The College has made gains in providing support services to ESL and underprepared students. The Matriculation and Assessment unit is commended for its efforts to modify, and then validate an assessment instrument that is uniquely responsive to the needs of the local ESL community served by Pierce College.

Efforts by EOPS have not been in place long enough to determine the impact of the program with underprepared students. It should be noted that the Associate Dean of EOPS has established the goal of utilizing a learning communities approach in support high of risk student populations. This highly effective

instructional delivery system links courses with student services curriculum and interventions, wedding instruction and services as a total support program for students.

In the College's response to this previous recommendation, the College indicated that the position of the Associate Dean of EOPS will be the College liaison to the Spanish-speaking population served by the College. Caution should be taken by the College to ensure that the responsibility for addressing the needs of this population is an institutional response, and not the sole responsibility of this position.

#9 It is recommended that the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees consider again increasing of the student health fee to the \$10 maximum permitted by the Ed Code.

The Board of Trustees approved the recommendation to raise student health fees from \$10 to the permitted \$11 level. The increased fee enabled the College to hire a licensed clinical psychologist for nine hours per week.

The need for psychological services continues to be a growing need. At the current level of funding, the clinical psychologist maintains a full caseload of students. To augment this service, the College maintains a Help Center, which is staffed by counselors and the college nurse, who provide crisis intervention services and act as a "first line" of assistance for students in need. The Health Center and the Counseling department are to be commended for their efforts in attempting to meet this continuing need.

B. ANALYSIS, EVALUATION AND VALIDATION OF THE SELF STUDY

The Team was impressed by Pierce College's diligence in responding to the numerous recommendations resulting from the previous visit, which indicates the institution's serious resolve to correct deficiencies and ensure improvement. The College has made significant progress in its journey from being a troubled institution to a more positive environment for learning.

Pierce College has clearly met the standards pertaining to support for students. It offers a comprehensive program of services, which are well received by students. In governance, however, student participation seems to be uneven, and the institution needs to take additional steps to make sure that student involvement and participation are both recruited and nurtured, from College governance to student activities to accreditation self studies.

The most profound change affecting student services at Pierce College is the notable shift in student demographics, from a student population that was remarkably homogenous twenty years ago to one characterized by great

diversity in recent years. In order to ensure quality service to this new mix of students, the College will need to focus its research and service efforts in this direction, so that the institutional strategies to support student success are thoughtful, thorough and practical. To date, the College has increased and improved its services, but has not made the effort necessary to study the institution from a student-centered perspective. Placing students and their needs at the center of future research will enable the College to address the complexities of the student body and match its response in an effective manner.

Given the commitment and spirit the Team observed on campus, there is confidence that the College will reorient its priorities to focus on the needs of its increasingly diverse student population. The College is strongly encouraged to put this effort at the top of its planning agenda.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

None

STANDARD 6: INFORMATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES

A. RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREVIOUS TEAM

#4 It is recommended that the College reconvene its Technology Learning Round Table Task Force by the end of the Fall 1995 term and assign it the initial task of developing a computing and technology master plan to be completed by the end of the Spring 1996 term.

The Pierce College Technology Plan has been developed by a representative task group under the direction of the Vice President of Academic Affairs. It was presented to the Board in December 2000. Development of specific goals and suggested funding mechanisms has begun for the current year and several years into the future. The comprehensiveness and specificity of this plan are noteworthy and should provide the College with clear direction for the next four to five years.

#12 The team recommends that the College develop and implement a comprehensive plan for staffing, space utilization and the acquisition, maintenance and replacement of equipment for the effective delivery of services in the Library, the Learning Center, the Media Center, the Math Lab, the Writing Lab and the Faculty Support Center.

The College is addressing these issues through the various planning processes, specifically the Technology Plan 2000 under the direction of the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Information and learning resources and services are sufficient in quality, depth and currency to support the institution's intellectual and cultural activities and programs in whatever format and wherever they are offered. The institution provides training so that information and learning resources may be used effectively and efficiently.

Information and learning resources and services are provided in a variety of areas at Pierce College: Library, Learning Center, Instructional Media Center, Faculty Support Center, 20/20 lab, Writing lab and Math lab. The technology, equipment and other resources in these areas have been maintained over the past few years of low budgets using a variety of sources such as state technology funding and block grants.

The library is a traditional facility fostering quiet, individual study with minimal space for group, collaborative work. It has both positive and difficult characteristics. The stack areas are difficult to access. There is a large retrospective print and microfilm collection. There is a small area for online catalog and electronic database use with extremely limited Internet access. The library offers orientations for classes, as well as a library research course. It lacks an appropriate place to teach library research skills, preferably in a hands-on fashion. The renovation of the Library with the Spring 2001 bond measure will allow for more effective physical organization of staff and services as well as electronic resource areas for student access and instruction.

The Learning Center is an active, busy, well used center with collaborative areas. It is quite crowded and needs room to expand. The classroom is used as an open lab but also for orientations.

The 20/20 lab is a combination pc and Mac lab designed for open access but is used primarily for specific classes thereby reducing open access use by the general student population. It is dark and crowded. The Writing Lab is a small attractive lab staffed by two English faculty members providing individual assistance with tutorials and computer programs. The Math Lab is managed by the Math Department and well used. The Faculty Staff Center is not used extensively. The Teleconference room is furnished with donated furniture, which makes an attractive and professional area, and includes teleconferencing equipment. The Information Technology Media Center is adequate but is potentially too small when the anticipated extensive growth in equipment begins. There are plans to increase staffing to support technology in labs.

The Technology Committee at Pierce has prepared an ambitious and extensive technology plan under the direction of the Vice President of Academic Affairs to address current and future technology needs throughout the campus. Sources of funding have been identified to enable Pierce to significantly increase the technological support of its educational programs. New technologies such as smart boards, data projectors, media carts, wireless networks, and laptops have been introduced and will be expanded over the next few years. Regular replacement of existing computers as well as additions of new computers are being planned. This technology plan will be enhanced with new facilities funded by the bond in Spring 2000. This plan has been built with the input of departments and areas throughout the campus, reflecting their current and anticipated needs.

Information and learning resources are available through the library and other labs to a certain extent but not nearly adequate for the needs of students and faculty. There is not enough open access for students needing to do word processing or Internet research due to scheduling problems with the labs and lack of equipment in the library and labs. A large open computer lab is an integral part of the technology plan and will address this need. Students are able to access information during the open hours of the facilities and now through remote access via the library web page to library catalog and electronic databases.

There are two staffing issues involved in providing information and learning resources to improve student learning. First is the maintenance of the equipment. Information Technology issues with staffing, training, and maintenance will be addressed by the Vice President of Academic Affairs. As the campus adds more technology in many areas, the issue of staff maintenance and response time becomes crucial. Technical support for faculty and students in classrooms, labs, and in the library's technology areas is an integral part of the successful use of the equipment and resources.

A second staffing issue pertains to staff training. The staff development committee has worked with the Information Technology area to provide training for staff in the uses of the technology, which will be in offices, classrooms and labs. There appears to be an organized effort to provide ongoing training in a variety of technology skills. The next step should be to use those skills to improve the instructional program in classrooms and labs, to teach students to access information and to evaluate such information critically. This is an area, which has been mentioned in some program review areas and should be central to the educational program for student success throughout the college.

The financial support of Pierce College has been such a major problem over the past few years that planning for all information resources has been difficult. For example, the library book budget has not had general fund support for a number of years; the library has had to rely solely on Block Grant funding for print and

electronic databases. There has been a significant change in the budget picture at the College due to new leadership at both the College and District, a new budget allocation process, enrollment growth after a number of years of decline, possible additional state funding, a forthcoming bond election, an emerging foundation, and partnerships. With improved funding, the technology plan along with the College budget should address consistent ongoing funding for equipment, materials, and staffing for areas of Instructional Technology and the library.

Evaluation of instructional services and programs has routinely occurred through student surveys and class evaluations. As new technologies and formats emerge, the evaluation of each resource area becomes more complex in terms of equipment, staffing, and materials. This needs to be considered in Program Review and long-term planning efforts such as the Technology Plan and the Educational Master Plan. **The College should develop a plan encompassing all areas of instruction, as well as the library and labs, to enable students to access, evaluate, and use information effectively.**

While the Standard Six Committee focused on collegewide access areas in Information and Learning Resources, there is technology development throughout the College and a number of discipline specific labs. Those areas should be considered in terms of the technology planning and staff training for information competency as well.

There were only four planning agendas identified in Standard Six: the open access lab, reorganization of information technology staff and facilities, budget for instructional technology, student evaluation of the writing lab. The first three will be done under the direction of the Vice President of Academic Affairs as part of the technology plan. The Writing Lab evaluations will probably be managed by the English Department.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Team recommends:

- 6.1 The College should develop a plan encompassing all areas of instruction, as well as the library and labs, to enable students to access, evaluate, and use information effectively. (Standards 6.4, 6.7)

STANDARD SEVEN: FACULTY AND STAFF

A. RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREVIOUS TEAM

The previous evaluation team in April 1995 made two recommendations related to faculty and staff.

#10. It is recommended that the College develop a faculty hiring manual with a set of criteria related to teaching effectiveness such as a teaching demonstration and/or a portfolio review.

The College has responded satisfactory to this recommendation with the completion of two closely linked manuals in 1997. These manuals included suggestions on screening and interviewing techniques as well as information on minimum qualifications and equivalencies.

#11 It is recommended that the District develop a process which allows the College to incorporate local requirements in position announcement when advertising for open positions.

Until very recently, standardized job descriptions existed for all positions within the Los Angeles Community College District, and all advertising, testing, and interview processes were centralized. Currently, there is a concerted effort to review and update the entire District Personnel Guide and to decentralize the personnel processes to include regional applicant pools and hiring procedures. A draft of the Board Rules on Faculty Hiring (February 14, 2001) is part of an overall revision intended to give greater autonomy and emphasis in determining local specifications, qualifications, and needs.

B. ANALYSIS, EVALUATION AND VALIDATION OF THE SELF STUDY

Los Angeles Pierce College is very fortunate to have an extraordinarily qualified, dedicated, and enthusiastic faculty, administration, and staff. This collegewide commitment is especially apparent from numerous interviews with students, management, and faculty members themselves. Clearly, this dedication has been, and continues to be, a major and distinctive characteristic at the College. Of particular significance is the institution's genuine and widespread interest in serving both the College and the community through various activities such as the Encore and Nurturing programs.

To support its educational programs and services, Pierce College employs highly competent full-time and hourly faculty and staff. Qualifications for all teaching positions are based on academic background, practical field experience where appropriate, currency in a specific discipline, teaching ability, recommendations from employers and peers, and personal interviews. Of primary importance are the applicant's specific knowledge, skills, and

technological or specialized expertise necessary to prepare students for the work force or for transfer to four-year institutions. Teaching demonstrations are also considered as integral parts of the selection process.

The selection policies and procedures for classified staff continue to be an issue. Some concerns include restrictive recruitment procedures, stale or unsuitable position pools, and lengthy delays in the hiring process. The need for a cooperative working relationship between the District and the Personnel Commission is paramount. All parties are strongly urged to work together in a timely manner to reach practical and functional solutions. Any delay will only intensify these problems beyond acceptable levels.

Evaluation processes for administrators, faculty and staff are in place, and are conducted as required by contractual agreement or policy. However, there is considerable skepticism as to how well the evaluation system works, and there is a general agreement that evaluation is not used to improve performance. Future plans call for: 1) training of evaluators with emphasis on evaluation theories, guidelines, and practices; and 2) a mechanism for formal feedback from employees. Because many believe that such input would benefit communications and growth for everyone, the College is encouraged to include input from students, faculty, and administrators in this perusal to develop the most effective evaluation tool for all staff members.

The institution is to be commended on its progress in addressing the professional and staff development needs of all campus constituencies. The Self Study and interviews with various campus groups verified that numerous workshops, seminars, conferences, Flex Day activities, and other related training sessions have been developed and made available to all employees. Topics have included classroom teaching techniques, sexual harassment, information technology and the use of the Internet, and new developments in industry. The team suggests that the College expand activities in upgrading existing technology skills and in developing new expertise, such as integration of multi-media within the classroom environment.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

None

STANDARD 8: PHYSICAL RESOURCES

A. RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREVIOUS TEAM

#13 In order to meet DWP deadlines for energy conservation incentives, it is recommended that the District immediately facilitate the rapid implementation of the energy conservation proposals the College has formulated.

The College has responded effectively to the challenge of energy conservation. Numerous energy efficient strategies were implemented including lowering ceilings, installing automatic light switches and bringing on-line a state of the art hybrid cooling system. The college should be commended for its efforts in the area of energy conservation.

#14 No later than the deadline established by FEMA, it is recommended that the District commit in writing to match the FEMA offer to provide 80% of the cost for replacement buildings.

The College has made the fiscal commitment to replacement of the buildings damaged by the 1994 earthquake. Preparation for demolition has begun and, although there has been some delay as the result of a need to seek more competitive bids, completion of the project is expected by Fall 2002.

#15 It is recommended that the College complete implementation of the physical resources and campus development strategy #5 in the 1993 Master Plan using appropriate campus involvement with an intent to support the educational program and create a revenue stream for the College.

Since the 1995 visit, the College has developed physical resources to the degree that funds have become available to do so. The potential for passage of a large District bond measure provides further opportunities for facilities development. Additionally, the College is actively exploring partnership opportunities in connection with its agricultural land.

#16 No later than July 1, 1996, it is recommended that the College establish, implement, and maintain effective collegewide injury and illness prevention as well as hazardous materials programs.

The College has an Injury and Illness Prevention Plan in place and has established a comprehensive system for disposal of each category of hazardous materials.

A. ANALYSIS, EVALUATION AND VALIDATION OF THE SELF STUDY

Pierce College is justifiably proud of the significant improvements in buildings, grounds and infrastructure that have been accomplished in recent years. Many building have been painted; landscaping has been enhanced and is supported by new irrigation systems; an updated telephone system has been installed; and, most notably, a much needed air-conditioning system now serves most of the College's classrooms and offices. It should be noted that, particularly in the area of heating and cooling, improvements have been accomplished in a progressive and environmentally responsible manner. Pierce College should be commended for its strong commitment and effective implementation of energy conservation strategies.

However, there are still a number of challenges remaining in the area of physical resources. These challenges include the following ongoing needs: updating and refurbishing of classrooms and offices, expansion of support staff to meet the growing facility demands of the institution, continuation of the efforts toward a barrier free campus, enhancement of technology in support of educational programs and support services, and extension of efforts toward a process of integrated long-range planning.

While commendable progress has been made in the appearance and functioning of many campus facilities, work remains to be done to ensure that physical resources continue to adequately support educational programs and services. Many classrooms offices, and restrooms are in need of repainting, new furniture, repairs to walls or ceilings, or new carpeting. The cafeteria would function more effectively as a student gathering place with more comfortable and flexible seating, and the kitchen is long over due for updated equipment. Although the College has made recent improvements in signage, identifying buildings from a distance is still difficult. In addition, many buildings are only identifiable from a single vantage point. Navigation is further complicated by the fact that the numbering system used throughout campus to identify buildings is not reflected on campus maps. Among the facilities that remain in need of improvement, the resurfacing of Parking Lot 7 is among the most urgent. The current condition of the lot makes parking difficult at best and, for the elderly or disabled, it presents a hazardous condition.

The College is fortunate to have a talented and committed staff in maintenance and operations. However, their numbers are inadequate to ensure that the maintenance needs necessary to support programs and services are consistently met. This is increasingly the case as the College experiences rapid growth in student enrollment. (The difficulty maintaining the clocks on campus is one small example of the current inability to keep pace with basic needs.) The problem of understaffing in this area will soon be compounded by the additional demands of new construction projects. While efforts to streamline maintenance requests through the introduction of an electronic tracking system will be helpful, the College will need to consider adding additional staff and/or making greater use of outsourcing to keep pace with growing demands in this area.

Barrier removal represents another area in which the College has made significant progress but faces additional challenges. The assistance of an ADA compliance consultant would be useful in determining those areas on campus in which ramp inclines may exceed appropriate limits and restroom doors may require some modification. The library is a facility that warrants particular attention with respect to accessibility. The ramp access is arduous and the elevator presents its own set of problems. The need to obtain a key to use the elevator, and to provide a deposit before a key is issued, creates multiple barriers to basic access to an essential learning resource.

The College effort with respect to systematic selection of equipment to support educational programs and services has been particularly deficient in the area of

technology. This is an understandable deficit given the fiscal challenges of the past few years, but one that needs to be aggressively addressed as the College enters a period of financial stability. Classrooms are inadequately equipped for multimedia instruction, computer access for both students and faculty is insufficient, and support staff for adaptive technology is lacking. The development of a shared vision of the role of technology in the provision of instruction and services is as critical as the infusion of funding to progress in this important area.

As in other areas, the College has made commendable progress in the area of facilities planning. The completion of a Facilities Master Plan is an important landmark in that pattern of progress. Another major milestone is the resolution of the long-standing controversy over the future of the Pierce College Farm. The College should be commended for the comprehensive analysis and inclusive process that resulted in broad-based campus and community support for the decision to preserve its unique agricultural lands for educational purposes. With that initial issue resolved, the College now faces the greater challenge of developing a long-term plan for both the agricultural lands as well as the other College facilities. Facilities planning is both enhanced and complicated for Pierce College by the possibility of a very large infusion of funds as a result of an upcoming District bond measure. Like a winning lottery ticket, sudden access to millions of dollars has the potential to solve a multitude of problems but brings with it the risk of becoming so overwhelmed with opportunities that it is difficult to retain a clear focus. For an institution that is still in the early stages of long-range, integrated planning, this presents a particular challenge. **It is recommended that the College develop a long-term plan for use of its agricultural lands that supports fiscal viability through strategies such as community partnerships while ensuring that the primary functions of this unique resource remain focused on goals directly linked to the Educational Master Plan.**

A. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 It is recommended that the College develop a long-term plan for use of its agricultural lands that supports fiscal viability through strategies such as community partnerships while ensuring that the primary functions of this unique resource remain focused on goals directly linked to the Educational Master Plan. (Standards 9.5, 3B.3)

STANDARD NINE: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

A. RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREVIOUS TEAM

#17 *It is recommended that the District develop a new budget allocation model in consultation with the College that provides the following:*

- *budget stability which considers the State budget allocation model that community college districts receive.*
- *minimum annual levels of funding that meet continuing and basic needs of Pierce College.*
- *financial incentives that support the College's efforts to increase productivity and control costs.*

In the 1998-99 fiscal year, the Los Angeles Community College District Board of Trustees adopted a new Budget Allocation Model which distributes revenue directly to the colleges based upon enrollment (FTES). The new system, along with the decentralization of budget responsibility and accountability, has enabled the District and Pierce College to take advantage of the improved financial situation of the State and has provided incentives for prudent fiscal management.

Since the adoption of this system, both the District and Pierce College have achieved financial stability, including large ending balances that have further increased flexibility.

#18 *It is also recommended that the College take greater responsibility for improving its own financial stability by increasing its own productivity, controlling its own costs, pursuing external sources of funding, and moving forward with its land, facility, and asset management proposals through joint ventures and partnerships.*

Pierce College has made major progress since the previous evaluation visit in both stabilizing and improving its financial situation. Increased enrollment, the achievement of a balanced budget through internal controls, and the achievement of significant year-end balances characterize the institution's current financial position. At the time of the Team visit, the College was completing a partnership arrangement to make costly parking lot improvements in exchange for an easement adjustment on part of the campus property.

#19 *No later than the close of Fall 1995 term, it is recommended that the District, in consultation with the College, establish a written policy regarding the disposition of profits from the income-generating activities that the College develops.*

This recommendation was met via the Board of Trustees' adoption of a District Budget Allocation Model and related decentralized processes that allow Pierce College and the other colleges to retain their local revenue.

#22 It is recommended that the Board develop an action plan to achieve financial stability including key steps and timelines for the District and its colleges. Implementation and financial stability should be a reality by the year 2000.

Through the adoption of a new budget allocation model in the District and the adoption of a decentralized mode of operation, financial responsibility for local operations shifted from the central office to the local colleges. This change in practice, coupled with increased controls and accountability, resulted in a rapid return to solvency and financial stability for the District and for Pierce College, including sizable ending balances in recent years, a trend which is projected to continue for the current fiscal year.

A. ANALYSIS, EVALUATION AND VALIDATION OF THE SELF STUDY

In the 1998-99 fiscal year, the Board of Trustees made major changes in the operational philosophy of the Los Angeles Community College District, shifting its focus from central control to service and shifting responsibility and accountability for many functions to the colleges. A new budget allocation model was adopted, which distributes revenue directly to the colleges on an FTES basis, in much the same way as apportionment is distributed to local districts by the State. Central or common costs among the colleges and the functions of the District are in effect reconstituted annually following this initial distribution of funds. Complementing the new system of funding, a decentralized approach to the management of funds has dramatically increased the authority and autonomy of the local colleges and their presidents, who are held accountable for the financial performance of their institutions.

At the District level, the new system has produced ending balances of over \$20 million. The District Chancellor and the Board are committed to this approach and feel that it will continue to have salutary results. At Pierce College, ending balances of approximately \$2 million have enabled the College to stabilize its funding base and to establish a contingency level of \$1.3 million. In addition, significant enrollment increases at Pierce College during this period have produced further infusions of funding into the College, enabling it to make needed improvements throughout the campus. For both the District and the College, this is a very different picture from the deficit-ridden organizations encountered during the previous visit. All parties are to be commended for their roles in the astounding turnaround of this fiscal situation.

Although Pierce College has welcomed the decentralized mode of financing the

institution, it has also experienced some difficulties, as has the District Office. A revenue-based model does not take unique or demonstrated needs into consideration, treating all recipients of funds as equal under the formulaic application. At Pierce College, however, the combination of extensive acreage, which is expensive to maintain, and the higher salary levels of a senior faculty and staff is difficult to address under the current model. Moreover, some ongoing District operational costs and the maintenance of an adequate District Contingency Reserve also do not fit neatly into the present model. **Therefore the Team recommends that consideration be given to effecting modifications of the District Budget Allocation Model to accommodate and allow for different conditions and needs among the Colleges and the District Office, such as unique salary and personnel impacts, campus acreage and facilities, economies of scale, and the need to maintain an appropriate District Contingency Reserve.**

Because the budget model is an annual mechanism, it does not promote long-range planning. Both the District and the College address the need for a long-range approach to technology funding and other long-term initiatives, which the present system does not accommodate. Of concern as well is the fact that long-term financial obligations affecting employees are not addressed within the model, although these liabilities are both real and significant. **Because of the importance of long-range planning in this area, the Team recommends that long-term financial obligations be thoroughly identified and a funding plan developed to address these financial liabilities.**

Within the College, efforts have been made to streamline the budget development process under the auspices of the Pierce College Council. These efforts have been largely successful, from the production of accurate budget data and histories to the timely review of budget needs to the adoption of budget plans for the subsequent year. From an operational standpoint, the Pierce budget appears to be well managed under the decentralized mode, although the lack of decentralization of some remaining functions, especially payables and reimbursements, remains a problem. The College and the District are encouraged to continue to work together to effect improvements in these areas.

At the time of the Team visit, Pierce College was actively involved in both planning and, through its President, fund raising for the District's proposed bond measure in April. The bond, will provide sorely needed facilities and facilities improvements at the College, has both galvanized support within the institution and also distracted it from other agendas. The Team, while impressed by the zeal and energy of this activity, cautions the College to keep considerations of its other responsibilities also at the top of its action agenda. Pierce College has made enormous progress in all areas of its financial resources, which has enabled it to set its financial directions instead of reacting to financial problems. The Team hopes the College will use this new plateau of stability as a starting

point for long-range financial planning.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Team recommends:

- 9.1 Consideration should be given to effecting modifications of the District Budget Allocation Model to accommodate and allow for different Conditions and needs among the College and the District Office, such as unique salary and personnel impacts, economies of scale, Campus acreage and facilities, and the need to maintain an appropriate District Contingency Reserve. (Standards 9A.2, 9A.4)
- 9.2 Long-term financial obligations should be thoroughly identified and a funding plan developed to address these financial liabilities. (Standard 9C.1)

STANDARD TEN: GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

A. RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FO THE PREVIOUS TEAM

Pierce College's previous evaluation team report contains four recommendations related to the Commission's new Standard Ten.

#20 It is recommended that the Board of Trustees provide stability to the leadership of Pierce College by implementing a plan to end the interim status of the President and senior administrators."

Both the Los Angeles Community College District and Pierce College have exhibited significant administrative turnover since the latter prepared its *Institutional Midterm Report* on April 2, 1997. Although no written plan appears to have been developed by the Board, the District appointed Pierce College's most immediate past President and its current President into permanent positions. Additionally, each of the College's Vice Presidents is filling a permanent position.

#21 It is recommended that the Board proceed with their self-evaluation and evaluation of the Chancellor and make known that such evaluations have been

completed.

A governing board self-assessment/self-evaluation took place on July 12, 2000. Information from this assessment was used to review the Board's direction, practices, and challenges. Additionally, the Los Angeles Community College District Board of Trustees has performed a systematic evaluation of the District Chancellor and Pierce College President. All activities were publicly noticed in Board agendas.

#23 It is recommended that the Chancellor, in consultation with Pierce College, delineate in writing those functions which are to be centralized at the District and those to be decentralized at Pierce College, delegating appropriate authority, responsibility, and accountability to both the District and Pierce College. These decisions should be widely distributed to all constituencies. Implementation should be done during the District 1996-97 year.

On December 15, 1999, the Los Angeles Community College District adopted "Organizational Principles Regarding the Role of the District Office and the Distribution of Authority and Responsibility to the Colleges." This document outlines the system's decentralization philosophy and has become the guiding direction by which the District clarifies responsibility and authority between itself and its nine colleges. Considerable progress has been made in providing greater autonomy to Pierce College in a number of areas including faculty hiring and evaluation, financial and business services, diversity, marketing and community relations, and information technology. This decentralization process is ongoing and will no doubt continue for some time.

#24 Keeping shared governance in mind, it is recommended that the College should clearly define in writing the roles, responsibilities and constituencies of all committees as well as their relationship to College processes, the College President, and each other, and communicate this information in writing to the entire Pierce College community. Implementation should be by Spring 1996. The Pierce College Council serves as the planning and shared governance body of the college. The Council's charter was amended in 1996 to incorporate constituent groups in College governance. Additional amendments to the Council's charter have been added strengthening the Council's operation over time. The Council's charter outlines the governance roles, responsibilities and authority for each constituent group. The Council meets regularly and effectively. A policy outlining the role and scope of the District Academic Senate was also validated. Information concerning Pierce College committees, their operation, authority and membership is available to all constituent group members on the College's Website. Participatory governance between the District and the College and within Pierce College is active and healthy.

The Los Angeles Community College District and Pierce College have

successfully addressed each of the previous evaluation team's recommendations.

A. ANALYSIS, EVALUATION AND VALIDATION OF THE SELF STUDY

Team members conferred with Pierce College stakeholders including Board members, the Chancellor, the College President, administrators, faculty, classified staff and students. The observation developed from these meetings and a review of pertinent Board policies, procedures, plans and committee minutes is that Pierce College is meeting its obligation for effective, collegial governance.

Pierce College is governed by an independent Los Angeles Community College District Board of Trustees. The seven-member governing board and student trustee have provided clear policy and planning direction to the District and its colleges. Board policy related to governance was reviewed and updated in 1999. Review of other policies is ongoing. The Board conducts periodic self evaluations and assesses the performance of its Chancellor and Presidents on a regular basis. Trustee orientation training, while not formalized, is evident. An examination of Board minutes indicates that Trustees review District academic programs and financial statements. College financial records are audited on an annual basis. Trustees comport themselves according to ethical conduct requirements contained in District policy.

The Pierce College President has the confidence of the Chancellor and Board. The Chancellor meets regularly with nine college presidents, on a regular basis in a newly formed "Cabinet," and reviews College plans, goals, activities and accomplishments. Formal channels of communication between the District and the Pierce College administration appear exemplary.

The District's decentralization of authority and responsibility to the College is a "work in progress." The Board, Chancellor, Pierce College President and campus constituent leaders are enthusiastic regarding this activity and support both its means and ends. Nevertheless, some confusion exists regarding the specifics of the District-College governance mechanism since the decentralization was effected. The governance process that exists between the District, represented through the Chancellor, and the nine colleges, represented by the presidents, is not well understood by those who are removed from this activity. Concern also exists about the system's ability to sustain this new governance mechanism if it is not clearly described by the District. **It is recommended that the Los Angeles Community College District clearly articulate its District-College decentralized governance process, and the specific role of the Chancellor's Cabinet, in policy or regulation.**

Board policy contains provisions for shared governance within the District and its colleges. All constituent groups have roles in governance within the Pierce College process. A College Council, chaired by the Pierce College President, functions to develop recommendations through participatory governance. College Council meetings are held on a regularly scheduled basis.

Among the District's strengths are a dedicated and relatively new Board of Trustees which understands its policy, leadership and accountability roles. The Los Angeles Community College District has a well qualified and committed District Chancellor, District administration and staff, and Pierce College President. Pierce College administrators have strong skills and are experienced in their areas of responsibility. The Chancellor and his Cabinet of nine presidents appear to work effectively together as does the Pierce College administrative team. Administrators are evaluated on an ongoing basis within the Los Angeles Community College District.

The Pierce College faculty is highly qualified and dedicated to their disciplines and to the institution. Faculty members have also had a long-standing tradition of involvement in both District and campus governance. Both the District and Pierce College have clearly written statements which delineate the role of the Academic Senate in participatory governance. Classified staff have demonstrated increased participation in college governance. Pierce College students are actively encouraged to participate within the college governance structure, although the level of their participation varies from year to year. The College exhibits a vibrant student government and active campus clubs. Nevertheless, time constraints, employment demands, and turnover in the student body have limited the role of students in governance. All constituent groups report that their collective morale is higher than it has been for many years.

Pierce College is a strong institution faced with many new opportunities. It is an institution which is embracing change in order to be successful in achieving its mission in the future. With its new President, talented administration, dedicated faculty and staff, and the District's emphasis on decentralization, Pierce College has the ability to reach the potential that is envisioned by its leadership and by the College community.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS

The team recommends:

- 10.1 It is recommended that the Los Angeles Community College District clearly articulate its District-College decentralized governance process and the specific role of the Chancellor's Cabinet in policy or regulation.

(Standard 10C.3)

LOS ANGELES PIERCE COLLEGE EVALUATION REPORT

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Now that the College has achieved a new level of financial and enrollment stability, the College should shift its planning and decision-making priorities to ensure that student educational needs and outcomes are the central focus, and that research and information about student characteristics, trends, and outcomes are more thoroughly integrated into the variety of planning processes. (Standards 3A.1, 3B.2, 3C.1)
- 4.1 Because the College has now strengthened its commitment to providing education extending beyond transfer courses, the College should develop and evaluate strategies to ensure that information about educational programs is communicated, used, and integrated into existing and planned research and the evaluation process. The development and use of this integrated information, which should include credit and noncredit basic skills and ESL programs, will further enhance the College's efforts to strengthen its commitment to providing education beyond transfer courses and programs. (Standards 4A.1, 4A.5, 4B.1, 4B.5, and 4D.5)
- 6.1 The College should develop a plan encompassing all areas of instruction, as well as the library and labs, to enable students to access, evaluate, and use information effectively. (Standards 6.4, 6.7)
- 8.1 It is recommended that the College develop a long-term plan for use of its agricultural lands that supports fiscal viability through strategies such as community partnerships while ensuring that the primary functions of this unique resource remain focused on goals directly linked to the Educational Master Plan. (Standards 9.5, 3B.3)
- 9.1 Consideration should be given to effecting modifications of the District Budget Allocation Model to accommodate and allow for different Conditions and needs among the College and the District Office, such as unique salary and personnel impacts, economies of scale, Campus acreage and facilities, and the need to maintain an appropriate District Contingency Reserve. (Standards 9A.2, 9A.4)
- 9.2 Long-term financial obligations should be thoroughly identified and A funding plan developed to address these financial liabilities. (Standard 9C.1)
- 10.1 It is recommended that the Los Angeles Community College District clearly articulate its District-College decentralized governance process in policy or

regulation. (Standard 10C.3)