

# **EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

**Taft College  
Taft, California**

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

This report represents the findings of the External Evaluation Team that visited Taft College on  
September 28, 2015 through October 1, 2015.

Dr. Kevin Trutna, Chair

**NOTE: this page shall be added to the team report noted below, immediately behind the cover page, and shall become part of the final evaluation report associated with the review.**

DATE: January 8, 2016

INSTITUTION: Taft College  
29 Cougar Court  
Taft, CA 93266

TEAM REPORT: Comprehensive Evaluation Report

This report represents the finds of the evaluation team that visited Taft College September 28 – October 1, 2015.

SUBJECT: Commission Revisions to the Team Report

The comprehensive External Evaluation Report provides details of the team’s findings with regard to the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies, and should be read carefully and used to understand the team’s findings. Upon a review of the External Evaluation Report sent to the College, the Taft College Self-Evaluation Report, and supplemental information and evidence provided by the College, the following changes or corrections are noted for the Team Report:

1. The Commission finds that the College is out of compliance with Standard II.A.6 and that Standard should be added to the citation at the end of Recommendation7.

## Visiting Team Members

### Chair

Dr. Kevin Trutna (Chair)  
President/Superintendent  
Feather River College

### Assistant

Dr. Katie Desmond (Assistant)  
Political Science, History Instructor  
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### Academic Representatives

Dr. Wendy Bass  
Faculty Child Development, Distance Education  
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### Administrative Representatives

Mr. Joseph Simoneschi  
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Dr. Robert Kratochvil  
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Dr. Monica Green  
Vice President, Student Services  
Norco College

## Summary of the Report

INSTITUTION: Taft College  
DATE OF VISIT: September 28, 2015 through October 1, 2015  
TEAM CHAIR: Dr. Kevin Trutna  
President/Superintendent, Feather River College

A team of eleven professional educators visited Taft College September 28 through October 1, 2015 for the purpose of evaluating whether the College meets ACCJC Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements and Commission Policies. This report is presented to make recommendations to the College regarding compliance with Standards, Eligibility Requirements and Policies, quality assurance and increasing institutional effectiveness, and to make a recommendation to the Commission regarding the College's accreditation status.

The visiting team members prepared in advance of the visit by attending an accreditation training, reviewing the College's Self Evaluation Report, inspecting evidence provided by the College electronically, and preparing a draft report of their observations and findings based upon their assigned Standard section review of the Self Evaluation Report and evidence. Their preparations also included a September 22, 2015 phone conference where the team discussed their initial assessments of the self-study report and identified areas where more information was needed. During this meeting the team compiled a list of College employees and constituent groups with whom team members would like to meet, and a list of additional evidentiary documents that they wished to review during the on-site visit.

The visiting team initially met on the afternoon of Monday, September 28, off campus to discuss their review of the self-study and the recently received addendum from the College, and to develop first impressions toward final commendations and recommendations. On Tuesday morning, the visiting team held a "meet and greet" with the campus community and toured the campus. The visiting team then interviewed administrators, faculty, staff, Board members, and students throughout the day, and continued these meetings on Wednesday. Open forums with the campus community were held on both days where the visiting team asked and responded to questions and concerns. On Tuesday afternoon, members of the team visited the off campus welding classroom. On Wednesday, one team member traveled to the Westside Energy Services Training and Education Center (WESTEC) in Shafter.

On Thursday, October 1, 2015, the exit forum was held with about 70 employees and students in attendance. The team chair summarized the team report, its role in the accreditation process, and the recommendations that would be forwarded to the Commission.

The College provided comfortable facilities, was welcoming and accommodating throughout the visit. Employees responded to requests and questions openly and efficiently. Taft College employees are committed to providing a quality education to their students and student success informs all campus planning and decisions. The visiting team was well received and was able to complete its scheduled review.

The visiting team witnessed a campus, student body, and community that believes in the services and importance of Taft College. Multiple student groups emphasized the quality, personal education, as well as the strength of student services they have received during their education at Taft College.

The College has made significant progress in addressing the 2009 comprehensive review recommendations and continues to make strides towards continuous improvement. This report describes the visiting team's commendations on the College's accomplishments, findings from the reading of the self-study and campus visit, and recommendations on how the College can continue its progress to meet the Accreditation Standards and Eligibility Requirements.

## Introduction

Taft College was founded in 1922 and established as the West Kern Community College District in 1971. The single-College, 735 square mile district is governed by an elected five-member Board of Trustees and is geographically located in the southwestern corner of the San Joaquin Valley of Kern County.

The College's main campus is located on 39 acres located at 29 Cougar Court in Taft, CA. An off-campus facility, the Westside Energy Services Training and Education Center (WESTEC), located at 5801 E. Lerdo Hwy. in Shafter, CA is a non-profit 501(c) (3) educational cooperative provides vocational and career training courses. The College has also leased off-campus space 3.5 miles from the main campus that will house over 50 percent of classes for its Welding program. Off-campus testing and counseling services are available to students in the service area. The College bookstore is currently located off campus in the Pilot Shopping Center in Taft. Taft College offers a comprehensive selection of distance education courses: offline, online, and correspondence.

The College's Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTES) is 2,668 with a headcount of 4,289 in its on-campus and online courses in 2013-14. Almost 85 percent of the enrollment is drawn from the District's service area. Taft College's diverse student body is over 50 percent of Hispanic heritage, followed by White and African American students. As of Fall 2014, the College employs 54 tenured and tenure-track full-time faculty, 80 adjunct faculty, 161 classified staff, and 5 educational administrators.

Since the last comprehensive accreditation team visit in 2009, Taft has had two permanent and one interim Superintendent/Presidents. The College has also undertaken committee changes resulting in the creation of the Governance Council and Strategic Planning Committee, as well as the creation of a new Educational Master Plan, Strategic Action Plan, and revised its Mission Statement. The College has created a new integrated planning process where its annual program review cycle is more clearly a part of planning and resource allocation. Many facilities projects have also occurred since the 2009 visit including the construction of the Center for Independent Living, and modernization projects to labs, dorms, and campus spaces. Construction on a New Student Center is planned for the near future.

As a result of the comprehensive team visit in October 2009, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (Commission) took action to issue a "Warning" to Taft College, and required follow-up reports and visits in October 2010 and October 2011. After these reports and visit, the Commission took action to remove Warning and reaffirm accreditation in January 2012. The College submitted its Midterm Report in October 2012 and its Self Evaluation Report in 2015. The current team visit and this report are in response to the College's most recent Self Evaluation Report.

## **Commendations**

### **Commendation #1**

The team commends the College for its Transition to Independent Living (TIL) program which pairs student in the program with other Taft College students. The program is enthusiastically received by all campus members and contributes richly to the educational experience of all students and to the atmosphere of student success at Taft College. The TIL center is an important campus centerpiece.

### **Commendation #2**

The team commends the College for its efforts in its excellent facilities planning and development, including the library, one-stop student services building, residence halls, welding classroom, and grounds, all of which represent diligent efforts to provide a clean, welcoming, safe, secure, and healthy learning and working environment that is integrated into student learning activities.

### **Commendation #3**

The team commends the College's engagement with students and its vibrant student life. Services and processes such as the restructured counseling services, the steps to success, and facilitation of student activities are central to student engagement and evidence of a commitment to student success.

### **Commendation #4**

The team commends the College leadership for its engagement and transformation of a campus culture of change related to integrated planning, data analysis, and institutional effectiveness leading to student success and continuous improvement.

## **Recommendations to Increase Effectiveness**

### **Recommendation #1:**

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that student and learning support services and administrative units actively participate in regular program review cycles including outcomes assessment. Results should be evaluated and used as a basis for improvement. (I.B.3, I.B.6, II.B.4, II.C.2, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.5)

### **Recommendation #2:**

In order to increase effectiveness and address the needs of online students, the team recommends that the College expand, diversify, and provide technology-related workshops that are based upon identified needs of distance education faculty. (II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, III.A.5.a, III.A.5.b, III.C.1.c)

### **Recommendation #3:**

In order to increase effectiveness of distance education, the team recommends the College develop and implement a Distance Education Plan, which addresses issues of student achievement and faculty training that is consistent with AP 4105 - Distance Learning, and that this plan is incorporated into college governance dialog and the integrated planning process. (II.A.2, III.C.1.c)



## **Recommendations to Meet Standards**

### **Recommendation #4:**

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends the College fully integrate the assessment of course and program student learning outcomes (SLOs) into the program review process, including analysis and dialog of results at the department/program level. The team also recommends the College systematically assess the effective use of financial resources and the impact of program changes as a result of implemented program review recommendations. (I.B.1, I.B.3, I.B.6, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, II.C.2, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.5)

### **Recommendation #5:**

In order to meet the standards and comply with the ACCJC Substantive Change Policy, the team recommends that the College submit a substantive change proposal for the discontinuation of the campus automotive program and a substantive change proposal for the re-established Welding Program offered at an off-site location. (Policy on Substantive Change, II.A.6.b, IV.A.2.b)

### **Recommendation #6:**

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College consistently assess, analyze, and evaluate student learning outcomes for all academic programs and courses. Meaningful SLO data and dialog should be used for continuous improvement of student learning. (I.B.3, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, IV.A.2.b)

### **Recommendation #7:**

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that student learning outcomes (SLOs) be communicated to students, including listing them consistently on all course syllabi and approved course outlines. (II.A.1.a, II.A.1.c, III.A.1.c, IV.A.2.b)

## **Evaluation of Institutional Responses to Previous Recommendations (2009)**

### **2009 Recommendation #1:**

*In order to comply with accreditation standards and to improve, the team recommends that the College complete its strategic plan and use it to guide educational, human resources, facilities, technology, and financial planning. Furthermore, the team recommends that the strategic planning process be used to guide College decision-making and resource allocation. The team recommends that this integrated planning be regularly and systematically evaluated to determine its effectiveness. Finally, the team notes that completion of an educational master plan is an unresolved recommendation from 2003.*

### **Response:**

In response to the 2009 recommendation, the College completed its Strategic Action Plan, Educational Master Plan, a Human Resources Plan, and has established an Integrated Planning Model. The College has a Facilities Plan and Technology Plan that is integrated with financial planning and decision making. The visiting team found evidence that the Integrated Planning Process was widely accepted and drove overall planning efforts.

### **2009 Recommendation #2:**

*In order to comply with accreditation standards and to improve, the team recommends that the College build on the last two years of revitalized program review and ensure that all programs in all areas of the campus are regularly and systematically reviewed. The team further recommends that program review be integrated into the College's planning process. The team also recommends that the College regularly and systematically evaluate program review to determine its effectiveness.*

### **Response:**

The Integrated Planning Model has instituted an ongoing cycle where Annual Program Reviews are linked to resource allocation and decision making. The cycle for Annual Program Review has been shifted from an 18 to a 12 month cycle. The team examined a sample of APRs and evidence of how resources have been allocated as a result of requests. The College uses surveys and reviews to evaluate these processes.

The team found evidence that the dialog analysis around SLO data in the Program Review process should be strengthened. The team found a fully-developed Program Review process for academic areas; student services and administrative units were not as consistently completed.

### **2009 Recommendation #3:**

*The team recommends that the College build on recent efforts to reach a proficiency level in the development and assessment of student learning outcomes by 2012 and establish a timeline to do so. Specifically, the team recommends that the College:*

- *Complete the development of student learning outcomes for all courses*
- *Develop student learning outcomes for all programs*
- *Develop and implement timelines for the continuous and regular assessment of all course, program and institutional learning outcomes*

- *Use those assessments as occasions for regular dialogue about improving learning at the College*
- *Ensure that faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving student learning outcomes have, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes.*

**Response:**

In response to the 2009 visiting team recommendation, the College has implemented and maintained methods for analyzing its own effectiveness through an improved program review process and integrated planning. While some work has been done in the development and assessment of student learning outcomes, the College has not consistently used Student Learning Outcomes assessment nor extensive dialog about the SLO analysis in all Program Review reports. The report indicates the College is using eLumen to document all components of the Student Learning Outcomes process including assessment and resource requests.

**2009 Recommendation #4:**

*In order to comply with accreditation standards and to improve, the team recommends that the College develop ethics policies for all staff.*

**Response:**

This recommendation was met; the College developed a Code of Ethics statement in 2011 which became College Board Policy 3050 which applies to all College personnel.

**2009 Recommendation #5:**

*The team recommends that the College file a substantive change proposal with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) for programs where 50% or more of the courses are approved to be offered in a distance education mode. (IIA.1.b) (IVA.4)*

**Response:**

The College responded to this recommendation relative to distance education.

## **Eligibility Requirements**

- 1. Authority:** The visiting team confirmed that Taft College is a public two-year community College operating under the State of California, the Board of Governors of the California Community College System, and the Board of Trustees of the West Kern Community College District. Taft College operates as a degree granting institution by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), a regional accreditor recognized by the Commission Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation and the United States Department of Education. The College's letter of Reaffirmation of Accreditation from the ACCJC is posted on the College's website.
- 2. Mission:** The visiting team confirmed that the current version of the mission statement for Taft College was revised in Fall 2014 and formally approved by the Board of Trustees on January 14, 2015 (Board Policy 1200). The mission statement describes the College's educational mission to enrich “the lives of all students” with a focus on “career technical education, transfer programs, foundational programs, and student service programs, and student support services.” The mission statement includes a vision statement, values on student learning, and is available on the College's website and in the College catalog.
- 3. Governing Board:** Taft College is a single College district governed by a five-member elected Board of Trustees responsible for the quality, integrity, financial stability of the institution and for ensuring the College achieves its mission in accordance with the California Education Code. The Board members represent constituents from throughout the District. There is also one non-voting student trustee (BP 2015). The Board adheres to an established Code of Ethics and conflict of interest policy and Board members have no employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the College or its centers (BP 1090; BP 2710).
- 4. Chief Executive Officer:** The superintendent/president of Taft College was appointed by the Board in February 2012. The CEO has the appropriate delegated authority to administer Board policies and state and federal laws and regulations. Changes in this position are duly reported to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC).
- 5. Administrative Capacity:** The Taft College Administration is adequate in number, experience, and qualifications to provide appropriate administrative oversight and support the institution's mission.
- 6. Operational Status:** Taft College is a fully operational institution with students actively pursuing degrees, certificates, and transfer education. The College maintains a main campus and two off site locations.
- 7. Degrees:** Taft College offers 47 associates degrees, of which 12 are Associates Degrees for Transfers (AD-T) to the CSU system. The College also offers 26 certificates of achievement primarily in skill-based programs needed by local industries in career and technical areas leading to degrees and certificates of completion. The College also offers

programs designed to meet identified service area needs such as Independent Living Skills. Complete information is provided in the College catalog.

- 8. Educational Programs:** Taft College offers a range of degree and certificate programs that are consistent with the College mission and are provided in a manner conventional to community colleges and consistent with Eligibility Requirements. The College offers a range of degree and certificate programs that are consistent with its mission and are of sufficient content, length and rigor appropriate to the degrees offered.
- 9. Academic Credit:** Taft College awards credit based on the Carnegie formula of one unit of credit per 18 hours of lecture or 54 hours of lab work per semester. This is consistent with Title 5, Regulations for the California Community Colleges (section 55002.5).
- 10. Student Learning and Achievement:** Taft College has a comprehensive Student Learning Outcomes webpage: [http://dl-test.taftCollege.edu/tcwp/instruction/?page\\_id=1208](http://dl-test.taftCollege.edu/tcwp/instruction/?page_id=1208). The College has institutional learning outcomes; instructional program learning outcomes, including general education learning outcomes; and course-level student learning outcomes. The College has institutional set standards which address student achievement. <http://ct-prod-wp.taftCollege.edu/iarp/dashboard/institution-set-standards/>
- 11. General Education:** Taft College has a clear general education component in its degree programs. Students are introduced to different areas of inquiry not only to gain a basic understanding of these areas, but also to comprehend and use the principles, methods, values and thought processes of these disciplines, consistent with the practice at an accredited community College and as provided for in Title 5 Regulations for California Community Colleges (section 55806). Students graduating with associate's degrees from Taft achieve general education comprehensive learning outcomes.
- 12. Academic Freedom:** Taft College maintains an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom and the freedom to test and examine existing knowledge are supported both by Board Policy (BP 4030) and campus culture.
- 13. Faculty:** The visiting team confirmed that full-time and part-time faculty at Taft College meet the minimum qualifications or its equivalent set by the Office of the Chancellor of California Community Colleges (BP 7120). As of Fall 2014, there were 54 full-time faculty and 80 adjunct-faculty. These numbers are sufficient to support the College's programs. The responsibilities of a faculty member are detailed in the collective bargaining contract between the District and the Faculty Association. Faculty responsibilities are stated in the Faculty Handbook. ([http://www.taftCollege.edu/tcwp/instruction/?page\\_id=1754](http://www.taftCollege.edu/tcwp/instruction/?page_id=1754) )
- 14. Student Services:** The visiting team confirmed that the College supports the learning and success of its students by offering student services that are delivered through various methods on campus and online. The College provides both Student Services and Student Support Programs.
- 15. Admissions:** Complete information regarding admissions can be found in the College catalog. This information includes student qualifications for admission, residency rules,

admissions requirements for students transferring credit, international students, high school students, advanced placement, and acceptance in the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP).

- 16. Information and Learning Resources:** Taft College provides access to information and learning resources and services sufficient to its mission and all its educational programs.
- 17. Financial Resources:** Taft College's annual budget consists of state funding based largely on student enrollment. The College also seeks state and federal grants, as well as funding from private sources, to support programs and services. The College provides management policies and practices that ensure financial stability and provide adequate resources to support student learning programs and services to improve College effectiveness. The College also is supported by the Taft College Foundation.
- 18. Financial Accountability:** Taft College annually undergoes and makes available an external financial audit by a certified public accountant.
- 19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation:** Institutional Planning is guided by Administrative Procedure 3250. The College has an Educational Master Plan (2014-2024), a Technology Master Plan (2012-2017) and a Facilities Master Plan (2012-2017). The College has an annual program review and planning process (<http://ct-prod.wp.taftCollege.edu/iarp/program-review/program-review-2015-2016-2/>). Program review is conducted for Administrative Services, Applied Technologies, Instructional Support Services, Liberal Arts, Math and Sciences, Office of the President, Social Sciences, and Student Support Services. The Governance Council develops criteria for program plan proposals, reviews the program plan proposals, and then ranks the program plan proposals and recommends to the President which proposal should be funded. The College annually appraises all members of the College community of the specifics of the planning process, so that each year it is clear as to what needs to be done in the planning cycle.
- 20. Public Communication:** Taft College publishes a catalog, class schedule, and other publications that provide information about the College's mission and goals, admission requirements and degrees, class schedule, certificates, graduation, transfer, fees and refund policies, names of Board members, as well as other regulations, policies, and procedures pertinent for students and the public.
- 21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission:** The elected Board members and the Superintendent/President are committed to integrity and transparency in their relations with the Accrediting Commission. The institution complies with Commission requests and directives, and prepares complete and accurate reports for submission to the Commission.

## **Standard I – Mission and Institutional Effectiveness**

### **Standard I.A – Mission**

#### **General Observations**

Taft College has a Mission Statement that defines its educational purposes: technical education, transfer programs, foundational programs and student support services, and that these services are provided to all students they serve. The Mission Statement identifies the College's commitment to an equitable learning environment defined by applied knowledge which leads to students' achievement of their educational goals. The programs and services offered by Taft College support the mission, and the mission is central to institutional planning and decision making. In addition the College has a Vision statement and a key set of Values, both of which are aligned with the Mission Statement.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

The Taft College Mission Statement reads:

“Taft College is committed to creating a community of learners by enriching the lives of all students we serve through career technical education, transfer programs, foundational programs, and student support services. Taft College provides an equitable learning environment defined by applied knowledge leading to student's achievement of their educational goals.”

The Mission Statement addresses its broad educational purpose in creating an “equitable learning environment” and its intended student population as “all students we serve.”

Taft College conducts a comprehensive review of its Mission Statement every six years with a “mini review” three years after the comprehensive review. The last comprehensive review of the Mission Statement was in 2014 and the current Mission Statement was adopted by the Board of Trustees in January 2015.

The College reports that in order to fulfill its mission they offer 47 degrees and 48 certificates and a wide range of student support services to “support the goals of an increasingly racially and ethnically diverse student population” as shown in their student demographics. Because a significant number of their students are academically unprepared, specifically in English reading/writing and mathematics, the College states that a large part of its mission is to prepare students for transfer-level coursework, since about 76 percent of students state that their academic goal is to earn a certificate or degree or transfer to a four-year university.

The process for reviewing the mission, vision, and values was campus wide. As part of the process, the Strategic Planning Committee and Governance Council provided draft statements that were sent out campus wide for comment.

The Mission statement is key to the program review process and key to the setting of goals

within the program review process and linking goals to resource requests and to the Mission Statement. Within the program review process, the College reports using student achievement outcomes data, student learning outcomes data, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) data, the California Community College Chancellors Office Student Scorecard data, tutoring effectiveness data, grant effectiveness data and other pertinent data in order to focus on student progress and attainment of their goals. Such data provides insight into the character of the College, its student population, and the educational needs of students enrolled at Taft College.

The Educational Master Plan, the Strategic Action Plan, and all other institutional planning committees are guided by the Mission. The process ensures that all planning processes at the College are used to achieve the goals of the Mission Statement and strategic directions. Student learning and achievement are central to the Mission, Vision and Values of the College. (I.A.1)

As noted previously, the current Mission Statement was approved by the Board of Trustees in January 2015. The Mission Statement is published on the Taft College web site, in the College catalog, and various publications including brochures and fliers. The Mission Statement is posted in various locations on the College campus, including video monitors in the library and cafeteria. (I.A.2)

The current College practice is to review the mission statement comprehensively every six years and with a less rigorous review three years after the comprehensive review. In doing the six year review, various internal and external data are reviewed and the College faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as students and the community, provide input in an effort to ensure a comprehensive review. The College documents various activities in 2014 that were a part of the comprehensive review of the Mission Statement.

In the last review of the Mission Statement in 2014, the review process was evaluated to identify what worked well and what could be improved in the next iteration. (I.A.3)

Taft College has incorporated the Mission Statement into all planning processes and documents, including the Educational Master Plan, Facilities Master Plan, and Technology Master Plan. As noted before, the Mission Statement is central to program review. All program goals resulting from program review must be aligned with the College Mission. The current program review and planning process was implemented in Fall 2010. (I.A.4)

## **Conclusions**

The Taft College Mission Statement defines the broad educational purposes, intended student population, and commitment to student learning. Programs and services reflect the broad educational purposes and intended student population.

The current mission statement was approved by the Board of Trustees in January 2015. The mission statement is published on the College web site, the College catalog, class schedules and posted throughout the campus.

The current Mission Statement went through an extensive review in Fall 2014 allowing input



from all stakeholders, including students and the community. The College has a regular review timeline and uses its committee process, governance process, and planning process to analyze data and review the Mission Statement. Leadership across the campus is to be commended for the transformation and engagement of culture of change through the development of the integrated planning model which focuses the campus dialog on improving student learning.

The mission guides institutional planning and decision making. The mission is central to the Educational Master Plan and program review goals.

The College meets the requirements of Standard I.A.

### **Recommendations**

None.

## **Standard I.B - Improving Institutional Effectiveness**

### **General Observations**

The Taft College Governance Council (GC) serves as the point for campus discussions and works with the Academic Senate to dialog on student learning, student achievement, student success metrics, and SLOs. The GC uses the Completion by Design model as its overarching process for promoting student success. Built into the processes at Taft College is an evaluation of each process and discussions toward improvement.

The primary driving force for requesting resources, facilities, and budget augmentations is through the Program Review process. This guides discussion for continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes related to student learning and achievement.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The Governance Council works with several committees including the Academic Senate, Student Learning Outcomes and Advisory and Steering Committee (SLOASC), the Student Success Committee, Access Committee and the Student Equity Committee. As described in the newly created Governance Guide, these committees together collaborate towards the ultimate goal of improving student learning processes and achievement. The strategic planning process incorporates timelines and responsibilities for these committees and others, and integrates all planning processes across campus.

Taft College sets goals and measures its effectiveness in various ways. The visiting team found that the Board of Trustees values measurements of student success, and quality assurance to the community, as foremost among their responsibilities. Elements of measurable goals were found in the Educational Master Plan, Program Review reports, Student Success and Access Committees, and as institutional set standards. The Strategic Action Plan also incorporates goals and measurable outcomes. (I.B.5)

The Strategic Action Plan (SAP) is the integration of many different committee responsibilities and the work of other planning processes across the entire campus. Embedded in the SAP is an analysis of effectiveness from each committee as they evaluate their own work and goals in relation to their individual committee charter. As an example, the Program Review process includes an evaluation with each Program Review submission; the end-users have a built-in process to comment on the effectiveness of the process and these results are analyzed by the committees that receive Program Review reports. Program Review recommendations are distributed to the appropriate group on campus for ranking and further recommendations related to budget, equipment, faculty and support staff positions. (I.B.4, I.B.6)

As mentioned above, Board members take their role seriously to monitor institutional effectiveness and communicate matters of quality assurance to the public. Internally, student achievement data is widely used in decision making and budget allocation as it is a fundamental building block for the Program Review process. Taft College also publicizes and discusses the College Scorecard from the Chancellor's Office. (I.B.5)

## Conclusions

The Governance Council serves as the collection point for discussions and dialog for continuous improvement of student learning. Program Review is the primary vehicle which guides these discussions. Program Reviews start with individual faculty, through Program Leads, and ultimately reach the Governance Council. Program Review data include student achievement analysis in addition to student learning outcome data. At the time of the visit, the team did not find pervasive and robust discussion about SLO data as part of the Program Review development. Program Review recommendations were more focused on student achievement data with the resultant recommendations widely used for budget allocation, budget requests, and new positions. Dialog across campus related to student achievement data was evident as the Educational Master Plan (EMP) utilized a process that included committee and campus-wide input. (I.B.1)

Yearly and long-term goals are set by various committees across campus. The EMP and Strategic Action Plan (SAP), along with input from committees across campus, determine goals and measure student effectiveness. Taft College originally set institution set standards and worked to integrate these into the work of the Governance Council. The institution set standards proved to be cumbersome as they required multi-year tracking, so they were revised to four short-term metrics, as these were then assimilated into the integrated planning process. Disaggregate data from institution set standards are used in the program review process, which originates at individual departmental discussions. Due to transitions in the website management and updates, the visiting team could not verify a robust discussion and communication of institutional standards on the website. The College has self-identified an improvement plan to further develop the interactive calendar and communication of goal metrics on the website. The completion of this improvement plan will help in the process of using results and institutional set standards completion as a measure of student success that is pervasive across campus. (I.B.2)

Institution set standards for student performance are established and cited in the Self Evaluation report. Desirable standards for student performance are referred to as goals and minimum standards are referred to as institution set standards. The program reviews integrate and analyze data on student learning towards the institution set standards. Programs have established standards as evident in Standard II.A. The visiting team found evidence that the College meets this requirement and that the institution set standards were appropriate for Taft College.

The Educational Master Plan and Strategic Action Plan have consolidated, and provided direction to, the work of improving student learning across the College. The development of the *Taft College Governance Guide* sets the standards where all campus constituents participate in discussions and research to improve student learning and campus processes. While many of these plans are in their infancy, the visiting team found evidence of credibility and support for this newly developed integrated planning process. The Program Review process continues to undergo analysis and improvement, including changing the timing of reports. Taft College evaluates each separate committee and the visiting team found evidence that this process could be further developed and standardized to make it more meaningful for improving campus discussions and improvement of the process. The Strategic Action Plan brings all plans together

into a cohesive and understandable process that is used to guide resource allocation which leads to an improvement of institutional effectiveness. The College has self-identified a plan to improve the connection between student learning outcomes and its incorporation into the planning process, including Program Review. The visiting team found evidence that this connection needed to be developed and incorporated into the entire Program Review process for all departments. (I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.6, I.B.7)

Included in campus-wide discussions were matters of assessment results about student achievement data, the State Chancellor's Office Scorecard and other student learning outcomes. Taft College also uses internal and external surveys related to student success, such as the Community College Survey of Student Engagement. (I.B.5, I.B.7)

Included in the Strategic Action Plan, along with individual processes like the program review, is an evaluation to review and improve planning processes and assure quality matters across campus. The Program Review process is one example of a recent change and improvement to an established process. (I.B.7)

The College does not fully meet the requirements of Standard I.B. because Standards I.B.1, I.B.3, and I.B.6 were not met.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation #1:**

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that student and learning support services and administrative units actively participate in regular program review cycles including outcomes assessment. Results should be evaluated and used as a basis for improvement. (I.B.3, I.B.6, II.B.4, II.C.2, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.5)

### **Recommendation #2:**

In order to increase effectiveness and address the needs of online students, the team recommends that the College expand, diversify, and provide technology-related workshops that are based upon identified needs of distance education faculty. (II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, III.A.5.a, III.A.5.b, III.C.1.c)

### **Recommendation #4:**

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends the College fully integrate the assessment of course and program student learning outcomes (SLOs) into the program review process, including analysis and dialog of results at the department/program level. The team also recommends the College systematically assess the effective use of financial resources and the impact of program changes as a result of implemented program review recommendations. (I.B.1, I.B.3, I.B.6, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, II.C.2, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.5)

### **Recommendation #6:**

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College consistently assess, analyze, and evaluate student learning outcomes for all academic programs and courses. Meaningful SLO data and dialog should be used for continuous improvement of student learning. (I.B.3, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, IV.A.2.b)

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

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

#### **General Observations**

Taft College offers a variety of high-quality instructional and Career Technical Education programs that culminate in identified student outcomes leading to degrees, certificates, employment, or transfer to other higher education institutions or programs consistent with the mission. These courses and programs are delivered in a variety of modalities to serve the students in the immediate and surrounding communities.

In response to the 2009 visiting team recommendation, the College has implemented and maintained methods for analyzing its own effectiveness through an improved program review process and integrated planning. While some work has been done in the development and assessment of student learning outcomes, the College has not fully incorporated SLO data analysis in this area. The Self Evaluation Report indicates the College is using eLumen to document all components of the Student Learning Outcomes process including assessment and resource requests. However, the visiting team found a lack of evidence that SLO assessment is fully integrated in the planning, decision-making, and resource allocation processes through Program Review. The College utilizes a variety of assessments, processes and program review to ensure quality of instruction, including the analysis of SLO data. Dialog is taking place through a number of participatory governance committees and through the program review process up to the Governance Council. Additionally, the evidence supports the commitment for an on-going, self-reflective dialog on student learning. The College works under the mission and the Educational Master Plan while serving students in and outside of the classroom. Instruction is continuously being improved by looking at the sequencing of courses, time to completion, rigor and online instruction.

The College has made significant strides in implementing and evaluating student learning outcomes and assessment. They have developed SLOs for most active courses and have program level outcomes for all instructional programs. Dialog is supposed to occur in committee meetings throughout the year and in program review, which has a designated SLO component. College Planning Days also facilitate dialog and provide the opportunity to close the loop on assessment and plan resources based on data. However, the visiting team found evidence of inconsistent integration of SLO analysis across all programs and dialog that is not pervasive at program level discussions.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

Taft College demonstrates that all instructional programs, regardless of location or means of delivery, address and meet the mission of the institution. The College maintains instructional integrity through adherence to Board Policy 4020, Program, Curriculum and Course Development, and its Curriculum and General Education Committee (C&GEC). Programs of study are defined in Administrative Procedure 4020, Program and Curriculum Development, and are reviewed regularly by the C&GEC. The College has renewed its commitment to a rigorous review of the curriculum by reviewing course outlines of record every five years and

Career Technical Education curriculum every two years. A strong emphasis is placed on offering courses and programs that meet the needs of educationally diverse students, regional demographics, and economy of the region's communities. As a result, students can access general education and career technical education classes on the main campus, through distance education, and off-campus locations such as WESTEC, Industrial Technology Educational Center (ITEC), and the Taft Correctional Institute. Instructional areas have worked closely with the Institutional Assessment, Research and Planning (IAR&P) staff to examine data related to age, race, employment, household income and educational attainment. Additionally, as confirmed in meeting minutes, Advisory Committees assist in providing qualitative information on the skills and training needs of industry and employers. (II.A.1, II.A.1.a, II.A.1.b, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.d, II.A.2.i)

The College provides clear and accurate information regarding its educational courses, course requirements, programs, and transfer policies. This information is placed in its College catalog, both printed and online versions, where appropriate. In every class section, students receive a course syllabus that specifies learning objectives. These syllabi are consistent with the institution's official approved course outline of record. The visiting team verified this by looking at course syllabi on file; however, not every syllabus examined included student learning outcomes. (II.A.1.a, II.A.1.c).

While faculty has made significant improvements in identifying and assessing student learning, more needs to be done to meet the standard. The visiting team examined evidence that indicated that not all courses currently being offered have student learning outcomes indicated on the course outline of record. However, all instructional programs have program level outcomes indicated as evidenced in the College catalog. Through the examination of emails and minutes from the past two years, the visiting team discovered an effort toward campus-wide dialog has taken place with regard to student learning outcomes and assessment. Through on-campus meetings with the visiting team, faculty and staff expressed the desire to develop and implement outcomes assessment, but acknowledge that there are some disciplines that have not incorporated this process into Program Review discussions. To help improve this process, the Student Learning Outcomes Advisory and Steering Committee (SLOASC) works with discipline faculty, divisions and the College community to ensure consistent progress toward meeting the standard. (II.A.1.c)

Similarly, with regard to the 2009 recommendation for the College to revise its program review process, interviews with faculty, staff, and administrators provided evidence that results of outcomes assessment are not fully integrated with the planning process, including resource requests and prioritization of those requests. Although the visiting team believes that the analysis of SLO assessment is happening in some areas, the institution is not capturing essential evidence of changes or improvements made based on these results on an institution-wide basis, including non-instructional areas. The visiting team found evidence that individual faculty use achievement markers as well as assessment data in formulating resource requests in Section Improvement Plans (SIPs). While this is found to be true for some courses, it is not widespread in every course and every discipline. Efforts of faculty towards inclusion of SLO data are acknowledged, however the visiting team observed that the Standard is not met. (II.A.1.c, II.A.2, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f)

Taft College recognizes the assessment of course and program quality as a faculty responsibility and this partially occurs through the curriculum development process. The C&GEC and its Technical Review Committee oversee this process. Additionally, as part of the Integrated Planning Model (IPM), the College has a five-year cycle for course review and two-year cycle for CTE programs. As part of this review cycle, department leads work with the IAR&P office to obtain student achievement data. All Career and Technical Education programs rely upon industry advisory committees to identify competency levels in courses and programs. The visiting team examined random sampling of advisory committee minutes and found substantive discussion taking place on a regular basis regarding objectives and course content. Additionally, a number of vocational programs prepare students for external licensure and certification as evidenced by on-going review of courses and programs with faculty, advisory committees and industry partners. The College is also committed to ensuring that all educational modes of teaching meet its high standards and rigor. The visiting team did find evidence of a need to evaluate faculty teaching online classes in a manner that is similar to the evaluation of faculty teaching face-to-face classes. Overall, the College has established Faculty Inquiry Groups (FIGs) to provide instruction and insight on pertinent topics. Also, the College has established a procedure for determining hiring needs and ranking criteria for new faculty positions. This was confirmed through interviews with faculty and administrators where this procedure was followed in the hiring of 11 new full-time faculty positions. Additionally, while the College has some support for distance education, the visiting team found a need for equal academic support programs for online students, particularly the use of an online tutoring service. The visiting team noted a sizeable achievement gap between students taking similar classes online versus face-to-face classes (60% versus 84% success rates respectively). The visiting team recommends that the College investigate academic and non-cognitive indicators of student success that will help close this gap. (II.A.2, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.c, II.A.2.d, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.A.5)

The College practices a comprehensive scheduling process involving discipline faculty, division leads, division chairs, the Distance Education Coordinator and administration. This process allows opportunity for dialog in order to produce a schedule of classes that coincides with course sequencing so that students have access to be able to complete a program. In addition to this process, the College offers accelerated courses in English, ESL and Math to shorten time to completion. (II.A.2.c)

Relying on faculty expertise, the College has established a curriculum in the major areas of knowledge that is consistent with its mission statement. The College catalog clearly states the skills, knowledge, and information that any student who graduates, transfers, or receives a certificate has acquired after completing his/her education at Taft College. The College has clear comprehensive General Education (GE) SLOs that are published in the College Catalog and are required for all associate degrees. Furthermore, all degree programs focus in a study of at least one area of inquiry. (II.A.3, I.A.3.a, II.A.3.b, II.A.3c, II.A.4, II.A.2.i)

The Taft College Catalog and Student Handbook provide clear information about educational courses and programs and transfer policies. All degrees and programs are outlined in detail with their purpose, intent and program level outcomes. The institution also makes public the transfer of credit policies in the College catalog in order to facilitate the mobility of the student without

penalty. The College examines all transcripts for incoming transfer students for acceptance and use in completing major and general education requirements. (II.A.6, II.A.6.a)

Beginning in the summer of 2015, the College resumed offering welding courses at the Industrial Technology Educational Center (ITEC), a leased facility in Taft, CA. The visiting team visited the facility, which is well equipped, well landscaped, and has the necessary components in order to serve students in the program. Plans are in initial stages to establish some counseling and career services on site. The visiting team found that a substantive change report for this location has not been submitted even though 50% of the program requirements were offered at the ITEC site. (II.A.6.b)

The Self Evaluation Report states, "Taft College provides accurate information about services, programs, and policies through its website, handouts, recruitment materials, the class schedule, Taft College Catalog and Student Handbook, press releases, advertisements, President's Reports to the Community, Fast Facts brochures, President's Newsletters, and specific program brochures." The visiting team found evidence for complying with this standard including the website, class schedule, Taft College Catalog and Student Handbook and news articles.

Policies on academic freedom and responsibility and student academic honesty along with clear expectations concerning student academic honesty and consequences for dishonesty are clearly provided in the Faculty Handbook and Student Handbook. Furthermore, the Taft College mission does not call for the promotion of any specific beliefs or worldviews. The College provides clear statements of expected codes of conduct and the visiting team found evidence of this in BP 5500, Standards of Student Conduct, and BP 3050 - Institutional Code of Ethics. (II.A.6.c, II.A.7.a, II.A.7.b, II.A.7.c).

## **Conclusions**

The visiting team found that while there have been significant improvements on the development of SLOs for every course and program, the full integration of SLOs into the Program Review process still needs to be developed. Leadership across the campus is commended for the transformation and engagement of the culture of change through the development of the integrated planning model with a focus on student learning. The College lacks specific evidence indicating which courses are not being offered and are currently under review for inactivation, therefore still appearing in the College catalog. The College has implemented a timeline for integrated and strategic planning. The Program Review process has been evaluated and revised based on that evaluation. However, the College lacks sufficient evidence that SLO assessment is fully integrated in the planning, decision-making, and resource allocation processes. Additionally, courses remain that have yet to assess the student attainment of SLOs and include SLOs in course syllabi.

The College does not meet the requirements of Standard II.A because Standards II.A.1.a, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.A.2.h and II.A.6.b were not met.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation #2:**



In order to increase effectiveness and address the needs of online students, the team recommends that the College expand, diversify, and provide technology-related workshops that are based upon identified needs of distance education faculty. (II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, III.A.5.a, III.A.5.b, III.C.1.c)

**Recommendation #3:**

In order to increase effectiveness of distance education, the team recommends the College develop and implement a Distance Education Plan, which addresses issues of student achievement and faculty training that is consistent with AP 4105 - Distance Learning, and that this plan is incorporated into college governance dialog and the integrated planning process. (II.A.2, III.C.1.c)

**Recommendation #4:**

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends the College fully integrate the assessment of course and program student learning outcomes (SLOs) into the program review process, including analysis and dialog of results at the department/program level. The team also recommends the College systematically assess the effective use of financial resources and the impact of program changes as a result of implemented program review recommendations. (I.B.1, I.B.3, I.B.6, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, II.C.2, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.5)

**Recommendation #5:**

In order to meet the standards and comply with the ACCJC Substantive Change Policy, the team recommends that the College submit a substantive change proposal for the discontinuation of the campus automotive program and a substantive change proposal for the re-established Welding Program offered at an off-site location. (Policy on Substantive Change, II.A.6.b, IV.A.2.b)

**Recommendation #6:**

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College consistently assess, analyze, and evaluate student learning outcomes for all academic programs and courses. Meaningful SLO data and dialog should be used for continuous improvement of student learning. (I.B.3, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, IV.A.2.b)

**Recommendation #7:**

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that student learning outcomes (SLOs) be communicated to students, including listing them consistently on all course syllabi and approved course outlines. (II.A.1.a, II.A.1.c, III.A.1.c, IV.A.2.b)

## **Standard II.B - Student Support Services**

### **General Observations**

Taft College supports the learning and success of an increasingly diverse student population through a student-centered focus. The College provides an array of student services programs and services via in-person and online to support their student body. The College employs promising student success practices through their Steps to Success, Monitored Academic and Progress Probation (MAPP), and restructuring its counseling department to increase collaboration among instructional faculty to better support students.

The College offers traditional support services programs such as Admissions, CalWORKs, Career, Counseling, EOPS/CARE, DSPS, Financial Aid, Outreach, Transfer, TRiO, and Veterans. The College invests in capital projects to better support programs and services to students such as the Center for Independent Living in 2013, the Ash Street Dorm Modernization project in 2014, and Student Center beginning Fall 2015. In 2008, the College formed a one-stop environment for its student support services and most recently, in Fall 2015, the Office of Vice President of Student Services moved to the one-stop area to provide greater line of sight of the operational services. The College states that its student support programs and services are evaluated on an ongoing basis, yet student learning outcome data were not transparent in its program review process through an ongoing, systematic method. In order to strengthen effectiveness, learning outcomes need to be more effectively linked to program reviews and resource allocation.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Taft College student support services appear to be student-centered, focusing on serving an increasingly diverse student population. The College recognizes the need to provide core student support services in multiple modalities. At the time of the visit, the team found that the College recently evaluated the delivery of services by service and location. The College is commended on requiring new students to participate in Steps to Success that includes orientation, assessment, and counseling prior to registration. While the College offers an interactive online orientation, it recognizes the need to improve in this area and is migrating soon to a new system (II.B.1, II.B.3.a)

Taft College restructured the counseling division to increase communication with instructional divisions in an attempt to better address student needs within specific majors. While this appears to be an exemplary practice as it better aligns with the Student Success Act of 2012, the College is encouraged to evaluate this restructure to ensure it meets the intended results. Taft College is commended on decreasing its student-to-counselor ratio from 974:1 (according to the Scorecard data) to 691:1 (lower than the state average of 722:1) in Fall 2013. The visiting team confirmed, during the course of student interviews, that counselors are readily available to students. (II.B.1, II.B.3.c)

The College employs student-centered practices that support student learning. For example, the College maintains a Consortium Agreement for students simultaneously attending both Taft

College and Bakersfield College so students are able to maximize financial aid resources available to them. The College also has a proactive academic and progress probation program called Monitored Academic and Progress Probation (MAPP). The College's program review of the MAPP program found low participation in this service. As a result, it is implementing steps to increase participation as well as measuring student mastery of the subject material. (II.B.1)

Taft College provides precise, accurate, and current information in its catalog and student handbook in an easy-to-access online format. The College has a workgroup that meets monthly to discuss modifications and produces an online addendum midyear to inform its constituencies of changes. (II.B.2)

The College maintains records of student complaints and grievances through files in the Office of Student Services and provides the Title IX Coordinator contact information in the Student Handbook and online. At the time of the visit, the team found the complaint form and Title IX coordinator referenced on the website through the search feature. The College must make readily available to enrolled and prospective students the complaint policies and procedures that are reasonable, fairly administered, and well publicized. The institution does not have a link on the homepage or within one click away from the homepage. Taft College needs to make efforts to better publicize its policies and procedures online as it relates to complaints and grievances. (II.B.2.c.)

Taft College requires all units to complete a program review annually. During the visit, the team discovered that not all student services units complete ongoing, systematic program review cycles. At the time of the visit, while the student support units received broad institutional student achievement data, they did not receive program-relevant data to best research and identify the learning support needs of the students in their units. Within and among the individual student support units, the visiting team observed dialog about the use and analysis of data that resulted in programmatic modifications. For example, as a result of student feedback from a unit survey, the Financial Aid unit embedded close-captioned FATV videos differently on their webpages, resulting in more frequent viewing of the videos. (II.B.3)

One method that the College utilizes to assure the quality of its student support services is through administration and review of the CCSSE every three years as well as the evaluation of distance education student support services. Access to these pre-matriculation services are provided to students at the correctional facilities and WESTEC as well as to distance education students. The College recently evaluated the delivery of services by service and location to ensure access to core student support services. The visiting team confirmed during the course of student interviews that adequate online resources are available on the College's website. (II.B.3.a)

Taft College has a strong student counselor ratio that contributes to student development. Counselors assist students with the development of comprehensive Student Education Plans and the use of DegreeWorks technology to support student progress towards their educational goals. In Fall 2013, Counseling was restructured so that counselors serve as division liaisons to support students and faculty within instructional divisions. This model is similar to what the College already had in place for its Athletics program, which has demonstrated successful student achievement results. The College has developed and intends to measure the specific

Student Success and Support Program goals of student course completion, term-to-term persistence, and achievement progress. To support the development of these goals, the College recently hired a technician to obtain relevant data for the counseling liaisons to support more of a case management approach to the delivery of counseling services across the institution. Regular counseling meetings and trainings serve to ensure collaboration and continued professional growth among the counseling liaisons and the entire Counseling Department. These trainings also serve to establish consistency in the delivery of services among the various areas to better support students. The visiting team confirmed, during the course of student interviews, that there is consistency among the Counselors regarding the advisement given to students. Advisors are evaluated annually and Counselors are evaluated on a rotating cycle. To better serve students, the Counseling Department extended its hours and intends to evaluate the effectiveness of this change. (II.B.3.c)

Taft College's mission and vision supports diversity among the college community. The College demonstrates support for diversity awareness and inclusion through courses, its "One Book, One Bakersfield, One Kern County" membership, guest speakers, and public discussion. The student government supports clubs on campus and activities on campus that are related to diversity issues, such as Disability Awareness Week, Spectrum (for LGBT awareness), and Best Buddies. The Best Buddies program supports the students in its Transition to Independent Living program, which has been a part of the College for over 20 years. It was clear to the visiting team how valuable this program is to the College and how the program and its students contribute to Taft College culture. (III.B.3.d)

During the site visit, the team discovered that the College migrated to Open CCCApply as an online application system. This migration will allow the College to collect and respond to data about individual needs more effectively. During the interview process, the team learned that the registrar position was vacant for a period of time, which has resulted in a gap in the program review process for the admissions office for at least a two year period. The College also ensures equitable access through its placement methods. The College completed its last ACCUPLACER Validation Study in 2009 and report on disproportional impact in 2014. The College reviews placement data regularly with faculty to ensure consistency and relevancy in how students are placed into courses using a combination of raw cut scores and other multiple measures used by counseling. (II.B.3.e)

Board Policies 3300 Public Records and 3310 Records Retention and Destruction address the storage, retention, and release of student records. Records are stored in the Banner database and Laserfische Imaging Solution system that are backed up regularly. The College requires use of assigned username and password for electronic access into the student system. Training on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is provided on a regular basis during faculty and staff in-service days. (II.B.3.f)

The College identified program reviews as the primary means by which the quality of services is assured. Learning outcomes assessment is part of the program review process, and although the team saw evidence that some assessment occurred, it did not see evidence that all units conduct assessments on a regular, ongoing cycle. As such, the evidence does not support that the institution evaluates all of its student support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs in all areas. The College administered a survey in Spring 2015 to

evaluate student support services and how the areas contributed to student learning. The College states that nearly all Student Support Services and Programs are assessing and evaluating one or more SLOs on a regular basis but the evidence observed demonstrate that ongoing assessment lacks adequate detail. While the College recognizes that the assessment and evaluation of SLOs in student support areas offers some challenging circumstances, it is nonetheless necessary and relevant. The College states that it identified five non-instructional programs: counseling, support services, athletics, co-curricular, and student workers where student contact is such that SLOs are appropriate. Regardless of how the support programs are clustered in the program review process, the College must ensure that all programs strive to assess outcomes on an ongoing, continuous basis to contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes and use these as the basis for improvement and resource allocation. Upon discussion with the Faculty Program Review leads, the visiting team learned that the College has identified the need for non-instructional student learning outcomes. As a result of these efforts, the College appears to be underway in improving this process to assure outcomes are assessed for student support services. (II.B.4)

## **Conclusions**

Taft College's Student Services as a whole demonstrates a number of best practices, such as mandating orientation, assessment, and counseling for all new students and restructuring counseling to increase communication with instructional faculty in order to better meet the needs of students better. An area of improvement for Student Services is to ensure that all of its programs regularly undergo a program review process requiring self-reflection on how they contribute to the mission of the institution, the assessment of outcomes on a regular basis, and data are used for program improvement. In the absence of an ongoing program review and outcomes assessment process for all areas, it suggests a gap in the institution's ability to demonstrate that the allocation of resources is tied to its integrated strategic planning process in which resources are allocated and the improvement of institutional effectiveness is broadly based. (II.B.4)

The College does not fully meet the requirements of Standard II.B because Standard II.B.4 was not met.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation #1:**

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that student and learning support services and administrative units actively participate in regular program review cycles including outcomes assessment. Results should be evaluated and used as a basis for improvement. (I.B.3, I.B.6, II.B.4, II.C.2, III.D.1.d, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.5)

### **Recommendation #4:**

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends the College fully integrate the assessment of course and program student learning outcomes (SLOs) into the program review process, including analysis and dialog of results at the department/program level. The team also recommends the College systematically assess the effective use of financial resources and the impact of program changes as a result of implemented program review recommendations.

(I.B.1, I.B.3, I.B.6, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, II.C.2, III.D.1.d, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.5)

## **Standard II.C - Library and Learning Support Services**

### **General Observations**

Library and learning resources are available to all instructors and students regardless of location with access to resources both on campus, online and through courier. The resources and services are sufficient for the College's academic programs and support student success. The Librarian works with faculty members to purchase resources to support College programs. There are multiple opportunities for information competency instruction through courses, one-shot bibliographic instruction, and presentations to faculty.

Library and Learning Support Services participate in annual program reviews. There is no documented library outcome assessment outside that which takes place in the INCO 1048: Information Competency & Bibliography course. The library uses annual surveys to assess and identify student satisfaction and needs. The learning center has collected data on SLO assessment in 2014-15, but they have not analyzed or reported the data. There is an inconsistent ongoing assessment of learning outcomes used to make improvements in library and learning support services. The College has made improvements in these programs; the visiting team could not find evidence of a direct connection of these improvements to outcome assessment.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The College supports instructional programs providing services in library and learning support services. Services at Taft College include a library, learning center (math and writing centers), supplemental instruction, and a computer lab. The team visit confirmed that the library provides adequate resources for students including books, periodicals and computers/laptops. The library design is student-focused and provides a collegial and supportive atmosphere for learning. (II.C.1)

The addition of numerous electronic resources (ebooks and databases) viewed on the library website documents that the library provides sufficient quality, depth, currency and variety of resources for students and supports the College's curriculum. Library and learning support services are provided in multiple formats to support students at multiple locations and modalities. Some of the services and resources available discussed with the Librarian and the Dean of Instruction, Grants include:

- Print and online books and journals
- Online reference services by email (24 hour turnaround)
- Embedded librarians in online classes (3 classes Fall 2015)
- In person and embedded Supplemental Instruction
- Requests for print resources for the Prison Program
- Skype/CCC Confer and an online tutorial pilot with NetTutor (IIC.1)

There is no direct outreach of these services to the WESTEC students per discussions with the Librarian and Dean of Instruction, Grants. They stated since the courses at WESTEC were short term, in many instances only one day, and they did not need any physical reference resources. Students at WESTEC do have access to all the online library materials, email reference as well as Skype and CCC Confer tutoring by appointment. The visiting team

observed that the lack of physical reference resources seemed to not be an issue for WESTEC students as services could be made available as needed. (II.C.1)

The College relies on appropriate expertise of faculty including librarians for educational equipment and materials for support services. The library has a collection development policy that is used to select resources relevant to its educational offerings. The Librarian also stated in an interview that she attends the Curriculum Committee to learn about new and updated curriculum needs. She also works collaboratively with the College programs and selects materials to support individual course assignments. The library has also participated in the “One Book, One Bakersfield, One Kern County” program and has worked with faculty to support this outreach/engagement project across multiple disciplines. The library also provides technology to students who need to complete assignments through a computer lab and laptop loan program. The College provides a high tech center for students who need technological accommodations. Emails between the Librarian and faculty show ongoing dialog and collaboration. Comment at the open forum from College faculty confirms the Librarian’s collaborative work between faculty and the Librarian. (II.C.1.a)

The College provides ongoing instruction for users of library and learning resources. Information Competency is a local graduation requirement and can be fulfilled through the INCO 1548 course: Information Competency & Bibliography. This course focuses on developing skills in information competency. The College offers this course online and through the prison correspondence program. The course is available to all students regardless of location or mode of delivery. The Librarian also stated that she works with faculty to provide one-shot bibliographic instruction sessions to approximately 30 classes per year. Since 2014, they have created a library instructional classroom available with 35 laptops to facilitate instruction. The Librarian also stated that she frequently provides “faculty reports” at flex day including new library resources and a library faculty survey. (II.C.1.b)

The College provides library and learning resource support services to students regardless of location or means of delivery. All on campus resources and services are mirrored in online formats. Books and ebooks, periodicals and databases, reference and tutorial services are all offered in multiple modalities and formats to staff, faculty and students. Email reference is available with a 24-hour turn around even on weekends, but is not used frequently. The Librarian only recorded approximately six requests per semester. The prison program students can request print resources, since they are not allowed access to online resources. The library, for the first time this year, produced a hard copy of the library catalog to facilitate requests. Only three requests were received last year from the prison program. With the paper catalog available to inmates, the College hopes that requests for materials will increase. (II.C.1.b)

The College currently has Skype and CCC Confer reference by appointment for students. The College has begun piloting NetTutor to provide 24/7 online tutorial support. They began the pilot in summer 2015 and have continued it into Fall 2015 with select classes. Faculty have been very involved in the pilot creating “rules of engagement” for student interaction for individual courses. Several of the rules of engagement were shared with the visiting team. (II.C.1.b)

Students at campus forums confirmed the accessibility of learning support resources and



services. Students praised the Librarian and tutors helpfulness and approachability confirming that there is always someone there to help. (II.C.1.c)

The College has effective maintenance and security for its library and learning resources. An inspection of the facilities verified that the library has security gates for the protection of materials and that buildings are well maintained. Campus emergency plans have been posted throughout the library. The Librarian and Dean of Instruction, Grants verified that they feel safe in the facilities and receive help when needed from Security. Campus safety issues can be reported through an online system on the College website. The Librarian also stated that their staff has discussed procedures for lockdowns in their staff meetings. (II.C.1.d)

The library does not have any collaboration with other providers for services or resources. All resources and services are provided in-house, including reference, instruction and processing. The Learning Center is piloting the use of NetTutor to provide outsourced 24/7 tutorial support for students. Faculty have been involved in the pilot and have developed rules of engagement ensuring that the tutorial services online have the same rigor as on campus offerings. Examples of these rules of engagement were provided to the visiting team. The visiting team also received copies of a documented service agreement between Taft College and NetTutor which outlines all of the logistics and compensation. This agreement is due to be presented to the Board in October 2015. The Dean of Instruction, Grants stated that they would use transcript analysis to evaluate the system once fully adopted. The College has also produced flyers to share with students and faculty to advertise the new service. (II.C.1.e)

The library has used annual satisfaction surveys to assess services and identify student needs. Per the visiting team's interview with the College Librarian, the library has used that data to improve the website adding an easy to access search box and increased the visibility of staff when students stated that they needed more customer service. No evidence was provided and the Librarian confirmed that the library did not have written learning outcomes. This was substantiated by the lack of outcomes or outcomes assessment in their program review. The SLO coordinator stated that some non-instructional programs do not have learning outcomes. The Librarian, stated that they use surveys to assess the program's effectiveness rather than student learning outcomes. The visiting team observed that the library does participate in program review to assess additional staffing needs and did not link these requests to student learning outcome assessment. (II.C.1.e)

The library has assessed Student Learning Outcomes in the INCO 1458 course. These outcomes were not listed on the COR database but were found in the Fall 2015 syllabus (now changed to INCO 1048). The course outcomes for 2013-2014 were assessed and submitted into eLumen and the report was provided to the visiting team. In an interview with the visiting team, it was learned that INCO 1058 course SLO data were analyzed and achievement data were used to request a validation study for a potential pre-requisite. (II.C.2)

The Learning Center and Supplemental Instruction programs have stated in their 2014-2015 Program Reviews that they are using 2011-2013 SLOs for assessment. According to their Program Reviews, these SLOs were assessed in 2014-2015 using a new method that included using multiple collection points. They have worked with the Assessment Coordinator to create a system to collect data but there was no assessment data for the Learning Center available for

the visiting team. They expect the data to be available in January 2016. (II.C.2)

According to their program review and a visiting team interview with the Dean of Instruction, Grants the Learning Center did use their 2013-14 program review to make changes to improve student support services that included creating a central Learning Center front desk and freeing up student tutors to work with students, although these changes were not linked to outcome data.

The Supplemental Instruction (SI) program uses comparative achievement data (between students participating in SI and those who did not) to assess the effectiveness of their programs, but SLO data were not provided to the visiting team. (II.C.2)

Upon discussion with the Faculty Program Review leads, the team learned that the College has identified the need for non-instructional learning outcomes. A request was submitted in August 2015 to the Academic Senate President and Vice President of Instruction requesting an alternate committee assignment to review the current process of non-instructional program assessment and make suggestions for improvements. (II.C.2)

## **Conclusions**

The College supports student learning and success with library and learning resources, personnel and services. These resources and services are linked to student needs and provide curricular support. The College relies on the expertise of faculty including librarians when selecting resources, equipment and materials to support student success and the achievement of the College mission, as evidenced in the library's collection development policy and a discussion with the College Librarian regarding collaboration and dialog across the campus. The institution provides multiple modes for ongoing instruction in information competency skills. Reviews of the College curriculum show that there is a one-unit information competency course and that information competency is a local graduation requirement. Interviews with the College Librarian provided evidence that the library also provides one-shot instructions for approximately 30 courses per year. The institution provides effective maintenance and security for library and learning support services. The Librarian and Dean of Instruction, Grants confirmed the safety of the building, the presence of security and that there is an online form to notify the College of any safety concerns. The College does rely on NetTutor to provide online tutorial services to students. They have a documented service agreement and the faculty is involved in the quality assurance process through the development of rules of engagement for specific courses and disciplines.

The College does assess and evaluate library and learning support services through surveys and has documented changes made from these assessments. The College does not provide evidence that these assessments are tied to learning. There is no evidence of program level learning outcomes for the library. There are stated outcomes for the learning center and supplemental instruction, but they have not consistently been assessed. The Dean of Instruction, Grants stated that they did collect outcome data on the learning center and supplemental instruction in 2014-15, but that data were not available at the time of the team visit. There was no evidence provided that learning outcome results were used as a basis for improvement.

The College does not fully meet the requirements of Standard II.C because Standard II.C.2 was not met.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation #1:**

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that student and learning support services and administrative units actively participate in regular program review cycles including outcomes assessment. Results should be evaluated and used as a basis for improvement. (I.B.3, I.B.6, II.B.4, II.C.2, III.D.1.d, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.5)

### **Recommendation #4:**

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends the College fully integrate the assessment of course and program student learning outcomes (SLOs) into the program review process, including analysis and dialog of results at the department/program level. The team also recommends the College systematically assess the effective use of financial resources and the impact of program changes as a result of implemented program review recommendations. (I.B.1, I.B.3, I.B.6, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, II.C.2, III.D.1.d, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.5)

## **Standard III - Resources**

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

#### **General Observations**

Hiring and evaluation processes at Taft College are guided by well-established policies and procedures. The College has adequate staffing for a college of its size and has consistently exceeded its state-mandated Faculty Obligation Number. Human Resources (HR) policies are tracked to ensure they are updated when required. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) training is now being provided and a new EEO Plan has recently been completed and submitted to the State Chancellor's Office. The College is working to improve its record on diversity of hires through expanded recruitment efforts. Professional Development opportunities are provided based upon identified needs. The College plans to utilize the results of an HR report prepared by outside consultants to prepare the College's staffing plan.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

The Board has established recruiting and selection policies relating to each category of employee to ensure that the College employs personnel who are qualified by appropriate education, training, and experience. Position descriptions list qualifications and duties. The classified staff union works with Human Resources to review reclassification or salary placement when there is a need for a new classified position. Faculty must meet minimum qualifications; equivalency is determined by the screening committee according to stated policy. (III.A.1)

Procedures for selecting employees are spelled out in BP 7120: Recruitment and Hiring and operating procedures. Job descriptions and minimum qualifications are stated, and Human Resources oversees the process. Faculty determine discipline-specific criteria in addition to minimum qualifications. Interview questions test the applicants' knowledge while teaching demonstrations are included for both full-time and adjunct faculty to demonstrate effectiveness in the classroom. Degrees from non-U.S. institutions require official certification by a recognized U.S. credential evaluation service. After an initial interview by the division chair, adjuncts are placed in a hiring pool and need to be approved by the Vice President of Instruction before being offered teaching sections. (III.A.1.a)

Faculty evaluation procedures are outlined in the Faculty Handbook. Tenure track faculty are evaluated annually during the first four years; non tenure track faculty are evaluated annually. Tenured faculty are evaluated every third year. Adjunct faculty are evaluated for at least one class section per discipline for the first two semesters, then at least once every third calendar year thereafter. Evidence provided to the team showing completion of performance evaluations indicated that faculty evaluations are, for the most part, up to date.

Permanent classified staff are evaluated at least annually. Probationary staff are evaluated at least once before the end of the 12-month probationary period. Administrators and classified supervisors fill out an evaluation form and are required to set goals; they also prepare self-evaluations every April. The president is evaluated annually by the Board of Trustees. When a

performance evaluation is not completed on time, the manager receives an email reminder from the Human Resources Office. Nevertheless, the visiting team found that some classified staff evaluations were past due with some still outstanding after more than seven months (III.A.1.b).

Instructors are expected to identify Student Learning Outcomes on their course syllabi, which are a component of evaluation. The Vice President of Instruction recently started checking to ensure Student Learning Outcomes are on all syllabi. Not all of the samples reviewed by the visiting team had Student Learning Outcomes and there did not seem to be an enforcement mechanism in place to ensure that SLOs were listed. The faculty evaluation form does not include Student Learning Outcomes or their assessments as criteria; however, the faculty self-evaluation asks faculty to list any activities in which they participated to improve instructional methods, and the form for nonteaching contract faculty asks them to describe their involvement with improving learning outcomes. A pilot study to connect faculty evaluation to achievement of Student Learning Outcomes was discussed in 2010 but was not pursued (III.A.1.c).

The College's code of ethics, Board Policy 3050: Institutional Code of Ethics, was adopted in June 2011 and covers all employees, with separate sections for each classification (III.A.1.d).

The College has increased its number of faculty over the past several years. For example, in 2011-12, the College was out of compliance with the 50% Percent Law. As a result, the College hired three additional full-time faculty in 2012-13, raising the ratio to 50.33%; to 50.92% in 2013-14, and to 51.55% in 2014-15 (projected). The College exceeded its Faculty Obligation Number for the past five years. In 2014, 62.68% of courses were taught by full-time faculty. According to a 2015 Human Resources Report completed by the Collaborative Brain Trust, the College has adequate staffing for a college of its size. The visiting team found evidence that the College is appropriately staffed to offer its academic programs in support of its mission. (III.A.2)

The Human Resources Director ensures that Human Resource policies and practices align with Board policy and legal requirements. Personnel policies are developed and updated by the Human Resources Department and reviewed by the Superintendent/President's Office and appropriate constituency groups. Human Resources policies and procedures are posted on the College website. The visiting team examined a matrix of policies and procedures which the Human Resources Department maintains in order to track the process of reviewing and updating policies. Procedures are equitably administered for internal candidates, who must apply and follow the same process of selection for adjunct faculty, administrative, or classified positions as candidates from outside the College (III.A.3).

The Human Resources Director is responsible for ensuring that policies are followed and implemented fairly. The College has policies and procedures related to selection, hiring, performance evaluation, compensation, benefits, and dispute resolution. Hiring committee members are required to receive Equal Employment Opportunity training within 12 months of serving and every two years thereafter. However, a 2015 Human Resources report noted that training had not been offered since 2011. The self-evaluation report noted that recent findings showed deficiencies in the Human Resource Department's functioning, and a new Associate Vice President of Human Resources was hired in August 2015. The new Associate Vice President attended an Equal Employment Opportunity Compliance training seminar on

September 10, 2015, and held internal team training for the Human Resource Department staff on September 25, 2015. Through a partnership with outside legal counsel, Equal Employment Opportunity training will be provided to the College in October 2015 (III.A.3.a).

The personnel records of all employees are safeguarded in fire resistant cabinets in the Human Resources Department, which maintains the confidentiality of employee personnel files by restricting access to authorized individuals. Employees have access to review their own personnel records (III.A.3.b).

To measure the effectiveness of diversified recruiting, application materials contain a separate voluntary demographic information section on ethnicity, age, gender, disability status, veteran status, and recruiting resource. The Human Resources Department uses the information to track the effectiveness of advertising. Job descriptions include a statement on the need to understand the diverse backgrounds of community college students. Interview questions include questions related to diversity. One of the criteria on the student evaluation form for faculty is “Shows respect for student ethnic, religious and/or gender differences” (III.A.4).

On-campus diversity programs in 2014-15 have included events sponsored by the Taft disAbilities Partnership Team (TAPT), such as People with Disabilities Week. Sessions were held on student success related to equity. Multilingual writers, who attended Taft College, visited the campus and spoke to students. Dr. Manual Pastor, a noted USC professor of American Studies and Ethnicity, addressed the subject of Students and Community (III.A.4.a).

According to the Human Resources report prepared by the Collaborative Brain Trust, the District’s mission statement indicates that it values diversity, yet its Strategic Master Plan does not address the issue of diversity. The College had been working for several years to update its 2010 Equal Employment Opportunity Plan. The Associate Vice President of Human Resources provided the team with the new EEO Plan, which was completed and submitted to the State of California Community College Chancellor’s Office in August 2015. The document includes a plan for diversity related to employees being more reflective of the College’s student body (III.A.4.b).

Board policies cover nondiscrimination, prohibition of harassment, and whistleblower protection. The Human Resources Department provides oversight to ensure these are adhered to. Procedures for reporting issues are described in faculty and student handbooks. The visiting team also reviewed employee complaints. The College has been using an outside legal service for investigation of complaints, but those will now be handled internally by the Human Resources Department. The Associate Vice President of Human Resources monitors the type of complaints to see if there is a trend that can be addressed broadly across the College (III.A.4.c).

Requests for professional development activities originate from an annual survey. Funding to attend trainings and conferences is provided through program review requests. The new Associate Vice President of Human Resources recently met with new administrators to ask about their professional development needs. The College created a dedicated Professional Development Center in the library in 2014, where training sessions are held and faculty can drop in to use laptops and printers. Professional Development offerings include brown bag seminars, Faculty Inquiry Group seminars, fourteen in-service (flex) days, tech talks, and

workshops. Some of the presentations are posted on the Professional Development website. A grant-funded instructional technologist assists faculty in the appropriate use of technology in their courses. Several classified staff who were interviewed felt that professional development activities are geared primarily to faculty and expressed interest in having more sessions for staff (III.A.5, III.A.5.a).

A Professional Development survey is sent out annually to solicit feedback about training sessions; however, the survey is open-ended, so only a few events received comments. In order to fully evaluate all offerings, the College may find it useful to collect feedback after each session. The survey asks for suggestions for future training, which are used by the Professional Development Committee to plan offerings (III.A.5.b).

To assist the College in developing a comprehensive staffing plan, the District contracted with the Collaborative Brain Trust to provide a report that will serve as the foundation for the development of a Human Resources Plan to support the Educational Master Plan and align needs with the College mission, values, and strategic goals. The report, completed in May 2015, includes a review of employee recruitment and selection practices, demographic data, staffing levels compared to four similarly-sized districts, staffing challenges, resource allocation, and position control. It provided 25 recommendations in the areas of training, recruitment and selection, diversity, staffing, and position control. The College intends to evaluate the data in the report and consider implementing recommendations, where appropriate, in the development of a Human Resources Plan.

Human Resources planning at the College is integrated with the institutional planning model through program review. Requests to hire faculty are forwarded to the Academic Senate, which conducts a ranking process. Requests for classified positions are forwarded to the Classified Staffing Committee for ranking. The ranked requests are then forwarded to the Superintendent/President for consideration based on available College resources. College constituents who were interviewed by the visiting team felt the process was fair and the ranking process was meaningful (III.A.6).

## **Conclusions**

The College follows its established processes for hiring and evaluations. The visiting team found that the College needs to ensure that staff evaluations are completed in a timely manner. The College has exceeded its Faculty Obligation Number for several years. The Human Resources Department experienced turnover when the Director resigned in 2015. A new Associate Vice President was hired and the Human Resources Department has been able to complete the stalled update of its EEO Plan, provide EEO training, and launch efforts to cast a wider net to recruit more diverse candidates that better reflect the student population.

Although employees are offered numerous professional development activities, the College may benefit from coordinating professional development efforts on campus. The individual currently providing technology training and assistance with instructional design is in a grant-funded position. Efforts should be made to determine the needs of classified staff and provide professional development opportunities for all employees. All professional development offerings should be regularly evaluated.

The College meets the requirements of Standard III.A.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Recommendation #2:**

In order to increase effectiveness and address the needs of online students, the team recommends that the College expand, diversify, and provide technology-related workshops that are based upon identified needs of distance education faculty. (II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, III.A.5.a, III.A.5.b, III.C.1.c)



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

### **General Observations**

Taft College operates at several locations: the main campus is located on 39 acres in Taft, California; the College also owns a 5.4 acre site that supports WESTEC in Shafter, California. The College Bookstore is housed at the Pilot Plaza Shopping Center in Taft, and the College leases space for industrial training programs at the Taft Industrial Park. The College also has residence halls that serve approximately 150 students, and the Transition to Independent Living Program has 55 students. In 2004, voters passed Measure A, a \$39.8 million bond measure for renovation and construction projects at Taft College. To date, four-fifths of the 2004 Measure A capital projects have been completed. The Facilities Master Plan is the guiding document for all facilities improvements as they support student learning.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Upon its initial arrival to the College, the visiting team found a clean, welcoming, and well-maintained campus. The grounds were nicely groomed and landscaped, bathrooms and classrooms were clean, and buildings were visually pleasing and functional. There are areas of the campus that provide soft space for student life and the capacity and tools for student teaching and learning. Classrooms, student support areas, and other operational spaces observed suggest a safe, secure, and healthy learning and working environment. This was confirmed by those who were interviewed. (III.B.1.b)

The Maintenance Department is responsible for maintaining all physical resources at the College. Included in this responsibility is conducting annual visual inspections of the campus for safety and maintenance needs. The department utilizes software for its work order control system that manages the process of routine maintenance from request to completion. This software tracks maintenance work orders and generates reports that assist staff in determining budget and staffing needs. Staffing in the Maintenance and Operations department is minimal, but highly productive. The staff is dedicated and passionate about work at the College, the product of which has positive outcomes on student success as was recognized by many comments during the visit.

The College has benefitted from the passage of Measure A, which has improved and expanded the campus' physical plant and facilities. Most of the projects included in Measure A have now been completed; each was identified in the Self Evaluation Report and a campus tour allowed the visiting team to see them first-hand. There was pride in the campus expressed by those with whom the visiting team met. And, there is great anticipation related to construction of the new Student Services building. The recently completed campus Facilities Master Plan (FMP) outlines the strategy for infrastructure improvements at the College. Pertinent administrators, along with some input from the Facilities Committee, also develop a list of maintenance projects for scheduled maintenance funding. This listing was available to the visiting team and includes such projects as roof repairs, mechanical and utility repair, roads and walkways, etc. The Facilities Master Plan feeds directly into the College's integrated planning model.

All new construction is done within Department of State Architect requirements, and

appropriate inspection services are used to ensure safety and compliance with State construction regulations. Ongoing safety and security issues are addressed by the Campus Safety and Security Committee, which meets monthly to respond to emergency preparedness training and to develop safety improvement strategies. The Facilities Committee meets monthly and has a related role in identifying infrastructure issues that may need repair. In partnership with the local school district, the Maintenance Department also keeps campus vehicles in good working order. It was verified through team visits that the department uses the program review process to identify other maintenance needs consistent with the Educational Master Plan.

Other significant safety components at the College identified in both the Self Evaluation and the campus visit are campus lockdown procedures and mechanisms handled by the Information Technology Services (ITS) Department, and the Code Blue Stations included in the modernization projects that allow requests for help from the Kern Security Central Office in cases of emergency. In addition to safety monitoring by the Maintenance Department and ITS, a reporting process related to injuries and accidents exists through the Human Resources and Student Services area. As well, annual safety inspections and reports are done by Taft College's property and liability insurance provider. While an annual review is conducted, there is also a monthly check-off list that ensures continued monitoring. Machinery and equipment is inspected and permitted by appropriate agencies, and the College complies with environmental and regulatory requirements.

Safety provisions at all sites including the residence halls, the campus bookstore, and the WESTEC facility are consistent with the main campus. Card readers are an important security measure that the campus installed at several areas including the Child Care Center, Student Services/Administration, Library, Science, Maintenance and Operations, and Technical Arts buildings. The parking lots and campus entrance also were reengineered to improve safety measures, and new lighting and "Code Blue" stations have enhanced security efforts. Security cameras have been installed as another safety precaution and deterrent at the WESTEC facility, around the Child Development Center, residence halls, and in the proximity of several other buildings on campus. (III.B.1)

Members of the Campus Safety and Security Committee verified through a campus tour that safety and security are taken into account in building construction. The visiting team observed surveillance cameras and uniformed security staff on campus. The Bookstore manager verified that there is a cash collection process in place, where the funds are provided to the College's Cashier for deposit. Through interviews, it was determined that the facilities provide for safe and sufficient physical resources that support and assure the integrity and quality of its programs and services on the main campus. In the meeting with the Campus Safety and Security Committee, it was stated that a disaster evacuation exercise is being planned in the near future.

The College has an annual contract with the Taft Police Department to provide law enforcement services to the District. The Campus Safety and Security Committee also has a "safety gram" that any student or employee can access, and it is immediately emailed or delivered to the Campus Safety Office. The College also has a campus map that identifies locations of the Code Blue stations in addition to automatic external defibrillator locations.

The College uses a phone system and text messaging system to announce emergencies or incidents on campus. This system can be used in conjunction with lock-cards, which will lock down facilities when activated by assigned administrators. The doors that do not have the automatic lock-cards have an automatic lock capability (lock-blok) to ensure safety. In addition to these safety features, the College has the ability to directly call out to 911. When a call is made via 911, the call will show as Taft College and the room number will show so the Police Department knows the location of the emergency.

After completion of the Educational Master Plan in summer 2014, the College began the process of updating the Facilities Master Plan, which led to specific goals for campus facilities included in the Strategic Action Plan through the integrated planning process. Both short and long-range facilities needs are included in the campus' planning and resource process. Among the processes substantiated by the visiting team were those related to program review, the work order control system, the annual space utilization and inventory process, and the Facilities Master Plan.

Resource needs identified through the program review process are vetted through the participatory governance process (operating and expense requests through one process, personnel requests through another). All requests are ranked by agreed-upon criteria and forwarded to the Superintendent/President for funding approval. Emergency needs identified by both the Campus Safety and Security Committee or Facilities Committee are considered from separate funds outside of the program review process. This year, the campus made available a listing of personnel and non-personnel requests identified through program review that were approved for funded by the President. Ongoing maintenance needs submitted through the work order process – other than emergency repairs – are completed as received and are funded either by the requesting department or through the program review process. (III.B.1.a)

Campus facilities are regularly reviewed for access and barrier removal, safety, and environmental health. All facilities have been designed and constructed consistent with fire and life safety codes enforced by the Department of State Architects and receive accessibility compliance reviews. In addition to annual inspections conducted by the College's property and liability insurance carrier, permits and inspections are renewed for building systems, elevators, fire suppression systems, boilers, generators, gasoline pumps, etc. Discussion with the Director of Maintenance and Operations confirmed that fire extinguisher and elevator permitting was done on a regular basis. The College also complies with environmental standards and requirements related to industrial chemical and biochemical wastes, for which the Science program is responsible. The Science Chair is a participant of the Safety Committee that addresses hazardous waste materials and the removal/disposal of biohazardous waste from the campus. The College contracts with a local Police Department for patrols at the WESTEC site. (III.B.1.b)

The College also utilizes facility assessors from the Foundation for California Community Colleges to help evaluate building conditions and identify any deficiencies. The annual space utilization process leads as appropriate to plans of action to correct any safety, maintenance, or compliance issues. The annual space inventory completed each fall provides essential information to the College regarding capacity and load ratios and space utilization, which are important data points for determining and maximizing State funding eligibility. The data assist

the College in determining future facilities needs, and contribute to the institution's facility allocation development and maintenance as well as utilization standards and guidelines.

Educational planning data including projected enrollment and proposed new programs inform facility space needs, which culminate in the Facilities Master Plan providing an overall view of a campus infrastructure footprint intended to support institutional goals. The Educational Master Plan identified five major recommendations for the future of the College and is the basis for all other institutional plans including the Facilities Master Plan. (III.B.2)

While the Educational Master Plan provides the framework for the Facilities Master Plan, the Facilities Committee is the participatory governance body that is responsible for reviewing and moving forward minor repair, renovation and construction projects. Smaller subgroups of the Committee are sometimes utilized to develop plans for selected projects. Staff at the campus corroborated the Self Evaluation Report regarding the Facilities Committee's development of a process for determining total cost of ownership. These standards have helped the College determine long-term operational costs of campus facilities, recognizing a period of value for depreciation. This assists the institution in long-range planning through the integrated planning model. (III.B.2.a)

The College analyzes data and evaluates effectiveness of its facilities through the participatory governance process. The College's Integrated Planning Model is based on the institutional mission and the Educational Master Plan, and several campus committees participate in identifying facility and equipment needs. The development of the Educational Master Plan included an internal and external scan of economic, labor market, and demographic trends. (III.B.2.b)

## **Conclusions**

The College meets this Standard. There is satisfactory evidence that the institution provides safe and sufficient physical resources at all of its locations where it offers courses, programs, and learning support services. The College plans, acquires or builds, maintains, and upgrades or replaces its physical resources in a manner that assures effective utilization and continuing quality to support programs and services and to achieve its mission. The institution assures the feasibility and effectiveness of physical resources supporting programs and services, plans and evaluates its facilities and equipment on a regular basis, and uses data regarding space utilization in its planning. Long-range capital plans support improvement goals and consider projections of the total cost of ownership of new facilities and equipment.

The Maintenance & Operations department is recognized and commended for its diligent efforts in making the College a clean, welcoming, safe, secure, and healthy learning and working environment for students and employees of the College.

The College meets the requirements of Standard III.B.

## **Recommendations**

None.

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

### **General Observations**

Since the last self-evaluation in 2009, the College has worked hard to meet the challenge of change and increased demand for technology services and infrastructure. Taft College demonstrates a significant commitment to technology, as technology provides a critical framework for the effective and efficient functioning of the district. The College has established an infrastructure and policies to meet the needs of faculty, staff, and students. The Information Technology Committee (ITC) was created to develop procedures and support technology planning for the district. The ITS department was responsible for the coordinating the development of the District's Technology Master Plan (2012-2017) in collaboration with the Facilities Committee and other constituents on campus.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The College has an Information Technology Committee which is a participatory governance committee that reports to the Taft College Governance Council (GC) on a monthly basis. According to their governance guide, this committee coordinates technology plans and technology related operational issues and is responsible for recommending technology strategies, training needs, and planning considerations to the GC. In addition to the ITC, the ITS Department has representation on many governance committees that report to the Governance Council.

The ITC led the creation of the comprehensive 2012-2017 Technology Master Plan, a planning document created to help set goals for improvement and to guide planning over a five-year period, from 2012 to 2017, and is organized to provide historical context, current environment, and recommendations regarding campus technology. It was developed with input from multiple sources (including the Facilities Committee) and members of the campus community, aligns with the Educational Master Plan, and is used to inform decision making and resource allocation for technology at the college-wide level.

The ITC participates in the program review process and resource allocation. The annual program review, the mission statement, and the Educational Master Plan provide the basis for integrated planning. (III.C.2)

The College's IT Department provides support for technology infrastructure, instructional support, assistive technology, Management Information Systems reporting, programming, and database management, audio-visual and telephone services, mobile technology, the College's Banner Enterprise Resource Planning system, and network support. The visiting team found that the College effectively utilizes grant funds and State Instructional Equipment (SIE) funds to provide technology and technology support for faculty, staff, and students. (III.C.1)

It is clear that the College addresses the hardware and software needs of the campus, along with online needs such as campus communications, learning, teaching, research, and delivery of online operational systems. Because of the College's foresight in replacing the aging blade server system in 2013-2014, no helpdesk calls were received regarding any Banner outages.

The College utilized bond funds and grants to fund “Modernization” projects that included a fiber optic upgrade, server upgrade, laptop carts, smart classrooms, portable devices, and a large student commons area. (III.C.1.a)

The College assures adequate infrastructure and training to support stable operations with State instructional equipment funds. The College provides training and support for the effective use of technology resources. Through several avenues, the College provides some practical professional development on the use of technology for faculty and staff. These have included in service programs, specialized training by vendors, and an annual three-day workshop. The College developed the Professional Development Center which hosts formal and informal training sessions and regularly scheduled brown bag meetings. Training topics have included the use of Banner, the ERP. The High-Tech Center provides training and assistive technology for students with physical, intellectual, and learning disabilities. (III.C.1.b)

The College conducted student surveys to measure satisfaction in order to improve classroom technology and maintenance to enhance student learning. CCSSE was administered in the Spring 2012 and Spring 2015 semesters and the results of the survey were incorporated into the program review and strategic planning processes. The College responded to the needs of its personnel and hired an Instructional Technologist position through grant funding.

The self-evaluation report states that extensive professional development on the use of technology is provided to faculty at least once a year during a three-day workshop. Based on the evidence observed by the visiting team, there does not appear to be sufficient opportunities for development in technology, online teaching, or web enhancing courses, considering the high percentage of students taking online and web-enhanced classes. There was an end-of-the year workshop that pertained to the use of technology in teaching, which occurred in 2013. The College distributes an annual professional development survey to get key input in planning for the next year’s workshops. Based on the findings in the 2014-2015 survey, the College may want to focus more workshops on distance learning issues such as student readiness and online pedagogy.

Prior to the visit, the Taft College Professional Development website appeared incomplete and did not list any current workshop information for campus faculty, staff, and administrators. During the visit, the website was updated, yet there were no technology training opportunities listed. However, in meetings with the Professional Development/Distance Education Coordinator, it was reported that faculty have the opportunity to register monthly for an Etudes training which certifies them to teach online. Etudes requires all users to go through an initial three-week certification process, but there are no requirements for continuing education. Distance education instructors using Moodle are not required to go through any certification training. There do not appear to be any guidelines or policies required of faculty before teaching online courses as training requirements were observed to be inconsistent.

Strategic Action Plan goal, 1.2.2, is to "Implement a plan to increase course completion rates for the courses with the lowest completion rates" with the outcome reported as "improve the successful course completion rate for the courses with the lowest completion rates." Since distance education students have a 60% success rate compared to 84% success rate for traditional courses, the visiting team noted that distance education courses should be addressed

within the Strategic Action Plan.

The annual professional development survey also collects feedback on satisfaction with the current year's workshops. The results from the 2013 survey were very positive, and technology related workshops appear to be popular. As part of the integrated planning process for resource allocation, the annual program review results are now distributed to the Budget Committee as well as the Director of Information Technology so that those two entities can collaborate to incorporate the program results into future technology plans. Considering that 40% of the College's students are enrolled in online classes, the visiting team would like to have found greater evidence to support a progressive training program for faculty in addition to the initial 3-week Etudes training. While some courses are offered via Moodle, the team did not find evidence of assistance for faculty on this LMS. In addition, very little evidence was found to support student readiness assistance for both learning skills and technology. The visiting team found that the College has plans to fully integrate both the tutorial and plagiarism software described in the self-evaluation. (III.C.1.c)

Taft College maintains sufficient technology across all offices, instructional classrooms, and labs, employing smart classrooms, iPads, mobile computer cards, campus-wide Wi-Fi, and Etudes for online learning. (III.C.1.d)

Technology planning is integrated with institutional planning through annual program reviews, the College mission statement, the Educational Master Plan, and the Taft College Service Request (TCSR) system. The Technology plan outlines lifecycle replacement of hardware. (III.C.2)

## **Conclusions**

The College's programs and services have access to current, appropriate technology (hardware and software) through quality training, technology infrastructure lifecycle, technology supports programs, and integrated technology planning that allows them to effectively achieve the mission of the College. The future planning needs for technology are addressed through the Technology Master Plan, which is integrated into the college-wide planning processes. Distance education is tied to the Technology Committee. Therefore, a more focused effort to provide faculty training and student readiness will help address the achievement gap between students taking classes online versus those taking face-to-face classes.

The College meets the requirements of Standard III.C.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation #2:**

In order to increase effectiveness and address the needs of online students, the team recommends that the College expand, diversify, and provide technology-related workshops that are based upon identified needs of distance education faculty. (II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, III.A.5.a, III.A.5.b, III.C.1.c)

### **Recommendation #3:**

In order to increase effectiveness of distance education, the team recommends the College develop and implement a Distance Education Plan, which addresses issues of student achievement and faculty training that is consistent with AP 4105 - Distance Learning, and that this plan is incorporated into college governance dialog and the integrated planning process. (II.A.2, III.C.1.c)



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

### **General Observations**

The College's mission is supported by financial resources, which is evident when touring the campus. Facilities and student services are well maintained, and the staffing is adequate for the size of the College.

The College has based much of its integrated planning on a new model that connects to the Strategic Plan and Educational Master Plan. During the economic downturn, the College was able to maintain services and provide student learning and programs without major disruptions. With the State economy's return to generating revenues, the College has begun to use its program review process to allocate resources. Student learning outcomes assessment, which feeds into program review needs to be strengthened as mentioned in the College's Self Evaluation Report. The continued assessment and evaluation of program review and resource allocation should be continued.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The College's mission and goals are committed to creating a community of learners by enriching the lives of all students they serve through career technical education, transfer programs, foundational programs, and student support services. The College provides an equitable learning environment defined by applied knowledge leading to students' achievement of their educational goals. Via the College mission, the Educational Master Plan is the foundation for financial planning, which supports its community of learners through career technical education, transfer programs, foundation programs, and student support services. (III.D.1)

Budget development is integrated with the College's Strategic Plan, Information Technology Plan, Facilities Plan, etc. using program reviews, which cycles back to the College's Educational Master Plan and Governance Council. (III.D.1)

The visiting team verified through the Executive Vice President of Administrative Services that financial planning is integrated with and supports institutional planning. The visiting team also verified through the Coordinator of Institutional Research, and the Student Learning Outcome Coordinator and Technician that the linkage between program reviews, student learning outcomes, and resource allocation is integrated. However, the Self Evaluation Report acknowledges "that the link between the analysis of Student Learning Outcome data and resource allocation decision-making must be strengthened," and is part of the College's Action Improvement Plan for Standard II.A.1.c. The visiting team verified that robust use of SLO data was not pervasive in the Program Review process nor was consistently completing Program Review reports in non-academic areas. (I.B.3, II.A.1.c, III.D.1.a)

The College assesses financial resources and availability, development of financial resources, partnerships, and expenditure requirements through a variety of sources. The College projects the number of funded FTES and revenue streams, whether funding is unrestricted or restricted. The College reviews budgeted amounts, and changes and reports these changes through public

sessions of the Board. The visiting team verified through the Executive Vice President of Administrative Services that budget updates are given throughout the year at Board of Trustees meetings, Budget Committee meetings, and negotiation group meetings. The Budget Committee is a subcommittee of the Governance Council. The Governance Council gets updates approximately once a month, and has representation by all campus constituency groups. (III.D.1.b)

The College also has a significant grant or restricted revenue stream for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) projects. Institutional planning reflects the revenue source and adjustments are made to ensure funds are used appropriately and for the intended purpose of the funding source. (III.D.1.b)

The College also submits quarterly and annual 311 reports filed with the State Chancellor's Office, which supports the ongoing assessment of funding levels, changes throughout the fiscal year, and the impact on institutional planning. The College is conservative in its financial planning, as evidenced in its 311 reports. For example, in the College's 311Q for Fiscal Year ending July 1, 2015, the projected revenues for the unrestricted general fund was more than 20% higher than what was budgeted. Review of the College's fiscal condition through various reports, such as Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Adopted Budget, quarterly and annual 311 reports, independent auditor audits, and evidence shows steady revenues. Through visiting team meetings with administrative staff the College has plans to ensure funds for Other Post-Employment Benefits. (USDE 609.19(a-e)) (III.D.1.b)

The visiting team also verified through the Executive Vice President of Administrative Services that the Other Post-Employment Benefit contribution in Fiscal Years' 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 was more than \$500,000. The District recently increased its contributions to this issue based upon long-range financial planning. According to the Executive Vice President of Administrative Services, the Other Post-Employee Benefit is partially funded to an irrevocable trust and is funded at approximately \$3,700,000, and the obligation is approximately \$20,000,000 based on its last actuary report. Previously the funding of Other Post-Employee Benefits had not been in place (2010 is when the College began to fund the obligation). The College completed an actuarial study in the last year and continues to engage in actuarial studies every two years and plan according to the results. (III.D.1.c)

The College, through presentations to the labor/negotiation groups, has discussed benefits and the dialog has been positive and collegial. The Faculty Association President has stated that "we are all in this together." (III.D.1.c)

The College has a defined budget calendar and follows its guidelines for submittal through program review, student learning outcomes, shared governance committees, committees/standing bodies, staff, and administrators. These include the Budget Committee, Governance Council, Academic Senate, Classified Unit, and then to the Board of Trustees for the Tentative Budget and then the Public Hearing and Adopted Budget. The College makes budget adjustments based on Principal Apportionment Reports from the California Community College Chancellor's Office throughout the fiscal year. A review of the previous year's resource requests are conducted by the Governance Council. The visiting team verified with the Executive Vice President of Administrative Services that program review and resource

allocations were linked. A “Program Review Funded Items (At Some Level)” was provided to the visiting team, and verified that resources were tied to the allocation of resources whether through unrestricted funds or restricted funds. Annually the College presents to the Board, for adoption, a budget that supports the mission of the College through the Educational Master Plan and its other District-wide plans. In addition, transfers and changes to expenditure classifications are approved by the Board on an ongoing basis. This process is used to ensure that student learning is supported. In addition, the visiting team was provided with the College’s Adopted 2015-16 Annual Budget. The Adopted Budget shows approximately half of expenditures are dedicated to instructional (31%) and support (20%) salaries, which support student learning programs and services. (III.D.1.d)

The College has a third party independent audit firm conduct an annual audit of finances. A review of the Fiscal Years’ 2012-2013, and 2013-2014 audits have unmodified opinions as evidenced in the audit reports provided to the visiting team. The College’s independent audit report had nine (9) total findings in Fiscal Year 2011-2012. The College responded effectively and was able to reduce those findings in its independent audit report for Fiscal Year 2012-2013 to two (2) total findings; one for Financial Reporting and the second for Vacation Accruals. These two findings were carried over to the Fiscal Year 2013-2014 independent audit with the Financial Reporting being partially implemented and the Vacation Accruals not implemented according to the report. (III.D.1.d, III.D.2.b)

The College shares financial information throughout the institution related to budget, financial reports, and Board approvals of transfers and expenditures. As evidenced throughout the Self Evaluation, the dialog and process related to shared governance groups provides for the sharing of financial information as well. The visiting team verified with the Executive Vice President of Administrative Services that updates on financial information are provided throughout the year in shared governance committees and with the Board of Trustees. (III.D.2.c)

The College has had the consulting company Strata Information Group come in assess their integrated software system (Banner). Strata Information Group reviewed the separation of duties/hierarchy of requestors and approvers. The College does not have a centralized Purchasing Department, so each area has a requestor of services and supplies, and an approver. The requestor and approver are not the same individual to ensure appropriate separation of duties. In addition, the College ensures receipt of goods are approved when they are received and the invoice is forwarded to Accounts Payable for payment issuance. The College operationally reviews and evaluates separation of duties of purchasers and approvers twice a year as verified by the Director of Fiscal Services. The Director of Fiscal Services works with the Information Services Department to look and compare the names of purchasers and approvers to ensure there is no duplication. The process is also reviewed as new roles are taken on by staff who do not have access to account codes when they move or are promoted to other areas of the organization. When this happens the old access is taken away and the new access is provided. (III.D.2.e)

In addition, the College is fiscally dependent on the Kern County Superintendent of Schools for issuance of payments related to purchase orders and contracts. The Kern County Superintendent of Schools acts as an additional level of review and audit to ensure appropriate expenditures and compliance with necessary approvals. Board approvals are completed during

Board meetings and agreements are authorized by the Superintendent/President and/or the Executive Vice President of Administrative Services. (III.D.2.e)

The College has sufficient cash flow due to the utilization of Tax Revenue Anticipation Notes, primarily because funding is based on local tax revenue, which is received twice annually. The Tax Revenue Anticipation Notes are then utilized to ensure cash flow to cover payroll, payments to vendors, and other needs during the fiscal year. The College utilizes Tax Revenue Anticipation Notes to ensure cash flow throughout the fiscal year, thereby ensuring that funds that are received are used to pay back the Tax Revenue Anticipation Note in the current year, as referenced in the College's Self Evaluation Report where "all obligations have been met throughout the program." The College also sets aside contingency funds for unforeseen events that were not part of the annual program review or resource allocation process. In addition, the visiting team verified through the Executive Vice President of Administrative Services and through the 311 Annual report that the unaudited year end percentage of the general fund balance is 13.2%. The College anticipates after the final audit is completed that the annual fund balance will be closer to 15%. The fund balance is higher than the Board of Trustees expected target of a 12% minimum reserve and the California Community College Chancellor's Office desired 5% reserve. (Standards III.D.1.c, III.D.3.a)

## **Conclusions**

Financial resource allocations are completed after program review with recommendations from the area managers, and shared governance groups, such as the Budget Committee and Governance Council. There has been a strong emphasis on participation in the program review process by most areas of the College, which then leads to the full resource allocation process to support student learning and programs. The visiting team did observe that not all administrative units had completed annual program reviews.

Program reviews, in relation to student learning outcomes, should be evaluated, assessed, and integrated fully to ensure complete/comprehensive data analysis which would better support resource allocation being directed to student learning and program support.

The College meets the requirements of Standard III.D.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation #1:**

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that student and learning support services and administrative units actively participate in regular program review cycles including outcomes assessment. Results should be evaluated and used as a basis for improvement. (I.B.3, I.B.6, II.B.4, II.C.2, III.D.1.d, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.5)

## **Standard IV - Leadership and Governance**

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

#### **General Observations**

The primary vehicle for developing institutional-wide dialog, innovation and excellence is the Taft College Governance Council (GC). Constituents from different groups across campus are included in the Governance Council which guides the overall direction of the school and makes recommendations to the Superintendent/President.

The process for requesting additional resources, facilities, and budget augmentations is through Program Review. Faculty Leads work with individual program faculty to start the program review report as it makes its way to Division Chairs and ultimately to the Governance Council

#### **Findings and Evidence**

The Governance Council involves constituents from administration, faculty, management, classified staff and associated student body representatives. As part of its operating procedure, the GC annually evaluates how the committee is meeting its charter requirements. Several subcommittees have been nurtured to assist the GC with the work of decision-making and processes as recommendations are developed. The Board of Trustees recognizes the importance and working responsibilities of the GC and various other committees. (IV.A.1)

Annual Program Reviews are the impetus for feeding campus discussion related to budget development, prioritization of new faculty and staff positions, and resource allocation. Program Reviews utilize achievement data and student learning outcome data. Program Leads are identified as the overseer and they coordinate each program review. Academic departments have developed and morphed over the past decade as the scope of each individual annual review moved from a broad division-level report to individualized department offerings, and sometimes specialized offerings within programs.

The Board of Trustees delegates appropriate authority to the Superintendent/President for matters of daily College operations. Taft College communicates, submits required reports, and works with local, state and national regulations appropriately. Taft College is active in ACCJC operations, workshops, and employees have participated in evaluation team visits to other colleges.

#### **Conclusions**

As the lead council on campus, the Governance Council brings all constituents together to make recommendations to the president. The GC has been active in developing a working handbook and Administrative Procedure related to the roles for governance issues and the flow of recommendations on campus. The Board has respected the role of the GC to make recommendations to the Superintendent/President and has taken steps in recent years to remain at the policy level outside of day-to-day operations, which has allowed the campus to build internal ownership of important processes such as developing an Educational Master Plan,

Strategic Action Plan and Human Resources Plan, all under the overall umbrella of the Taft College GC work. (IV.A.1)

The Governance Council recognized the need for expanding the existing Board Policy 2510 into a working handbook for the daily operations of governance on campus, including defining the roles of each constituent group. The resultant Governance Council Handbook was created to answer these questions and clarify roles, structures, process, and participation as ideas and effective communication take place across campus. The visiting team observed this handbook to be applied across campus as Taft College has embraced the newly developed integrated planning process. (IV.A.2.a, IV.A.3)

A Facilities Master Plan was created and it is a source of pride as employees talk about the future learning space and how it will transform the campus. The visiting team found evidence that facilities planning is truly integrated into the needs of campus and will support student learning when it is completed.

Taft College uses both internal and external surveys to evaluate the College's effectiveness and integrity. The Governance Council conducts an annual evaluation to look at its progress in relation to its charter. The visiting team found that different committees that report to, and do substantial work for the GC, do not all similarly evaluate their own effectiveness and the degree to which they are meeting their own goals. (IV.A.2.b, IV.A.5)

While the student achievement data presented for Program Review analysis does include student learning outcome data, the visiting team could not find a thorough analysis and robust discussions occurring at each department level in preparing individual program reviews. The visiting team found evidence that the link between SLO data and annual program review process was minimal as most Program Reviews were built upon student achievement data. (IV.A.2.b, IV.A.3)

Taft College has grown considerable in the past decade, responding to the needs of the community and job-training. A substantive change report was submitted for distance education where programs are more than 50% available through a modality outside of the classroom. This substantive change report seemed to be after-the-fact as Taft College learned that some of their programs were available at levels over 50% through distance education and had a difficult time tracking which courses were offered through DE modality. A substantive change report should also be completed for the new welding program that is available at a new off-campus facility. Further, ACCJC was not notified of the closure of the automotive technician program. Taft College has addressed these issues so that approval of curriculum is not disconnected with course scheduling, and this process of monitoring should prevent similar issues from occurring in the future as the College can be proactive in submitting substantive changes when necessary. (IV.A.4)

The College does not fully meet the requirements of Standard IV.A because Standards IV.A.2.b and IV.A.5 were not met.

## **Recommendations**

## Recommendations to Increase Effectiveness

### **Recommendation #1:**

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that student and learning support services and administrative units actively participate in regular program review cycles including outcomes assessment. Results should be evaluated and used as a basis for improvement. (I.B.3, I.B.6, II.B.4, II.C.2, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.5)

### **Recommendation #4:**

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends the College fully integrate the assessment of course and program student learning outcomes (SLOs) into the program review process, including analysis and dialog of results at the department/program level. The team also recommends the College systematically assess the effective use of financial resources and the impact of program changes as a result of implemented program review recommendations. (I.B.1, I.B.3, I.B.6, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, II.C.2, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.5)

### **Recommendation #5:**

In order to meet the standards and comply with the ACCJC Substantive Change Policy, the team recommends that the College submit a substantive change proposal for the discontinuation of the campus automotive program and a substantive change proposal for the re-established Welding Program offered at an off-site location. (Policy on Substantive Change, II.A.6.b, IV.A.2.b)

### **Recommendation #6:**

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College consistently assess, analyze, and evaluate student learning outcomes for all academic programs and courses. Meaningful SLO data and dialog should be used for continuous improvement of student learning. (I.B.3, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, IV.A.2.b)

### **Recommendation #7:**

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that student learning outcomes (SLOs) be communicated to students, including listing them consistently on all course syllabi and approved course outlines. (II.A.1.a, II.A.1.c, III.A.1.c, IV.A.2.b)

## **Standard IV.B – Board and Administrative Organization**

### **General Observations**

The Board of Trustees of West Kern County Community College District is comprised of five members elected at large. Each member serves a four-year term. In addition to elected members, the Board also has one non-voting student member who serves an annual term. The Board of Trustees and administrative organization are engaged and proactive in providing guidance in overseeing the College.

Based on interviews at the College, there appears to be strong level of respect among the Board Members and good working relations with the Superintendent/President. Meeting minutes provide evidence of strong engagement in Board dialog, yet seldom do actions on items result in votes that are not unanimous. The visiting team found that the Board takes its role seriously to represent the needs of the communities that Taft College serves.

While the District experienced two changes in leadership since 2011, after an extensive search process the College's current Superintendent/President was hired in May 2012. The Board of Trustees holds the Superintendent/President accountable for the implementation of policies, operation of the College, and fiscal stability, and has delegated such authority to the Superintendent/President. An annual evaluation process is in place to assess the performance of the Superintendent/President. Staff interviews indicated that the Superintendent/President is integrally involved in all aspects of institutional management and effectiveness, effectively controls the budget and expenditures, and maintains effective and widespread communication.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Board Policy 2200 provides specific delineation of the various roles of the Board and the delegated authority of the Superintendent/President. Board policies are consistent with the institution's mission statement. (IV.B.1, IV.B.1.a, IV.B.1.b)

Board Policy clearly defines the role of the Board of Trustees and its duties and responsibilities (BP 2200). A policy manual and administrative procedures are in place to guide implementation of policy as appropriate. These policies and procedures are available to the public on the District's website. Policies are developed or revised by a process of review that includes an initial item on the Board agenda that allows for stakeholder involvement and a subsequent second reading for approval by the Board. The Board revises these policies and related procedures through a process coordinated by the office of the Superintendent/President. Board policies are in place and are reviewed and updated on a regular process. The Board utilizes the Community College League of California (CCLC), which provides necessary input and recommendations related to policy development and revision and potential changes in legislation and regulations. And, Board Members attend CCLC conferences and presentations as appropriate. Board development is ongoing for both new and continuing members. (IV.B.1.d)

The Board makes decisions that support the District and its students, and its actions are



consistent with documented policies and bylaws. Board meeting agendas and minutes are published and available to the public. Board self evaluations and goals adoption takes place on an annual basis. (IV.B.1.e)

The District has an established process for selecting its Chief Executive Office (BP 2431), and the Board has implemented and applied this process in its selection process. The Board followed that process in its most recent hiring in May 2012. In addition, the Board has established guidelines for review and evaluation of the performance of the Superintendent/President. (BP 2435), and has followed this process annually. Every three years, the procedure calls for the evaluation of the Superintendent/President to include community input. (IV.B.1)

The Board consistently conducts an annual retreat at which the Board compares its performance against the goals it set in the prior year, and it sets new goals for the subsequent year. The Board holds public monthly meetings and has special meetings when necessary. It also conducts “study sessions” on topics of interest. These meetings are subject to the Brown Act, and the public is informed in advance of agenda items and meeting schedules. Board meetings are open to the public, and the public and constituency groups are invited to comment at the meetings. There are several pertinent policies in place that address how the Board operates and protects itself from conflicts of interest. In addition, the Board reviews its Code of Ethics each year and conducts a two-hour training on ethics every other year. The Board members also complete Statements of Economic Interest (Forms 700) as required by law. There is an established development and training program for new and continuing Board members, as well as CCLC training workshops, special study sessions, Board workshops, and other Board development opportunities. BP 2740 emphasizes the importance of the Board’s commitment to development and orientation activities. The Board follows BP 2110 when filling member vacancies. (IV.B.1.h, IV.B.1.f)

Minutes from the Board of Trustees meetings indicate that the Board acts in a manner consistent with its policies. The Board ensures that systems are in place to ensure its members are aware of their roles and responsibilities, participate actively in receiving and reviewing information, and engage themselves in the decision-making process of the District. Board policies are consistent with the mission statement, and ensure that excellence, uprightness, continuous improvement of student learning and support services, and the resources to support them are a high priority. (IV.B.1.b)

Based on the Self Evaluation and discussion with the Superintendent/President, it is also the expectation of the Board that resource decisions are based on support of the planning goals related to student learning and services. The Board of Trustees took significant financial action in 2008-09 when it sought District resolve to address GASB 45 requirements relating to District funding of OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) retiree benefit costs. The institution considered options for decreasing its unfunded OPEB liabilities by creating an irrevocable trust that provides funding for these commitments. Review of documents and interviews of staff have concluded this action is in progress. Evidence indicates that the Board does take responsibility and gives final approval for all educational programs, legal issues, and fiscal matters. (IV.B.1.c)

As the ultimate decision-maker in those areas under their responsibility, the Board is committed to the participatory governance process as defined in BP 2510. This provides constituency involvement in developing recommended policies for Board action. Policy revisions or new policies are considered by College committees including the Governance Council and the Academic Senate. In addition, constituency report outs are a part of the regular Board of Trustees meetings. The Board receives reports as necessary regarding educational programs, legal issues, and budgetary matters, but provides the Superintendent/President with delegated authority on certain areas including entering into contracts and daily operations.

Throughout this recent accreditation process, the Board has been intimately involved. BP 3200 outlines the commitment and involvement of the Board in the Self Evaluation and accrediting review process. Staff provides annual reports to the Board regarding student outcomes and the Student Success Report Card, and the Board routinely reviews other important institutional effectiveness reports. Board reports at their meetings provide substantial information regarding the College's Self Evaluation and progress in meeting accreditation goals. The Board has taken recent steps to remain at the policy level and not actively participate in campus operations. The visiting team observed that this has had a positive impact on the growth and development of the Governance Council and the Integrated Planning Model as they serve as lead campus governance processes. (IV.B.1.i)

The Board of Trustees has delegated to the Superintendent/President executive responsibilities of administering all policies adopted by the Board and implementing all Board decisions. This delegation is authorized by BP 2430, which also stipulates that the Superintendent/President may delegate entrusted powers, but is ultimately responsible to the Board for execution of such powers and duties. The Superintendent/President is also responsible for ensuring that the College is compliant with all applicable laws and regulations. She was integrally involved in the process of reviewing the College vision, mission, and values statements. She also is keenly familiar with and utilizes various services that provide updates to existing and new policies, legislation, and regulations. She uses these services as the basis for recommendations to the Board of Trustees, and such recommended changes are also vetted by appropriate campus stakeholders and committees. (IV.B.2.a, IV.B.2.c)

The Superintendent/President has a Cabinet which she manages and evaluates. Cabinet members were interviewed by the visiting team. Members of the Cabinet include the Vice President of Instruction, Vice President of Student Services, Executive Vice President of Administrative Services, and the Associate Vice President of Human Resources, all of whom are educational administrative positions defined by Education Code and reflected in BP 7250. Two additional educational administrators are included in the administrative organizational structure as are five classified managers and supervisors.

The Superintendent/President has weekly meeting with the Cabinet as a whole and with individual Cabinet members. Cabinet meeting agendas and meeting minutes are for use by the Superintendent/President and Cabinet for action and follow-up. Meetings with the management team of the organization as a whole are held on a quarterly basis. The Superintendent/President has four direct reports in addition to the Cabinet members, each with whom she meets on a weekly basis. Administrators, managers, and supervisors establish annual goals related to the Strategic Action Plan and the College mission. These goals,

established in collaboration with the supervising administrator, are the basis of annual evaluations.

The Superintendent/President co-chairs the Governance Council, is lead negotiator of each employee bargaining group, chairs the institution's Health Benefit Committee, and participates fully in the selection process related to full-time faculty and senior administrative positions. In addition to work related to these committees, the Superintendent/President leads the process of setting goals, values, and priorities of the institution. BP 3250 establishes the role of Superintendent/President in implementing a broad-based, comprehensive, systematic, and integrated system of planning with constituency involvement and research support. The Governance Council is the primary collegial constituency committee. The Superintendent/President has led the GC in developing priorities related to the Educational Master Plan, the Facilities Master Plan, the Technology Plan, the program review process, and other important planning activities. (IV.B.2.b)

The Superintendent/President also provides administrative oversight to the Office of Institutional Assessment, Research and Planning. In this role, she ensures that institutional evaluation and planning is directed by data produced by that office. These data were embedded into the various College plans, including the Educational Master Plan, and linkages between plans are identified in the integrated planning model of the campus. An institutional effectiveness survey conducted in 2013-14 concluded that the Office of Institutional Assessment, Research and Planning received good or above average grades in providing assistance with interpretation of data, facilitating the program review process, providing accurate and timely data. Established procedures are in place to evaluate institutional planning at the College. The Governance Council, for example, evaluates its effectiveness on an annual basis, which produces opportunities for dialog within constituencies and prospective changes in processes.

Interviews conducted by the visiting team concluded that the Superintendent/President is promoting a positive institutional culture regarding integrated planning and resource allocations leading to student success. Moreover, the 2013-14 Institutional Effectiveness Survey concluded by a 4-to-5 margin that the Superintendent/President does promote such integrated planning processes. An annual campus-wide survey on administrative units' effectiveness is another example where data leads to potential changes in operational effectiveness. (IV.B.2.b)

Additional evidence was obtained through interviews by the visiting team that the Superintendent/President and the Executive Vice President of Administrative Services communicate budget information to the campus community. Per Board Policy 6100, the Superintendent/President is responsible and accountable for the overall fiscal status of the College. The institution prepares its annual budget in a timely manner and reviews it with the Board of Trustees. Program review is a component of the budget process, and data are expected to be used to formulate resource requests. The Governance Council is responsible for reviewing such requests associated with program reviews and to prioritize funding recommendations to the Superintendent/President. Faculty positions and new classified positions follow a similar process with different constituency committees. The Budget Committee and Governance Council receive information about the fiscal condition of the campus throughout the year, the Board of Trustees gets regular updates on the budget at its

meetings, and the Superintendent/President along with the Executive Vice President for Administrative Services provides information to the College at a campus-wide meeting each semester. (IV.B.2.d)

The Superintendent/President has worked hard to enhance communication and a collegial culture at the institution. All College meetings, faculty and classified appreciation weeks, dissemination of monthly bulletins highlighting campus accomplishments, having open office hours, and developing a community annual report are examples of recent efforts to support a collegial process of mutual respect and communication. In addition, the Superintendent/President reaches out to service clubs, elected officials, and business leaders and has placed a high priority on meeting regularly with educational institutions in the service area. In 2014, she authorized a study detailing the economic impact of Taft College throughout the region, an effort to expand the awareness of the important role of the institution in the County. (IV.B.2.e)

## **Conclusions**

After reading the institution's Self Evaluation Report and evidence, observing the College and interviewing College leadership, employees, students, and Board members, the visiting team determined that the College meets all aspects of Standard IV.B. Evidence was provided to substantiate that the Board is engaged and proactive in the areas of this standard. Board policies and administrative procedures are followed and updated on a regular basis. The Board and administrative leadership strive to keep the institution effective in meeting student and community needs. The College Superintendent/President demonstrates primary responsibility for the quality of the institution and provides effective leadership in organizing, planning, budgeting, hiring, and continuous improvement, and the campus has, in turn, supported integrated planning processes.

Leadership across the campus is to be commended for its engagement and transformation of a campus culture of change related to integrated planning, data analysis, and institutional effectiveness leading to student success and continuous improvement.

The College meets the requirements of Standard IV.B.

## **Recommendations**

None.

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

The evaluation items detailed in this Checklist are those which fall specifically under federal regulations and related Commission policies, beyond what is articulated in the Accreditation Standards; there may be other evaluation items under ACCJC standards which address the same or similar subject matter. Evaluation teams will evaluate the institution's compliance with standards as well as the specific Checklist elements from federal regulations and related Commission policies noted here.

*General Instructions: The form should contain narrative as well as the "check-off."*

- a. The team should place a check mark next to each evaluation item when it has been evaluated.*
- b. For each subject category (e.g., "Public Notification of an Evaluation Visit and Third Party Comment"), the team should also complete the conclusion check-off.*
- c. The narrative will cite to the evidence reviewed and team findings related to each of the evaluation items. If some content is discussed in detail elsewhere in the team report, the page(s) of the team report can be cited instead of repeating that portion of the narrative.*
- d. Any areas of deficiency from the Checklist leading to noncompliance, or areas needing improvement, should be included in the evaluation conclusions section of the team report along with any recommendations.*

This Checklist will become part of the evaluation team report. Institutions may also use this form as a guide for preparing documentation for team review. It is found as an appendix in the team and institutional self evaluation manuals.

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

#### **Evaluation Items:**

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

(Regulation citation: 602.23(b).)

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

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

**Narrative (add space as needed):**

The visiting team found evidence that the College meets this requirement.

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

**Evaluation Items:**

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

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

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

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

**Narrative (add space as needed):**

Yearly and long-term goals are set by various committees across campus. The EMP, Strategic Action Plan (SAP), and other committees determine goals and measure student effectiveness as part of their yearly charter. Taft College has discussed institutional set standards, revising them to four short-term metrics, as these were then integrated into the integrated planning process. Disaggregate data from institution set standards are used in the program review process, which originates at individual departmental discussions. Due to transitions in the website management and updates, the visiting

team could not verify a robust discussion and communication of institutional standards on the website. The College has self-identified an improvement plan to further develop the interactive calendar and communication of goal metrics on the website. The completion of this improvement plan will help in the process of using results and institutional set standards completion as a measure of student success that is pervasive across campus.

Institution set standards for student performance are established and cited in the Self Evaluation report. Desirable standards for student performance are referred to as goals and minimum standards are referred to as student achievement outcomes. The program reviews integrate and analyze data on student learning towards the institution set standards. Programs have established standards as evident in Standard II.A. The visiting team found evidence that the College meets this requirement and that the institution set standards were appropriate for Taft College.

### **Credits, Program Length, and Tuition**

#### **Evaluation Items:**

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

(Regulation citations: 600.2 (definition of credit hour); 602.16(a)(1)(viii); 602.24(e), (f); 668.2; 668.9.)

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

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

#### **Narrative (add space as needed):**

The visiting team confirmed that the College awards academic credits based on generally accepted practices in degree-granting institutions of higher education. Credit hour assignments and degree program lengths are within the range of good higher education practices. Tuition is consistent and

clock hours are consistent with policy, procedure and practice.

The College conforms to commonly accepted standards and practices for awarding credits and degrees with a minimum of 60 semester credit hours required for an associate degree. The educational programs offered are congruent with the College's mission and are based on recognized fields of study. The College has written policies and procedures for determining that the credit hours meet commonly accepted academic expectations. Board Policy 4020 – Program, Curriculum, and Course Development identifies that the College follows Section 51000, 51022, 55100, 55130, 55150 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations.

The College is in compliance with ACCJC policies regarding institutional degrees and credits.

### **Transfer Policies**

#### **Evaluation Items:**

- Transfer policies are appropriately disclosed to students and to the public.
- Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to accept credits for transfer.
- The institution complies with the Commission *Policy on Transfer of Credit*.

(Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(viii); 602.17(a)(3); 602.24(e); 668.43(a)(ii).)

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

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

#### **Narrative (add space as needed):**

Taft College has developed and implemented policies and procedures for transfer that comply with the Commission *Policy on Transfer Credit*. The visiting team found evidence that the College meets this requirement.

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

#### **Evaluation Items:**

- The institution has policies and procedures for defining and classifying a course as offered by distance education or correspondence education, in alignment with USDE definitions.



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

(Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(iv), (vi); 602.17(g); 668.38.)

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

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

**Narrative (add space as needed):**

The College adheres to state and federal regulations and ACCJC policies regarding Distance Education (DE). The College's Substantive Change Proposals to Offer at Least 50 percent of Course Units for Programs through Distance Education were approved by the Commission in June 2013. DE courses are required to meet learning outcomes of the course and to undergo a separate review and approval process by the Curriculum Committee, and upon recommendation by the Superintendent/President, are approved by the Board of Trustees. The appropriateness and measurability of distance education course SLOs are discussed by the Technical Review Committee and SLOASC who then make recommendations to the appropriate Division Chairs. Assessment data for DE courses are included in the program review process.

The College has processes in place to address student authentication. The College uses ETUDES and MOODLE learning management systems (LMS), which requires secure passwords for student log in, and instructors are encouraged to vary their assignments frequently as well as use different assessment methods to familiarize themselves with individual student work and ensure student authenticity

The College is in compliance with ACCJC policies regarding distance education and correspondence education.

**Student Complaints**

**Evaluation Items:**

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

(Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(ix); 668.43.)

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

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

**Narrative (add space as needed):**

The visiting team evaluated discipline records and policies and found that the College is in compliance with these requirements.

**Institutional Disclosure and Advertising and Recruitment Materials**

**Evaluation Items:**

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

(Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(vii); 668.6.)

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

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

**Narrative (add space as needed):**

The Taft College catalog presents information in a logical, easy-to-use format. It contains all necessary material, including general information, requirements, and major policies affecting students. The catalog workgroup meets monthly to update the catalog and ensure accuracy. The catalog is produced annually, and an addendum is published in advance of the spring term. Together these provide current information about courses and programs, and are available online and in hard format.

The College's accredited status is affirmed in the College catalog and in other official publications, and is stated accurately and fully.

The College is in compliance with ACCJC policies regarding institutional advertising, student recruitment, and representation of accredited status.

**Title IV Compliance**

**Evaluation Items:**

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

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

**Conclusion Check-Off:**

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

**Narrative (add space as needed):**

The visiting team evaluated college external audits, reports, and processes. The visiting team found the College in compliance with these regulations.