

# **EVALUATION REPORT**

## **Santa Rosa Junior College**

1501 Mendocino Avenue  
Santa Rosa, California 95401

A Confidential Report Prepared for the Accrediting Commission  
for Community and Junior Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited  
Santa Rosa Junior College on October 22-24, 2002

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**ACCREDITATION TEAM VISIT  
SANTA ROSA JUNIOR COLLEGE  
October 21-24, 2002**

**INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY**

Santa Rosa Junior College, founded in 1918, is a single-college district with multiple sites serving a credit and noncredit enrollment that exceeded 36,000 students in fall 2001. The Sonoma County Community College District serves all of Sonoma County and encompasses 1,600 square miles, from the southern portion of Mendocino County in the north to the tip of Marin County in the south. The district is bordered to the west by the Pacific Ocean and to the east by Napa and Lake Counties.

The majority of Santa Rosa students attend classes at the 104-acre campus in the heart of the city of Santa Rosa. In addition, nearly 6,000 students attend classes at the rapidly growing full service Petaluma Campus, established in 1995. Santa Rosa Junior College also operates a Public Safety Training Center, which recently moved to a 20-acre site 10 miles north of the Santa Rosa campus, and a 360-acre farm northwest of Santa Rosa. In addition, the college enrolls nearly 2000 students in classes in a shopping mall near the Santa Rosa campus, and offers classes at over 70 other locations throughout the district.

Sonoma County is one of the fastest growing counties in the Bay Area, with a population of 458,614 residents (U.S. Census 2000). The Latino/Hispanic population is growing at a faster rate than the overall population rate, increasing from 7.1% of the total population in 1980 to 17.3% in 2000. The economy of Sonoma County is a mixture of service industries, light manufacturing, high technology, agriculture, and tourism.

Santa Rosa Junior College has a long history of stability in leadership as well as faculty and staff. Since 1918, the college has had only four presidents. Members of the Board of Trustees also tend to serve long terms, some as long as 30 years. Most of the permanent faculty and a large percentage of staff who become employed at Santa Rosa Junior College remain for the rest of their careers.

The Sonoma County community clearly supports the college. Examples of community support include the Doyle Trust that provides scholarship funds to a large number of Santa Rosa Junior College students, and the recent passage of a \$251.7 million bond measure.

From October 21-24, 2002, a ten-member accreditation team visited Santa Rosa Junior College for the purpose of evaluating the college's application for reaffirmation of accreditation. In preparation for the visit, team members studied the Commission Handbook for Evaluators and attended orientation/training workshops conducted by the Accrediting Commission. Team members also carefully read the college's self study, the previous team's report and recommendation, and related documents provided by the college.

Two weeks prior to arriving on campus, each team member prepared written reactions to the Santa Rosa Junior College self study and related documents, and identified inquiries to be made during the visit. On October 21, the team met to collectively review the self study report and initial written reactions by team members, and to finalize preliminary questions and issues to be addressed during the following three days. Over 70 appointments were scheduled by team members prior to the visit.

During the three-day visit, the team met either individually or in groups with over 250 college faculty, classified staff, students, administrators, and governing board members. Team members also visited day and evening classes at the Santa Rosa campus, the Petaluma campus, the Shone Farm, the Public Safety Training Center, and the Center at Coddington Mall. In addition, team members held three widely publicized sessions open to all members of the college community, including two at the Santa Rosa campus and one at the Petaluma campus. The team very much appreciated the cooperation and candor demonstrated by faculty, staff, and students throughout the visitation.

The accreditation self study process was initiated in the fall of 2000 with broad participation by the college community. The college leadership, self study chair, Accreditation Steering Committee members and Standards Committee members are commended for implementing a well planned and inclusive process, and producing a report that is well organized, well written and user friendly.

The visitation team found overwhelming evidence of a high level of quality inherent in programs and services throughout Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC), and a long and continuing tradition of excellence in meeting educational needs within the community. In particular, the team observed the strengths noted below.

1. Highly dedicated faculty and staff.
2. High quality instructional programs and student service programs with an excellent reputation within Sonoma County and among California Community Colleges.
3. A dramatic positive change in the collegial climate, and the rebuilding of the mutual trust and respect between and among all constituencies.
4. Excellent progress toward development of a comprehensive and effective planning system.
5. Exceptional community support for, and pride in SRJC, as evidenced by the bond vote and fund raising success.
6. Astute financial management resulting in a continuing high level of fiscal strength and stability, allowing the college to weather state budget difficulties better than many other colleges.
7. Very attractive, well maintained, and functional Santa Rosa and Petaluma campuses.
8. A high level of commitment on the part of the college to meeting diverse educational needs throughout the community, as evidenced by the Petaluma Campus, the Public

Safety Training Center, the Shone Farm, the new downtown Culinary Arts facility, and the offering of classes at 73 locations throughout the district.

9. Outstanding work of the college's curriculum committee for its impressive task of reviewing over 1,000 curriculum submissions, strengthening requirements through the introduction of majors, and redesigning curricular pathways to promote student success.
10. A strong commitment of resources to support faculty and students in the use of technology.

The team was impressed with the college's response to the recommendation of the previous team related to planning and governance. The college has made very significant progress toward a comprehensive and integrated planning system, and dramatic movement toward a collegial governance environment characterized by mutual trust and respect among college constituencies.

Through the self study report and validating information provided during the site visit, Santa Rosa Junior College demonstrated that it meets, and in many cases significantly exceeds the standards of accreditation. The college's self study report also thoughtfully and candidly describes areas where improvement should occur in the level of performance relative to the standards, and has developed extensive planning agendas and a planning summary to address these areas. The visitation team recommendations outlined below underscore and build upon the most critical areas presented in the self study.

In summary, the team recommends that the college:

1. Clearly demonstrate that issues of staff diversity in hiring and training are major priorities and commit attention and resources to affect change. (2.6, 7.D.2, 10.B.3)
2. Develop processes to assure that resource allocation decisions are linked to planning efforts and support the goals and priorities identified in the college's Institutional Master Plan. (3.B.3, 4.D.1, 9.A.1)
3. Develop a performance evaluation system for each employee group that eliminates the backlog of overdue evaluations and clearly defines timelines, accountability, criteria, purposes, and desired outcomes of evaluation. (7.B.1, 7.B.2, 7.B.3)

## **RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 1996 ACCREDITATION EVALUATION**

### Recommendation:

*Santa Rosa Junior College must continue paying serious attention to the planning process. Educational programs, facilities, and budgeting must converge in this process. A statement about the vision for the educational services to be rendered to the region in the next decade, and the manner in which they will be rendered, must be developed at the highest level of the institution. From this vision statement, communicated widely, must flow the master plan for the long-term future and the strategic plans for the more immediate future.*

- *The entire college, Board, faculty, administration, staff, and students must work in concert in the spirit of collegiality and shared governance. The perception of limited participation by some must be dispelled. The college must make decisions in an environment of receptivity to the ideas of all and a sense that these ideas flow freely up and down the organizational structure.*
- *The college must bring about a sense of efficiency by reconfiguring the committee structure through which its business is generally carried out.*
- *The planning process must be made more central to the realization of the educational goals implicit in the mission of the college. Educational decision making must be at the heart of the process. The college could benefit from placing planning closer to the academic component and at a higher level in the organizational structure.*

### Response:

The college has adequately responded to the planning aspect of this overarching recommendation. Evidence of this response includes a vision statement adopted by the Board of Trustees, which in turn provided guidance for a revision of the college mission statement in 2001. The visitation team validated the considerable effort the college has undertaken to implement a comprehensive and integrated planning process. The process includes the development of goals that follow from the college mission, educational master planning, component planning, program planning and evaluation, and the establishment of an Institutional Master Plan. In addition, the college has created and staffed an institutional research office that is beginning to provide input to planning processes.

The college has also responded to the governance aspects of the prior team's recommendation. Since the last accreditation visitation in 1996, there has been a dramatic positive change in the collegial climate and a rebuilding of mutual trust and respect between and among all constituencies. In addition, the entire committee structure was re-examined and the membership, purposes and interrelationships were clarified. There is a high level of support for the continuation of each one of the 33 committees, and a widely shared opinion that all the committees are functioning in a manner that allows for the timely completion of governance activities.

## EVALUATION OF THE COLLEGE USING ACCJC STANDARDS

### **Standard One** **Institutional Mission**

#### Observations:

The Board approved vision statement adopted in 1998-99 succinctly captures the focus and aim of the institution. Subsequently, a review and revision of the institutional mission statement was undertaken. Following a consultative process, the current mission statement was approved by the Board of Trustees in November 2001. Although the mission statement is intentionally general in nature, fifteen more specific Statements of Commitment are linked to the mission statement and identify the broad-based educational purposes that Santa Rosa Junior College seeks to achieve.

The self study expresses concern that the current mission statement may be “overly general,” especially in regards to defining the students the institution intends to serve. Largely due to the general nature of the mission statement, there is a difference of opinion among members of the college community about the adequacy and the usefulness of the current statement. However, there is widespread commitment to using the vision and the mission as a basis for institutional planning. The college intends that presentations to the Board of Trustees involving new initiatives will address the relevancy of the proposal as it relates to the mission statement.

The mission statement is reviewed, revised, and approved on a six-year cycle to correspond with the accreditation self study process.

#### Conclusions:

The college is generally in compliance with Standard One. However, as indicated in the self study, consensus is lacking within the institution as to whether the mission statement defines the students the institution intends to serve as well as the parameters under which programs can be offered and resources allocated. Due to the differing opinions regarding the content of the mission statement, and the preeminence of its use for planning purposes, the college may wish to review the institutional mission statement sooner than the proposed six-year cycle.

#### Recommendations:

None

## **Standard Two** **Institutional Integrity**

### Observations:

Santa Rosa Junior College manifests its concern for educational quality in its publications. In print as well as online, the college catalog, semester schedule of classes, student guide, and district policy manual are generally well organized, graphically handsome, and straightforward. Information about academic and vocational courses of study, degree/certificate requirements, and the faculty and administrators who provide them are clearly stated in the college catalog. SRJC also uses mailings to publicize its offerings at the Santa Rosa and Petaluma campuses. Additional program and department brochures are widely distributed. The SRJC website is of particular value as an omnipresent information port and a recruitment vehicle. Fiscal and ethical responsibilities are also delineated.

The Sonoma County Junior College District has a strong and ongoing commitment to academic freedom, as enunciated in the district policy manual and in the collective bargaining agreements with two faculty unions. Similar declarations are made in the more public statements of the college's Magna Carta adopted in 1997, after all college constituencies were heard on the essential nature of unfettered inquiry.

The college seems genuinely concerned about academic honesty. It disseminates its policies in each semester's class schedules. As well as being online and in the SRJC catalog, the principles are enunciated in a student services brochure distributed at student orientation, and are available through Disability Resources and Student Affairs as examples of departmental delivery. Such materials are available in English and Spanish. Adequate measurement of understanding the provisions and consequences for violation of academic honesty has yet to be determined, and is a concern to be addressed at the vice presidential level by the end of academic year 2004-05.

The team found evidence of the college's understanding of and concern for issues of diversity through various curricular initiatives and a variety of special programs and services that serve and support an increasingly diverse student population. While the college appears committed to hiring faculty and staff from ethnically diverse backgrounds to reflect the growing student diversity, and has expressed significant concern over the lack of progress in this area, little has been done in terms of focusing attention or resources to address this lack of progress.

SRJC offers student participation in 11 men's and 9 women's varsity sports. The addition of women's varsity badminton planned for spring 2003 will further increase opportunities for female scholar-athletes. After a self-reported violation of recruitment rules during the 1998-99 academic year, the Athletic Department initiated a stringent internal and external examination of its entire program. All levels of responsibility were addressed and appropriate adjustments were made. The template that emerged was effective and could serve as a standard for similar review of athletic teams and programs.

The team observed that SRJC views its relationship with the Accrediting Commission seriously and is committed to fulfilling all standards, policies, and guidelines the Commission may require.

Conclusions:

The substantive requirements of Standard Two have been met by Santa Rosa Junior College. The college utilizes a wide variety of documents, both printed and electronic, to present itself to the public and students of Sonoma County. Policies regarding academic freedom, academic honesty, and student rights and responsibilities are clearly documented, available, and serve the college well.

As indicated in the Standard Two planning agenda, one area where additional focus and progress is needed is the college's efforts to hire faculty from ethnically diverse backgrounds to reflect the growing ethnic diversity in both the county and college population.

Recommendations:

1. Clearly demonstrate that issues of staff diversity in hiring and training are major priorities and commit attention and resources to affect change. (2.6, 7.D.2, 10.B.3)

### **Standard Three** **Institutional Effectiveness**

#### Observations:

Santa Rosa Junior College has made an honest and effective effort to develop a structure to make planning a critical function of the institution. All individuals and groups interviewed regarding this standard reiterated their personal and the college community's commitment to planning and decision making that is informed by data and research. The planning documents of the college serve as evidence of the college's focused commitment to addressing the mission and vision of the college as it relates to and supports the college's educational programs and support services. The college is working toward creating an organizational culture of decision-making that is based on data, research, and evidence of progress toward institutional goals and objectives. The members of the Standard Three Self Study Committee believed their investigation and report substantiate the college's commitment to program improvement through planning, research and evaluation.

The college published a document titled "Institutional Master Plan" that identifies the planning effort of the institution as being dynamic and ongoing. It documents the two years of planning that went into creating the document and the use of component master plans and component goals as a critical feature of this document. The Institutional Master Plan also synthesizes the component plans and goals to ensure they are integrated into the planning and decision-making efforts of the college. The plan also includes a statement of core values and a matrix of planning process or flow.

The college created an Institutional Research Office with three full-time staff members assigned as a part of its response and commitment to creating a data driven, planning and decision-making environment. The college also established a Research Advisory Group with component representatives to ensure the planning efforts of the component areas were integrated into the college's master planning efforts. The planning process includes an evaluation and assessment by the Institutional Planning Council (IPC).

The IPC participates in developing the goals of the institution, which guide the goals developed by component areas of the college. The goals of the IPC and the component areas are expected to address and relate to the mission statement of the college. Each component area submits a report to the president on its progress toward accomplishing its goals with an explanation of how they interface with the college's mission statement and goals. The evaluation of progress toward goals and related improvements occur at the component level. However, it is possible for component areas to initiate program improvements without direct communication or coordination with other component areas.

The college's Institutional Master Plan includes all planning efforts and documents developed by the institution. The individual planning efforts are summarized and a synthesis of the plans are written and included in the Institutional Master Plan as a guide for additional planning or program reviews. The master plan for each component area includes priorities for each component area. The Institutional Master Plan summarizes these plans and creates

an institutional priority list. Although the college develops a list of priorities for improvement, it is unclear how these priorities relate to the decision making or resource allocation process of the college. The component areas may or may not receive additional resources based on an institutional priority list, and it is more common for individual component areas to assume the responsibility of identifying resources to address program improvements.

The matrix the college developed to outline its decision making process did not clearly outline or define the resource allocation process of the college. Interviews conducted as a part of this standard indicated that resource allocations occur at different committee levels, without clear communication or interaction between committees. Committees identified as having the authority or responsibility to allocate resources are faculty staffing, classified staffing, equipment and facilities allocation, bond fund, and computer allocation. There appeared to be some confusion among people interviewed related to these committees as to how they related to the role and function of Institutional Planning Council (IPC) or the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC).

The college recognizes it has not evolved or developed its institutional/organizational planning or research culture to a level of documenting its work toward achieving specified institutional outcomes. The Institutional Research Office of the college is relatively new and is in the process of creating a culture of trust for the data and information generated by that office. The Institutional Research Office has developed a fact book that is seen by all interviewed as an asset to the planning efforts of the college. Several people interviewed stated they were more likely to use the data mining process of the college to support their planning efforts. They did not feel they had sufficient experience with the research office fact book to rely totally on the information contained in that book. The college develops and publishes program reviews, written by each component area of the college. Information from these program reviews is used to improve programs and services and to communicate with the college and surrounding community. The college president holds an annual event/dinner where he communicates institutional information to members of the college and the local community. It is unclear how ongoing planning information is communicated to members of the college in an environment that fosters conversation between the leadership of the institution and the college community. The component administrators are expected to communicate to managers in their areas without a clear plan or process for ensuring information is communicated to line staff members.

The planning process of the college is characterized as being dynamic and ongoing. The matrix of the flow of the planning process includes the involvement of the research office and an evaluation and review process at the component and IPC levels. The process outlines indicate a continuous and ongoing effort of review and assessment.

### Conclusions:

The college has developed a planning structure that demonstrates and confirms their commitment to planning and informed decision making. The planning structure includes

formal input from appropriate component leaders and constituent groups of the college. The planning matrix developed by the college allows interested individuals to track the college's planning and decision making process. The work of the college results in the publication of an integrated planning document, which outlines the planning initiatives of all units of the institution and a summary of the relationships and implications of these planning initiatives. The college has clearly identified its core values statement, vision statement, mission statement, and its institutional goals, as well as the link and relationship between each of them. As a result of this effort, the college has made changes in a number of areas, as evidenced by the creation of a Schools Relations Coordinator and the development of revised and new majors.

The information provided in the planning documents of the college address a number of institutional concerns, as is evidenced in the planning statements related to the Petaluma campus. Although the college has made tremendous progress in this area, there is still a sense of staff and faculty wanting to increase their access to information and data generated by research and other operations to inform decision making and planning efforts at the component and institutional level. The master plan and component plans of the college include information on the goals, objectives, work activities and timelines of initiatives and goals included as a part of the plans. The college also publishes a fact book, developed by the Institutional Research Office, to assist units in their planning effort.

The program reviews of the college include a program profile that details the assessment effort of each department and provides a checklist to guide the development of program reviews. The development of program profiles and work plans for each unit are evidence of the college's commitment to creating change and successful movement toward improving programs and services and accomplishing institutional goals.

Although the college has made significant progress toward developing an institutional culture that uses data to support its planning effort, significant concern was expressed by a number of people interviewed regarding the relationship between planning and resource allocations. It is generally believed by a number of people of the college that there needs to be a clear process developed that allows resources (facilities, staffing, equipment, dollars) to be allocated as a result of the planning and decision making structure of the college.

#### Recommendation:

2. Develop processes to assure that resource allocation decisions are linked to planning efforts and support the goals and priorities identified in the college's Institutional Master Plan. (3.B.3, 4.D.1, 9.A.1)

## **Standard Four** **Educational Programs**

### Observations:

The responses to the Standard Four substandards were well organized and sufficiently detailed. The self study report identified areas for improvement and plans for continuous evaluation. As the college is attempting to evolve into an institution that relies on “a culture of evidence,” the visiting team noted that greater emphasis needs to be placed on the regular collection and analysis of data to shape short-term and long-term educational planning.

The college meets the varied educational needs of its students by offering a wide array of courses, including 2,800 degree-applicable courses, 495 non-degree-applicable courses, and 233 noncredit courses. Currently, the institution offers more than 120 degrees and certificates. Each year approximately 1,100 students transfer, 1,800 receive degrees, and 800 receive occupational certificates of 18 units or more.

SRJC provides students with an opportunity to fulfill degree or certificate requirements within a reasonable time period. Course offerings are scheduled in flexible formats (e.g., online and in nontraditional time formats). For example, many off-campus programs offer computer science classes in six-week, eight-week, and traditional semester-length formats. The Police Academy, for instance, is offered through an intensive 20-week format as well as an 11-month program. Flexibility is aimed at providing students with accelerated experiences so that degrees and certificates can be completed within a reasonable time period. In this context, courses in human resources and business management are scheduled on weekends and allow students to complete certificates within nontraditional time frames. Additionally, the team confirmed that program advising sheets are updated by the Transfer Center on an ongoing basis. The team also noted that the annual Student Guide distributed by the Counseling Department includes certificate and degree information, a transfer flow chart, associate degree requirements, and general education requirements.

To better serve students’ educational needs, the general education task force has recommended a modified general education pattern that includes new requirements in American culture/ethnic studies, environmental awareness, and information competency. In addition, in an effort to strengthen the sequencing of courses within degrees, students seeking degrees must choose a major. At the time of the team visit, thirty-nine majors have been approved by the Majors Committee and submitted to the Curriculum Review Committee.

In the occupational areas, discipline faculty scan the external environment by relying on industry advisory boards to identify workforce needs and ensure that programs meet current industry needs. The occupational programs rely on data from the UI Wage data and vocational program core measures to track the success of graduates exiting the occupational programs.

Because 60% of the college’s students who undergo assessment place in basic skills courses, a new English developmental pathway has been developed to better align college skills and

ESL courses with the English curriculum. Moreover, collaboration between counselors and college skills faculty provides support for students to transition from basic skills into college-level courses. Similarly, the development of course materials relevant to the 100-level student is intended to aid students in the transition to degree courses by introducing students to critical thinking and to discipline-specific content in the liberal arts. The college employs innovative curricular strategies to bridge students into degree-level courses through college success courses, learning communities, and thematic links in clusters of courses.

As was substantiated by the Student Services Survey, 92% of respondents indicated that they had a favorable experience with counseling services. The team noted that academic advising programs meet student needs. There is also collaboration and training for counselors and faculty advisors to ensure superior advising services for students.

In an effort to improve the college's services to nontraditional and underrepresented students, including the growing Latino population, outreach activities as well as tutorial services have been expanded through programs provided by MESA, PUENTE, and joint activities of the Transfer and Career Centers.

While the college has in place a program discontinuance policy, no program has been totally eliminated. Instead, enrollment data reported in the Program Evaluation and Planning (PEP) documents serve as the framework for identifying program deficiencies and improvement plans to build enrollments and ensure program currency. The timely completion of these plans in a two-year cycle, therefore, acts as a trigger mechanism that leads to program modification and intervention rather than program discontinuance. However, the institution acknowledges the need to arrive at a consistent procedure to inform students of significant program changes.

The college has implemented an educational planning process that identifies staffing (full-time faculty and classified staff), equipment, and facilities needs. However, the team has validated that there is some confusion among some constituencies about the linkage between departmental planning and resource allocation. There is overall agreement that the staffing prioritization process is well understood and has enabled the institution to provide resources to hire full-time faculty. On the other hand, there is overall recognition that there is no clear process to request additional classified staff. In the area of technology, the Strategic Master Plan for Technology identified as a top priority to provide students with access to appropriate technology. In this context, in the 2002 academic year, \$700,000 will be allocated to upgrade student computer labs. While institutional leaders emphasize that resource allocation takes place at the unit level (e.g., academic affairs, student services, administrative services, etc.), some faculty groups have identified the need to close the feedback loop by more closely communicating the alignment of resource allocation to educational priorities and pedagogical needs.

Santa Rosa Junior College reaches out to its community by offering its program and services at various locations throughout the district. Comprehensive degree and certificate programs consistent with the college's mission, are offered at the Santa Rosa and Petaluma campuses. A brand new Public Safety and Training Center houses such programs as fire technology,

administration of justice, and emergency medical training. This impressive facility provides a superior learning environment for students enrolled in public safety training and exemplifies a solid partnership between the college and the public safety agencies in the surrounding communities. The Academic Affairs Educational Plan identified the need to improve the scheduling and offerings at the off-campus centers. Nonetheless, the team confirmed that the college has a commitment to maintain a presence through various off-campus centers. In addition, the visiting team validated the self study recommendation to improve the allocation of resources to address the growing needs of the Petaluma Campus.

SRJC enjoys strong partnerships within the community that contribute to the success of its educational programs. These partnerships are forged on a foundation of fruitful collaboration and sharing of resources. Some exemplary programs that benefit from such partnerships include the agriculture program. With the aid of the Agriculture Trust Committee, funds were raised in the amount of \$400,000 to build a classroom at the Shone Farm. Another exciting venture is the Technology Academy at the Petaluma campus. This Academy was borne out of keen collaboration between the college and the telecommunications industry. Finally, through a grant from the Kellogg Foundation, a joint certificate program will be developed in the areas of sustainable agriculture, culinary arts, and nutrition. In addition, the culinary arts program has partnered with the Sonoma County Wineries Association to support the expansion of the culinary arts training program. Within ninety days, it is expected that the culinary arts program will be relocated to the Brickyard Center as an interim step toward its eventual relocation to the Sonoma County Food and Wine Center. The team recognizes the mutual benefits from such partnerships and commends the college for its innovative cooperative ventures.

SRJC's Curriculum Handbook, along with the Curriculum Technical Review Feedback document, provides faculty with clear guidelines designed to aid faculty with the curriculum approval process. Programs being submitted for approval must demonstrate a coherent design that takes into account length, breadth, depth, and course sequencing. The team observed through interviews with numerous faculty that SRJC faculty take pride in the curriculum process and are concerned about rigor and adherence to standards. The CRC expects that each course outline reflects quality sufficient for students to obtain course objectives, is rigorous and effective, demonstrates an integrated approach in instructional objectives and assignments, and is current in texts and materials. In this context, the Quadrennial Review was created to maintain the curriculum current and to engage faculty in continuous curriculum improvement processes. However, as the self study indicated, the Quadrennial Review has not been fully implemented since there is no tracking mechanism for compliance with this requirement. While the CRC has explicit published standards for consistency and rigor for all courses and program, a higher level of scrutiny could be attained by incorporating course review within the PEP process. The team suggests that a system be developed to ensure adherence to the Quadrennial Review process.

Individual discipline faculty verify student mastery of knowledge and skills in its degrees and certificates in the context of an examination of instructional objectives and learning objectives contained in the course outlines. Student competence in language and computation or critical thinking is defined in terms of assessment characterized by grades

awarded or scores in standardized licensing exams. Specialized occupational programs that require an external review process (POST) or passing a state certification test (nursing) have more explicit learning outcomes. The planning agendas in the self study clearly indicate the need to define and measure student outcomes at the course and program level. However, through interviews with the faculty leadership, it is evident that it is imperative to garner faculty support to move toward a systematic plan to assess learning outcomes. Equally important is the need to incorporate output data into the program review process such as transfer data, retention data, and persistence data. While program plans have primarily focused on enrollment data, there is recognition by some campus groups of the need to incorporate outcomes assessment into the program planning process.

All degree programs require that students complete 23 units of general education applicable to the associate degree, full certification of 39 units applicable to CSU general education certification, or full certification of the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC). This information is clearly published in the college catalog and in other publications available to students.

The general education program has undergone considerable review, and three new degree requirements have been approved. Moreover, the General Education Task Force has identified the need to focus on the number and nature of GE offerings within each area in order to improve the overall coherence of the GE pattern. The Academic Affairs Educational Plan also identified the need to open dialogue among faculty about the interrelationship among the various general education courses. Efforts to strengthen general education have focused on providing greater connections among the various GE disciplines and developing a system for identifying learning outcomes for general education.

The visiting team confirmed that SRJC meets the standard regarding the process for establishing and evaluating its programs. It is also evident that faculty play a central role in developing and approving curriculum. SRJC's curriculum committee is to be commended for its impressive work in reviewing over 1,000 curriculum submissions, conducting approximately 800 technical reviews of all curriculum submissions, completing over 590 course and program approvals, and reviewing and approving approximately 161 prerequisites, co-requisites, and advisories. Another improved curriculum feature is that course outlines for proposed and approved courses are available electronically to district employees. The visiting team validated that course outlines are available to the public via the college's website.

In terms of distance education, there exists a process for the review and approval of distance education courses. Currently, the college offers 126 courses online and 191 sections have been offered through the online modality. Consistent with the clearly stated expectations of the CRC, there is a process in place for the review and approval of distance education courses. More importantly, such a review adheres to the Commission's Principles of Good Practice, including the requirement that delivery of courses and programs through electronic means is consistent with the institution's mission and that review and approval processes meet course and program objectives. Another key consideration is that online courses result in learning outcomes appropriate to the breadth and rigor of the course. Some preliminary

research has demonstrated that students' retention is comparable between traditional classrooms and online courses. As the college continues to gather data about course completions in the online environment, these data can be incorporated into the departmental PEP process. Some college constituencies have suggested that there is a need to incorporate retention and programmatic information about the context of online delivery modes within the PEP process.

The team validated that the college's programs, both credit and noncredit, are designed, administered, and evaluated under established institutional practices. Noncredit courses are approved by the curriculum committee. Similarly, noncredit instructors are hired and evaluated following established district procedures. The primary and most prevalent of the noncredit programs, the one for older adults, is a continuing expanding program with 450 sections per semester and approximately 85 instructors.

While the faculty evaluation process is intended to ensure the ongoing and systematic assessment of instructional quality, the visiting team discovered that the college does not have a system for tracking evaluations for all categories of staff including faculty.

The visiting team recognizes that SRJC has a well-documented program of articulation with senior institutions. Summary articulation data reveal that as of September 2002, SRJC has a total of 1,455 by major articulation agreements with state colleges and universities and 990 articulation agreements by departments identified by the receiving institution. Given the continuous updating of articulation agreements, a system for disseminating articulation information for counselors has been recommended as a self study action plan.

### Conclusions:

Through a thorough review of institutional documents and many interviews with district personnel, it is evident that SRJC is in compliance with Standard Four. The self study planning agendas provide direction for the college to engage in short-term and long-term planning and to create a framework for continuous improvement. Implementation of the identified plans will require the following: (1) monitoring the impact of the revised developmental sequence in terms of student success data such as improved retention and transition into college-level courses; (2) clarifying the relationship among the various plans (PEP, profile summaries, educational plans, Institutional Master Plan); (3) strengthening the linkages between planning and resource allocation by clearly articulating the rationale for resource allocation; (4) incorporating a thorough review of online modalities as part of the PEP process; and (5) assembling a group of faculty and campus leaders to devise a system for identifying and articulating learning outcomes.

In an attempt to respond to the recommendations of the last accreditation team to pay serious attention to the planning process, the institution has developed elaborate and well-designed planning processes. However, it is less evident how research frames and guides plans and how the convergence of the various plans is connected to the budget allocation process.

While the Office of Institutional Research provides leadership in documenting and analyzing student performance indicators in response to state reporting requirements, it is suggested that SRJC fully embrace the concept of developing a culture of evidence by incorporating the assessment of learning outcomes as a top priority. While efforts have been underway to begin to train faculty in outcomes assessment, the institution must seize the opportunity not to lose momentum after completion of this accreditation cycle. Early adopters of the assessment of learning outcomes such as the representatives of the Developmental Education and ESL Task Force have begun to examine basic skills course completions to redesign the developmental English pathways. It is suggested that the institution identify a core group of leaders to carry out the task of developing a system for the assessment of learning outcomes. Similar to the already well-established curriculum review process, the definition and assessment of learning outcomes must be central to the educational review process. Student retention and success data must also be clearly incorporated into the educational planning process. In this context, it is important to align more closely the activities of institutional research with the educational planning process.

Recommendation:

See Standard Three, Recommendation 2.

## **Standard Five** **Student Support and Development**

### Observations:

Santa Rosa Junior College recruits and admits students appropriate to its programs. It identifies and meets the diverse needs of its community and its students by providing programs and services that address the educational, career, and personal development needs of the students it serves. The college addresses issues related to student access in a number of ways. This is evidenced by its focus on increasing student access by offering admission information in Spanish, streamlining the admission form for noncredit students, and the creation of a Relations with School Coordinator.

College publications are consistent with its vision and mission statements, and its programs and services align with the approved policies and procedures of the college. The student services area of the college provides a number of pathways for prospective and currently enrolled students to receive information regarding access, retention, and successful movement toward their educational and career goals. All appropriate policies and procedures are located in the college catalog and the student guide. However, it was difficult to locate a copy of the student grievance procedure for the college. The catalog has some information regarding the college's grievance procedures, but it does not tell students where they can get a copy of the actual policies and the appropriate grievance form. Additionally, it is difficult to locate the college's policies or procedures related to student discrimination complaints in the college catalog. The information related to student discrimination complaints is located under the title of "Matriculation".

Santa Rosa has a number of dedicated staff and faculty who are committed to meeting the educational and support service needs of its students and potential students. The college offers a number of services and programs (i.e. Puente, MESA, DSPS, online support services, high school outreach, Financial Aid Office, Health Services, Reentry Program, Transfer Center, and EOPS) to assist students in reaching their educational and career goals. The college offers appropriate programs and services critical to assisting its currently enrolled and prospective students in experiencing success. Particularly noteworthy is the Doyle Scholarship Program. An additional observation of student-centered behavior is a suggestion box located in the college bookstore.

The areas within student services do an excellent job of planning. This is evidenced in the Student Services Master Plan, the Student Services Program Review and the component plans that drive decision making in student services. The planning bodies in student services include a seat for student representatives. According to students, their input is valued and they feel welcomed, although students recognize it is sometimes difficult for them to be on-going participants in the planning process. To ensure student involvement in the accreditation process, a class was created and students could enroll in a course and receive college credit for participating in the self study process.

The Admission and Records office complies with all regulations and requirements related to the security and confidentiality of student records. The A&R office is committed to increasing student access, as evidenced in its work with a student focus group to solicit input in order to create a user-friendly registration form for noncredit student registration. This effort is intended to address concerns related to older adults and ESL students in the noncredit program.

The office of Matriculation and Student Development is recognized as an important function of the college, as evidenced by the allocation of \$300,000 in state Partnership for Excellence funds to offset state reductions to matriculation funding. The assessment and placement process follows established guidelines and requirements, and the college is engaged in ongoing discussion regarding the assessment process and appropriate instruments for testing. The college allows students an opportunity to review the placement test prior to their scheduled time to take the exam in order to reduce test anxiety. The Matriculation and Student Development Office appears to be working with the Institutional Research Office to establish ongoing evaluation of the outcomes of the assessment process.

The services of the Santa Rosa campus are decentralized as a result of the space limitations and growth of the college. The college is aware of issues and concerns regarding limited space for student services at its Petaluma campus. SRJC is also aware of the myriad difficulties student experience as a result of limited resources and has language addressing these concerns in its Facilities Master Plan. Evidence of SRJC awareness and planned response can be found in the student services program review priorities and the Institutional Facilities Master Plan. The college is known as a leader in exploring new delivery systems using existing and new technologies.

The college offers a number of activities, including a student information day to assist students in identifying available services and the location of offices. The Student Affairs office uses students to conduct regular tours of the campus for all interested students and community members. These two efforts assist the college in addressing students' concern regarding the decentralization of services at SRJC. The college supports an associated students office and space for college clubs. There were several posters and flyers posted around the college indicating a healthy campus climate for the students, staff and faculty members. The student handbook, titled "Student Guide", and other information created for distribution to students, supports the college's claims of fostering a healthy intellectual, and ethical environment and promoting personal responsibility. The students interviewed regarding this standard agreed with the colleges self study statements regarding a student-centered environment. Students said they felt the instruction and services of the college were high quality and fostered a positive learning environment.

### Conclusions:

The team was able to validate that the self study document accurately identified the accomplishments, issues, concerns and practices of the student service area of the college and that the college meets the intent and purpose of Standard Five. All of the people interviewed

as a part of this standard were clear about their commitment to students and the college. There is an obvious sense of pride in the services and focus on students, and the staff and faculty of student services are actively examining and evaluating the quality and impact of their work with students. They are also aware of and developing services focused on the growing Spanish speaking student enrollment. The commitment of the staff and faculty of student services includes involving and engaging students in appropriate committees and groups. The students interviewed regarding this standard said seats are reserved for them on all appropriate committees of the campus, but they are concerned with the occasional conflicts with classes or their student government meeting.

The college is commended on its decision to address the issue of access by reviewing the application for noncredit students, placing kiosks on high school campuses and allowing students an opportunity to review placement exams. The planning efforts of student services have resulted in clear and concise documents such as the Student Services Master Plan and Student Services Program Review. Both of these planning documents provide input and information to members of the student service areas and the college-at-large regarding the goals and priorities of individual student service programs. The college is commended for the detailed work that has been done in the area of student services planning.

Although the college has a policy related to student grievances, it is not easy to locate in the college catalog or schedule of classes. The catalog has a reference to the policy and general information about who to see regarding a grievance, although it did not direct the student to the office(s) where the policy can be obtained or a detailed explanation of the process is available. Additionally, the college catalog and schedule of classes address the student discrimination complaint process under the heading of "Matriculation and Rights and Responsibility". While the team validated that SRJC is technically in compliance with the Standard Five subsection related to student complaints and grievances, it is strongly suggested that the college provide more accessible and additional information in this regard to prospective and currently enrolled students. In particular, it should consider developing specific language in its catalog and schedule of classes related to both areas, using a more descriptive heading or title to assist students in understanding the college's practices related to grievances and discrimination complaints.

Recommendations:

None

## **Standard Six** **Information and Learning Resources**

### Observations:

Print and electronic resources appear to be sufficient at the Santa Rosa campus. At the Petaluma campus, print materials are limited because of space constraints but all electronic resources are available. Space for learning resources on both campuses is inadequate, but will be addressed by the planned construction of the new library on the Santa Rosa campus and at the Petaluma campus in the second phase of construction. The SRJC Technology Master Plan calls for a new automation system to replace the existing ten-year-old system.

The library follows a well-established process for the selection, acquisition, and cataloging of all types of instructional resources. The selection process responds directly to faculty and department needs. The library website provides access to print and electronic collections and links selected online information sites.

The Media Services area is driven by faculty requests, and provides a diverse collection of media and technical support to faculty while maintaining one of the highest service response rates on campus. Circulation of media materials is somewhat hampered because of lack of staff to maintain and catalog the collection. While space is insufficient to carry out repair and maintenance work, it is anticipated that construction of the new library will correct this deficiency.

Academic Computing is a valued resource to faculty in meeting their instructional computing objectives. Support to faculty includes assistance with computer technologies planning, evaluation, acquisition, and implementation. The college supports a wide range of instructional programs through a number of multi-curricular computer labs. Faculty and administrators participate directly in the proposal and acquisition process for academic computing equipment and materials through the annual instructional capital outlay process.

The Tutorial Center on the Santa Rosa campus is staffed by 17 instructional aides and approximately 50 student tutors in two temporary buildings. It is heavily used and serves 1,300 students each semester. Further development of the center is constrained by the limitations of staff and space. It is anticipated that the space problems will be alleviated with the building of the new library. Space for the Learning Assistance Center on the Petaluma campus, which is limited and inadequate in meeting student needs, will continue to be a problem until the second phase of construction is addressed.

MESA is located in a temporary building, which is inadequate and poorly designed for the services provided. This shortcoming will also be addressed with the construction and renovation of campus space now being planned.

The hours of the Santa Rosa and Petaluma libraries, Media Services, open computer labs, and the Tutoring Center maximize student and staff accessibility to their services, including accessibility to individuals with disabilities. The Santa Rosa campus library is ranked second

in the state for hours open per week according to a recent Chancellor's Office statistical report. The libraries have also expanded summer session hours during the past two years.

Staff in the various information and learning resource areas are highly qualified and have access to appropriate training opportunities. Some staff, however, expressed a need and interest in additional opportunities for training.

The college has provided sufficient financial support for the library collection, although additional funding from the general fund was required to augment cuts in the state allocations in 2001-02. In Media Services, the change in the capital outlay process for acquisition of media equipment places more responsibility for selecting equipment on each department and highlights the need for a comprehensive assessment of all replacement needs. The goal to reduce the current computer replacement cycle from seven years to three to five years is now possible with the passage of the SRJC bond measure.

The information and learning resource units utilize a variety of assessment methods to evaluate their services. The library reported the results of student satisfaction surveys conducted by CSU and Student Services, in which the Santa Rosa library ranks very high. Media Services depends on feedback from units it serves, which judge Media Services to be very effective. Evaluation of Academic Computing and the Tutorial Center is done annually through the Academic Affairs' program evaluation and planning process.

#### Conclusion:

Overall, information and learning resources are sufficient in all areas, and the team was able to validate that SRJC is in compliance with Standard Six. Instructional materials and equipment are sufficient in all units. However, all units report staffing deficiencies, and most areas report problems with inadequate space to provide services to students and staff. As outlined in the planning agendas, it is suggested that SRJC give attention to considering the staffing needs described in the self study as resources become available. Resolution of space problems should occur with the planned construction of the new library on the Santa Rosa campus and phase two of construction at Petaluma.

The Library, Media Services and Academic Computing have established equipment selection and acquisition procedures that involve input from the users of their services and assures the appropriateness of their acquisitions.

Assessment is conducted by each unit. However, with the exception of Media Services, it is not clear if the information is systematically utilized by the units in a way that results in appropriate changes in resources and services.

#### Recommendations:

None

## **Standard Seven** **Faculty and Staff**

### Observations:

The SRJC faculty and staff have provided exceptional service to growing numbers of students throughout the college's varied campus sites. The college community has, however, identified concerns regarding the sufficiency of the number of classified staff both at the Petaluma campus and at some departments on the Santa Rosa campus. The Petaluma campus also has an unusually high percentage of part-time faculty. The self study suggests that this condition impedes the development of a cohesive instructional community. With continued enrollment growth and plans for additional facilities, staffing issues will become more intense. Concern has been expressed about the lack of personnel to support weekend and evening classes. Lack of access to copying services, health, and other student services were cited as issues of concern.

Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selecting all personnel are clearly stated, public, directly related to institutional objectives, and accurately reflect job responsibilities. Hiring processes appear to be well defined and hiring committees appear to function with integrity and in a timely fashion.

The College recently completed a comprehensive program to reclassify classified positions to more accurately reflect work requirements. This reclassification resulted in an increased number of job descriptions and a more accurate profile of actual work. The committee commends the college for its reclassification study, which more accurately defines the work of its classified staff.

This large institution with its multiple campuses has unique challenges in recruiting, managing, and assessing personnel. There is adequate evidence of inclusive performance evaluation in some groups, but the areas of faculty and classified staff evaluations have been identified as issues requiring attention. While the nontenured faculty members appear to have appropriate and timely evaluations, there are significant issues regarding evaluations of tenured faculty and classified personnel. It has been suggested that the process for regular faculty evaluations may be too cumbersome. The District Tenure Review Committee has reviewed and revised the evaluation procedure for regular faculty with the goal of establishing a simpler but effective process. The evaluations of classified staff appear to be inconsistent and untimely throughout the college. Procedures for evaluations in the college's multi-campus organization are either confusing or inconsistent. The self study reports a long list of past due evaluations for both regular faculty and classified employees. The self study suggests that the district establish an accountability system for timely evaluations.

The college staff development program provides rich opportunities for professional growth. Motivation and retention of students is an important and necessary focus of staff development. The lack of anticipated state funding will necessitate the re-thinking of staff development priorities and goals. Some staff expressed concern that more attention should be paid to classified staff development, including support for their efforts through released

time or other incentives at the departmental level. Managers may need to become more active in encouraging and facilitating active involvement of classified staff in staff development programs.

The college is part of a diverse community and the students reflect that diversity, but the current faculty does not. The faculty and staff have grown by significant numbers but underrepresented groups have grown to a lesser degree. Women faculty have experienced the greatest advance, having increased from 33% to 47% of the regular faculty since 1991. Other underrepresented groups have experienced only modest percentage gains and as a result, the diversity of the staff less and less reflects the diversity of the community. The college has begun to explore efforts to widen the pool of underrepresented candidates, such as the STAR recruitment website and their “Valuing Diversity” workshops. The efforts are encouraging, but the results have been somewhat disappointing. While the Staff Diversity Committee should play an important role in shaping and defining action plans for faculty and staff diversity, a more intensive, all-inclusive, and creative effort is needed to provide the proper impetus in creating opportunities for underrepresented groups at Santa Rosa.

### **Conclusions:**

Santa Rosa Junior College has met most of the requirements of Standard Seven. There is a large population of seasoned, dedicated, and student-oriented faculty who are engaged with energy in the educational process. The reputation for excellence is based on student input and reflected in the strong support of the community.

The faculty and classified staff evaluation process needs scrutiny and reassessment. The large backlog of past due evaluations needs to be addressed. Until it is, the college is not fully in compliance with Standard Seven B.1. The process should be scrutinized and a more accountable and defined process should be implemented. The college has experienced unusual growth, which has resulted in an increasing imbalance of part-time to full-time faculty ratios. Notable in this regard is the Petaluma Campus. This growth and other factors have also resulted in a notable shortage of classified support personnel in many areas.

Staff development activities are threatened by the shortage of state funding. The staff development program needs to carefully assess offerings and focus on those activities that emphasize teaching improvement and more effective support services.

The College has invested much time and energy in accomplishing its goals with regard to diversity. To date these efforts have borne limited fruit. The underrepresented population has grown by small increments as the faculty and staff have expanded more dramatically. The college needs to address this issue with intensity. The community has become more diverse; the college community needs to echo that diversity.

Recommendations:

3. Develop a performance evaluation system for each employee group that eliminates the backlog of overdue evaluations and clearly defines timelines, accountability, criteria, purposes, and desired outcomes of evaluation. (7.B.1, 7.B.2, 7.B.3)

Also, see Standard Two, Recommendation 1

## **Standard Eight** **Physical Resources**

### Observations:

Santa Rosa Junior College is a strikingly beautiful campus, engendering a source of pride for the students it serves, the staff who work there, and the city and county in which it resides. The college environment is well maintained and conducive to learning. While the campus is bounded on all sides by urban barriers, the pervasive feeling within its boundaries is that of a turn-of-the-century village set in a glade of heritage oaks.

Still, there were issues of significant concern raised in the SRJC self study. The challenge of the rapidly growing Petaluma campus (17 miles south of the main campus) will test the SRJC capital projects vision. The state Chancellor's Office approval of the Final Project Proposal for Petaluma means the preliminary architectural drawings will be funded in 2003 as the next phase of the build-out of the Petaluma site.

There is collegewide expectation that the passage of local Measure A and its \$251.7 million general obligation bond will yield additional classrooms, office space for faculty and staff, and technology upgrades to support the SRJC educational programs. It is also expected that the 16 relocatable buildings on the Santa Rosa campus that exceed 25 years in age will be replaced.

A recent addition to the Santa Rosa campus, funded in part by private gifts, is the superb new William Race Health Sciences building that houses all health sciences and student health services programs. Another recently completed project is the equally impressive Public Safety Training Center 9 miles to the north of the main campus in Windsor. These two recently opened facilities contribute over 80,000 assignable square feet of state-of-the-art space for a growing community.

The college is keenly aware that significant understaffing remains a persistent problem in maintenance, custodial, and grounds services. As new capital projects move forward, existing infrastructure ages. Without increases in skilled maintenance and custodial staff, already working at more than 35% over industrial standards, the college cannot hope to keep up with campus workloads, to say nothing of scheduled maintenance/repair/renovation. The college needs to ensure that planning for new construction and staffing for proposed facilities go hand in hand.

The college demonstrates that addressing health, safety, and security issues is a significant priority. While there are still concerns over the district's many and varied county sites, the college leadership has committed to an ongoing oversight which has yielded, and promises to further yield, promising results. The District Emergency Preparedness Plan (revised Summer 2002), and the awareness of physical access issues are examples of this leadership. Environmental health, police department, and student services complement staff all feel a part of the consultative processes involved in the creation and maintenance of a safe and

healthful college environment. In response to a longstanding parking problem at SRJC, a consulting firm is currently drafting a comprehensive plan to address that need.

The self study was quite frank in assessing its needs for inventory control and a completed comprehensive campus master plan. Since the self study, SRJC has completed a fixed asset inventory, begun work on a comprehensive physical campus master plan, and engaged the services of an appropriate consultant to that end. The end of the current academic year is the target date for the completion of this master plan.

Conclusions:

The Accreditation Team concludes that the physical resources needs of SRJC are, on the whole, being substantively addressed and that the college meets the requirements of Standard Eight. With district assignable square footage spread over the large Santa Rosa campus, an evolving Petaluma campus, and over 60 additional off-campus sites, the issues of coverage in personnel, technology, maintenance, and safety are massive. Nevertheless, SRJC is committed to and successfully implementing an educational vision that is definable in physical terms to its varied constituencies. For that countywide commitment, SRJC is to be specifically commended.

Recommendations:

None

## **Standard Nine** **Financial Resources**

### Observations:

Financial planning at the college happens at many levels. The annual budget process begins in the departments and is filtered up through the administration to the Vice President of Business Services. Department staffs are allowed input into allocation of discretionary funds before submitting to the next level. The Budget Advisory Committee is a shared governance committee that reviews the assumptions used in budget development and disseminates information to the college community. After adjustments are made to reflect the state budget, the tentative and final budgets are taken to the Board for approval as required. This process is distributed to staff through the budget calendar each year and is widely understood and followed. While the budget planning process is well understood, the linkage between budget planning and other institutional planning activities is vague, informal, and not well understood by members of the college community.

A fiscal stability report was completed in 2001 to analyze the financial history of the college as well as project future trends in funding, enrollment, and expenditures. This report is available on the college website and is used in budget development as well as contributing to the college's Fact Book.

Allocation of new funds such as Partnership for Excellence and equipment funds are distributed through a proposal process. Departments submit requests for funds with specific dollar amounts. This process has been improved to filter through the management to assure compatibility with departmental and institutional goals.

Physical facility planning is updated each year by providing a five-year capital outlay plan to the state. It identifies long-term needs for new buildings that are based in the institutional master plan. Extended facility planning was done to prepare for placing a general obligation bond measure on the ballot. The passage of the bond will provide funds to maintain and expand the colleges many locations to meet future needs. The fixed asset inventory has been completed including useful lives and depreciation calculations in preparation for GASB 34/35 implementation.

The financial management system appears to provide adequate, timely information to staff and is currently being upgraded to accommodate online requisition processing and tracking. Information is available to departments both online and through printed reports, and special requests are accommodated through the accounting office. An evaluation of the current system revealed the need to move to a fully integrated software system to provide more timely information, support institutional research, reduce duplication of efforts, and automate processes. The administration is at present reviewing the options and will be making a recommendation.

Financial documents fairly represent the financial status of the college. Quarterly reports are prepared, presented to the board, and forwarded to the state as mandated. The audit report

reflects strong internal controls and financial oversight over all district funds including financial aid, auxiliaries and foundations. The auxiliary activities of the college directly support the goals of the institution by providing funds for buildings, renovations, and student scholarships. The Race Health Sciences Building is a result, in part, of successful private fundraising by the foundation. The Doyle scholarship fund is also a source of pride and provides scholarships to thousands of students each year. There have been few audit findings in the last two years. Items relating to the financial aid transactions were addressed by evaluating and adjusting the staffing and management of the department.

Guidelines for contractual agreements are clearly outlined in board policy. A listing of all contracts is presented to the board for approval including the fiscal impact of the agreements. A conflict of interest code assures the integrity of employees and Board members who participate in material financial decisions.

The college annual budget accounts for all current obligations. A detail list of transfers is presented in the adopted budget and reserves are established to fund future obligations such as retiree health benefits and bond payments. It has been many years since the last study of the college's obligations for retiree health benefits study was completed. A new study would update the assumptions and provide a better calculation of the reserve required to fund the future liability.

The college belongs to several JPAs for insurance and maintains appropriate levels of coverage to minimize the risk from liability and property damage. The unrestricted reserves are well above the state recommendation providing many years of fiscal stability and preparation for financial emergencies.

#### Conclusions:

The college financial resources are well managed and provide the fiscal stability necessary to meet the majority of elements of accreditation for Standard Nine.

Significant improvements in institutional planning have strengthened the already sound financial management. Processes are in place to bring together planning efforts in all departments of the college. The culmination of this planning is reflected in the Institutional Master Plan. While the document is complete, the next step is to tie this document to the financial planning of the institution.

Although the financial management system has served its purpose, the college would benefit from a fully integrated system incorporating finance, human resources, and student data. This need was identified and highlighted in the self study planning agenda.

The college has sustained financial stability by using a conservative approach to financial planning and maintaining more than adequate reserves. While the administration has been prudent, they have not been complacent towards future funding challenges. The current budget issues are openly discussed and communicated to the college community.

The team recognizes the administrative efforts in maintaining financial stability. Successful passage of the general obligation bond and fundraising efforts complement the abundant reserves in achieving financial success at the college. Their strong financial position will enable them to weather the upcoming state budget difficulties.

Recommendations:

See Standard Three, Recommendation 2.

## **Standard Ten** **Governance and Administration**

### Observations:

The team was able to validate that the Santa Rosa Junior College governing board is organized appropriately and provides stable policy-level leadership to ensure the quality of educational programs and the financial health and integrity of the college. Board policies appear to be comprehensive and generally current, and board orientation and performance assessment procedures are appropriate. A governing board member served on the Accreditation Steering Committee.

Based on an interview with board members, they are satisfied with the process for evaluating and establishing goals for the superintendent/president. The board solicits input regarding the superintendent/president's evaluation during its annual retreat. Goals are developed and distributed to the college community.

The current superintendent/president has served in the position for over 12 years. The effectiveness of his leadership and management is evidenced by the overall high level of quality and accessibility of programs and services, the financial strength, the positive climate, and the strong reputation and support within the community.

As validated by interviews with board members, the president of the faculty union, and a majority of the Standard Ten Committee members, the college has made significant progress in creating a strong spirit of collegial governance. The very high level of participatory involvement of faculty on committees was validated. The consensus opinion is that all 33 committees are functioning in a manner that allows for the timely completion of governance activities.

The college organization and staffing structure are similar to other large single college districts with multiple campuses and sites. The college recently revised the structure of the academic affairs area and has conducted and implemented comprehensive classification studies for both management and classified staff. In interviews with the Standard Ten committee members, however, there was a significant feeling that the administrative organization and staffing was insufficient, especially at the Petaluma campus.

Issues identified in the self study relative to the Petaluma campus were validated through interviews with faculty leadership and comments from participants who attended the session at Petaluma. One issue involves the department chair structure. SRJC prides itself in the effectiveness and efficiency of the department chair structure, and the scope of decisions regarding scheduling, staffing, planning and curriculum made at the department chair level. However, all the chairs are based at the Santa Rosa campus, which has created concerns about the role of the department chair, and a feeling of disenfranchisement on the part of Petaluma faculty and staff. There was also a general consensus among faculty who teach at the Petaluma campus that the Petaluma Faculty Forum concept has not worked very well.

However, feedback during the open forum suggests that faculty representatives on the Forum have not done a good job of communicating with their colleagues at the Santa Rosa campus.

There is a statement in section 10B.3 in the self study that refers to diversity. Specifically, the statement reads as follows, "The college is experiencing difficulty in attracting and retaining qualified faculty, staff, and administrators of diverse backgrounds. The high cost of living in Sonoma County is clearly a significant factor." This problem was validated by similar concerns expressed by administrative leadership, academic senate leadership, and the district's compliance officer. It was acknowledged that faculty has become more supportive of the institution's diversity goals.

College policies clearly state the role of classified staff in college governance, and opportunities for classified staff participation in governance roles have increased in recent years. However, interest in serving on committees is not very strong among classified staff members. According to classified union representatives, two issues serve as disincentives for greater classified participation in governance activities. First, it is alleged that middle managers are more concerned about "getting the job done," rather than finding creative ways to make it possible for classified staff to participate on committees. Second, released time and reassigned time is limited for classified staff.

Students have significant opportunities to participate in college governance, and the role of students is clearly stated in college policy. Students also serve on most hiring committees.

#### Conclusions:

The visitation team concludes that the college is in general compliance with Standard Ten. The college has made a tremendous amount of progress since the last team visit. With the exception of governance issues pertaining to the Petaluma campus, the college should be commended for making significant progress in the implementation of strong collegial governance processes. Working together in the spirit of collegiality, the campus community has done a magnificent job of dispelling negative perceptions about college governance.

The visitation team encourages the college to work harder to resolve governance issues expressed by the faculty who work at the Petaluma campus. This effort includes developing strategies that will create a stronger sense of empowerment for faculty, staff, and administrators at Petaluma.

In order to assure an effective learning environment that responds to the needs of an increasingly diverse student population, the college's leadership clearly understands the need to increase the ethnic diversity of the college faculty and staff. To date, however, little progress has been made in this regard, as noted in the observations and conclusions under Standard Two and Standard Seven. The self study planning summary calls for increased efforts to attract faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds, and the visitation team strongly supports this focus.

The visitation team suggests that the campus leadership develop strategies that will provide opportunities for classified staff to play a more meaningful role in governance activities. The classified union and the Classified Senate should find ways to work more collaboratively on governance issues.

Recommendations:

See Standard Two, Recommendation 1.