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STANDARD 1-INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND GOALS, PLANNING AND EFFECTIVENESS

Tacoma Community College hosted a full-scale Evaluation Team visit on April 14-16, 2004. The college was well-prepared for the visit and the team expresses its appreciation to the college for the gracious reception it received.

The Self-Study prepared by the college in advance of the team’s arrival was well done and reflected broad-based participation by all college constituencies. The college was candid in its appraisal of institutional strengths and weaknesses. The team was especially pleased to be able to confirm the representations in the Self-Study that Tacoma Community College is deeply committed to student success and that employees find the overall working culture to be respectful and supportive. The Evaluation Team did conclude, however, that the college’s own perception of the maturity of its educational assessment efforts may be exaggerated. (See General Recommendation #3).

As per Commission Policy A.5, the Evaluation Team did not receive any third party comments regarding the accreditation status of Tacoma Community College. Tacoma Community College is a comprehensive community college that serves the diverse educational needs of a growing urban center. It mission, at once simple and complex, charges the college to provide educational services that comprehensively address the varied needs of its diverse community. The college supplements its mission statement with a set of values that direct how its mission statement is to be accomplished.

The mission statement of the college was adopted in 1991 and formally reviewed in 1998. The statement of values was appended to the mission statement in 1998. The college is satisfied that the mission and values statement reflect current aspirations and appropriately direct college activities. The Evaluation Team concurs with the judgment of the college and further finds that it reflects the actual work of the college.

The college has also adopted a set of “Future Focus Priorities” (FFP’s). First adopted in 1998 and then revised in 2001, the FFP’s serve as the strategic planning focus of the college. They also represent the essential core of the college’s Institutional Effectiveness efforts.

FFP’s show up as key factors in the annual goal setting process of all managers. Managers are expected to develop annual work plans that reference one or more of the FFP’s.

Additionally, the college schedules regular progress reports on FFP’s at regular meetings of the district’s Board of Trustees. This continuous reporting cycle to the Board of Trustees ensures that FFP process receives ongoing scrutiny at the highest levels of the institution. Members of the Board of Trustees, when questioned, were knowledgeable at a satisfying level of detail about the FFP process and current progress on each of the priorities.

FFP’s are also featured in the Nichols assessment model used throughout the college. The
FFP process, however, has particular (but not exclusive) application to non-instructional units. These units use the FFP’s as building blocks for work plans. Finally, FFP’s are incorporated in the college’s budget development process. New budget initiatives are expected to demonstrate an explicit link to one of the FFP’s.

Taken as a whole, the FFP process works to ensure that the overall behavior of the college is focused, purposeful, and strategic. All too often strategic planning is a paper exercise that fails to actually guide the day-to-day life of an institution. This is not the case at TCC; the FFP process is a strong and vibrant part of the overall work of the college. TCC is commended for the strength and vitality of this planning process.

A strong and robust planning process does not always produce desired results. The FFP’s focus on increasing the number of full-time faculty at TCC has met with modest success. The effects of this disappointment are detailed in subsequent sections of this team report (see also, General Recommendation #2).

It is worth noting here that the Evaluation Team is very aware of the difficulty posed by General Recommendation #2. Tacoma Community College does not have the option of simply “printing money” in order to hire additional full-time faculty. Moreover, the Evaluation Team is also aware that the leadership of the college has not made a decision to avoid hiring additional full-time faculty while pursuing other objectives. Nevertheless, the Evaluation Team feels strongly that certain features of the academic program are badly frayed because the resources of the fulltime faculty cannot be stretched far enough to support basic student needs. As a single example, students and faculty alike cited many, many examples of student advising encounters that were shockingly inadequate. (ER 6, ER 7, Standard 3. D. 10, 2. C. 5). The Evaluation Team consciously avoided making recommendations that would require TCC to spend money it does not have. Rather, General Recommendation #2 has been carefully constructed to require that the college thoughtfully review its service options and then size its ambitions and efforts more closely to available resources.
STANDARD 2 – EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS

Overview

Tacoma Community College offers programs leading to a variety of degrees and certificates. The Associate of Arts and Sciences Option A degrees are transferable to most baccalaureate institutions in Washington. Associate of Arts and Sciences Option B degrees are designed to transfer to a specific program within a specific four-year college or university. The Associate of Science degree is intended for students pursuing science programs at four-year institutions. Tacoma Community College also offers an Associate of Applied Science, an Associate of Technical Arts – General, Associate in General Studies and a variety of certificate programs.

Educational programs are compatible with the institutional mission and goals. Tacoma Community College has an established process for developing new programs and courses, identifying curriculum changes and determining the degree requirements and course sequences. The Curriculum Committee, composed of faculty from across the organization and chaired by faculty, reviews new courses after they have been reviewed by department, division, and library faculty. Course syllabi clearly and consistently identify course objectives.

Some programs offer credit for prior learning options. There are systems in place to ensure the prior learning experiences equate to course learning outcomes and that students are prepared for the next steps in their education program.

TCC has identified six College-wide Student Learning Outcomes and these outcomes are infused in the outcomes and objectives of courses throughout the institution, as indicated on course syllabi. The Assessment Committee, composed predominately of faculty, effectively supports faculty in addressing assessment issues across the institution. The members of this committee are to be commended for the leadership role they play in helping faculty meaningfully assess classroom learning and improve teaching strategies as a result of assessment efforts.

Throughout instructional programs, institutional effectiveness efforts involving assessment of teaching and learning are documented, using the Nichols model. By requiring programs and departments to address assessment of at least one college wide learning outcome once every three years, continuous progress is made in assessing college wide outcomes.

There is a systematic and regular review plan for professional technical programs. Professional technical programs are reviewed once every three years and the process includes documented discussions about program outcomes, assessment strategies, and future plans for program improvements. Although this review process has some assessment components, it does not appear to be systemically tied to the educational assessment plan. This systematic review process is not required for other departments.

Instruction in Counseling and the Library is appropriately and routinely assessed. Both areas
have identified assessment research projects and documented teaching improvements resulting from the research.

It is evident that the College is doing extensive and effective assessment work at the course level and related to the six College-wide Student Learning Outcomes. This work is faculty driven and commendable. However, the educational assessment plan does not clearly and systematically address the identification, publication and assessment of program learning outcomes for each program, department and degree. Programs that have external accreditation processes more consistently have program student learning outcomes in place and published in formats available to students. Identified program assessment strategies are sometimes present. Some professional technical programs do not appear to have published student learning outcomes or assessment strategies in place. (2.B.2, 2.B.3, Policy 2.2)

The college does not have an overall plan for non-professional technical departments to complete regular program or department review processes that identify areas of need, program outcomes, or assessment strategies. This inconsistency should be corrected. (2.B.2, Policy 2.2)

The Self-Study appendices included college core of knowledge outcomes in social sciences, natural sciences, humanities, and quantitative skills (Appendix 2.3). Faculty in these areas appear unaware or confused about these outcomes and how they relate to classroom objectives and teaching. These Core of Knowledge outcomes are not systematically assessed. There is not a systematic method for departments offering transfer courses to get helpful information about performance of their students after transfer. (2.B.2, 2.B.3, Policy 2.2)

The college needs to strengthen its efforts to identify learning outcomes and assessment strategies at the program level, and develop methods for using data from the assessment to improve teaching and learning. (2.B.3) The work that the college has done on assessing college-wide student learning outcomes can provide a basis for moving to the program level and helping faculty assess and improve programs and departments.

**Human Services, Administration of Law and Justice, Paralegal, Paraeducation and Education, Human Development, Continuing Professional Education**

Human Services faculty demonstrate a strong and loyal commitment to quality learning experiences for students. The curriculum is built on 12 competencies from the Human Service Research Institute and the National Organization of Human Service Education. The program also includes 23 competencies required for completion of the Chemical Dependency certification. Faculty publish these program competencies in a program student handbook and infuses them into courses throughout the program. This crosswalk of competencies and courses is also published in the handbook. Assessment of these competencies is less clear, although general assessment strategies are in place. Faculty and advisory committee members use student and employer surveys, completed 6 to 12 months after hiring a graduate, to determine general satisfaction with the program. These surveys do not appear to address specific program competencies/outcomes, but rather satisfaction with the program as
a whole. More specific feedback is needed for faculty to be able to improve specific aspects of teaching and learning, based on program evaluation. (2.B.3)

There are three full-time faculty, two regular part-time faculty, and occasionally other part-time faculty teaching in the Human Services program. Faculty report a large advising load, sometimes as high as 50-60 students. The program is fortunate to have long-term faculty who are committed to the work of the institution. They have made program adjustments in response to student needs. The 15 credit Case Aide certificate was developed to meet the needs of WorkFirst funded students.

The faculty appraisal process for both part-time and full-time faculty is applied consistently and provides a method for identifying professional development plans for faculty. Faculty participate in regular professional development activities offered by the college and report that they are helpful and appropriate. The Part-time Faculty Institute was reported as particularly effective.

The Administration of Law and Justice and Paralegal programs share some common courses, resources, and are aligned in the same department. They are well connected with the corrections, law enforcement, and legal business communities.

Each program has one full-time faculty and several part-time faculty each term. One full-time faculty position is vacant and backfilled with part-time faculty. This has given the remaining faculty a very large advising load (100+ students). (Standards 3.D. 10, 2. C. 5. , 4.A.10)

The Administration of Law and Justice program is currently assessing community needs and employment viability to determine future directions for the program. The Paralegal program is preparing for accreditation through the American Bar Association. These activities are just two of many examples of the faculty’s commitment to maintaining the quality and currency of the programs.

Both programs have identified program competencies, although they do not appear to be published for students. The assessment strategies for these program competencies are not clearly identified. Consistent with many other areas on campus, course outcomes and assessment strategies appear strong, but program outcomes and assessment strategies are not clearly evident.(2.B.2) Improvement in the teaching and learning environment is based on student and employer surveys as well as advisory committee input. These assessment tools do not appear to be linked to the program competencies, but rather general satisfaction with graduates.

College Wide Student Learning Outcomes are infused throughout the program curriculum as evidenced in the course syllabi. A recent assessment project included analysis of student scores on a critical analysis assignment. Students struggling with the assignment appeared to have reading comprehension problems, so that is being addressed in future sections of the course.
Credit for Prior Learning is awarded for Police Academy Training (5 credits of internship). The content of the training was analyzed and the same criteria and standards as required by program curricula and college policy was applied to the alternative learning experience before credit was awarded.

Faculty evaluation processes are rigorous and documentation aligns with the processes outlined in the faculty-negotiated agreement. Faculty find the professional development plans helpful and see the evaluation process as formative as well as summative. Program chairs mentor and coach part-time faculty and have input into their evaluation.

In the Paraeducation program, one full-time faculty provides advising assistance, program coordination, and program development for the 175+ students preparing to be teachers and students preparing to be early childhood educators or paraeducators. All other faculty who teach in the program are part-time or full-time in another discipline and teaching an education related course. The college has shown its commitment to this program by increasing resources, although there is still a high dependency on part-time faculty. (4.A.10) The college has created a Center for Careers in Teaching, which assists students with course selection for efficient transfer and program information about the Paraeducator program.

The program has strong ties and partnerships with four-year institutions, local school districts, and child care providers. The program works cooperatively with other departments to develop courses that will meet the needs of education students. They have successfully developed a Math for Teachers course and are working on an Art appreciation course for teachers and an integrated science course. Beginning next year, a 12 credit learning community will be offered for education students. The creativity of the faculty and staff in securing resources and working in partnership with external agencies and other departments is to be commended.

The paraeducator curriculum is based on skill standards that are considered the program outcomes. These standards are not published in the college catalog or program materials that were reviewed. (2.B.2)

This program had recently completed a program review and used the recommendations from the program review as the intended outcome in their institutional assessment project, using the college’s modified Nichols process.

College-wide Student Learning Outcomes are addressed in course objectives and articulated to students on course syllabi.

Credit for Prior Learning is awarded if students have successfully achieved a Child Development Associate credential and completed 12 credit hours of the Paraeducator program. Processes for awarding credit for prior learning involve careful scrutiny of the learning experience to ensure that it meets the same standards as the classes taught through the program.

Counselors teach one or more human development courses each term. This allows counselors
to stay connected to the classroom teaching environment, which helps them work more closely with faculty and students. The counselors are involved in developing curriculum that helps students succeed and helps them gain skills in working cooperatively with others. The Human Development courses are evaluated by students each term and curriculum changes are made according to student input. College-wide learning outcomes are evident in course syllabi and assessment assignments.

For many years, counselors have taught several linked classes. The Managing Math Anxiety is an excellent example of regular assessment of learning followed by immediate curriculum and teaching improvements. Students provide daily feedback to faculty about the student’s progress and experiences in the class. Areas where students are struggling are quickly addressed and teaching strategies are adjusted as early as the next class session. This linked class is an exemplary example of meaningful assessment and immediate improvement in teaching and learning.

The counseling staff is commended for maintaining an instructional focus as part of their college goals and working closely with other departments and programs to help students succeed.

**Business Division**

The Tacoma Community College Business Division offers transfer instructional programs of study leading to an Associate of Arts and Science Degree, Option A or an Associate of Science Degree, Option B. Also offered are Professional Technical programs of study leading to Associate of Applied Science degrees and certificates.

The Tacoma Community College Option A degree is transferable to most baccalaureate institutions in Washington. Students planning to transfer to Evergreen State College or the University of Washington - Tacoma are also strongly advised to include at least one learning community, either coordinated studies or linked course work, in their degree program.

In addition, there is a proposed Associate in Business degree in the TCC approval process. This degree option will directly transfer to all of the public state of Washington colleges and universities.

The Option B degree is awarded in fields of study where the transfer requirements differ significantly from the Option A requirement. Option B Business Transfer students need to know the requirements of the colleges or universities they are considering and be certain early in their TCC program of study about how the requirements of those educational institutions differ from those of the Option A degree. The International Business Program is one example of a specific Option B Business program of study.

The Information Systems Associate in Arts and Science degree is an Option B program designed to transfer to the University of Washington-Tacoma's Business Administration
Program for completion of a Bachelor of Arts degree with a concentration in Information Systems. There is also a Computer Application Developer UWT CSS Transfer option that transfers to the University of Washington - Tacoma.

The Business Management and Organizational Leadership program is a Professional Technical Associate of Applied Science degree program with a degree option available in Museum/Gallery Operations. A certificate option is also available in Business Administration and Management.

An Associate of Applied Science degree is offered in Automated Accounting Applications. A number of accounting related certificate options are also available.

Global Business is an Associate in Applied Science degree program that was first offered in 2000 and is being further expanded as more students enroll. The Information Technology degree emerged from previous coursework to better meet current needs including employment opportunities in evolving technology. The IT program also provides for the following program options, each of which leads to the Associate of Applied Science degree: Computer Application Developer, Network Administrator, Network Hardware Support, Web Developer

The following certificates are also offered in the following areas: Network Administrator, Network Hardware Support, Web Developer, Web Graphics.

An Office Professional Associate of Applied Science degree and certificates provide the following program options: General Office Assistant - a one-year, four quarter certificate program; Receptionist/Clerk - One quarter Certificate; Word Processing - A one-year, four quarter certificate program.

In addition to the campus Business and IT labs, Business Labs are located at the Downtown Center and Gig Harbor Center and are available to students who first complete an orientation prior to beginning a Business Lab course at either of those instructional sites. Three courses in accounting are offered in these labs as are Business Math, Bus 110 and CU and Office courses.

A selected faculty review of documentation substantiated that faculty educational and experiential credentials are appropriate to their teaching and related faculty assignments.

Both full-time and part-time faculty are evaluated consistent with the criteria established TCC criteria printed in the negotiated TCC faculty contract, Self Study, and other TCC documentation and in accord with Policy 4.1 and Standard 4.A.5.

Full Time Faculty teaching workloads appear appropriate to their individual program or department disciplines. Advising the number of business or IT students individually assigned to each faculty member appears to be challenging at times, depending on the amount of time individual students may need. (Standards 3. D. 10, 2. C. 5.)
Faculty are highly involved in the governance and leadership of TCC through a variety of endeavors. Examples of their leadership include active participation on planning and implementation through committee participation and instructional program reviews, revisions and development that also extends to more efforts on the global level as that relates to potential employment possibilities for their students.

**Continuing Education and Special Learning Programs**

Tacoma Community College (TCC) maintains the following off campus instructional centers: Gig Harbor/Peninsula Center, the Downtown Center, Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW), and the Information Technology Certification Center (ITCC) at the Tacoma Mall. TCC also maintains the Center for Business and Professional Development (Downtown Center) that provides contract training at various area industries. Although all maintain a standard consistent with the mission and goals of the college, each is also unique in the way it serves its constituency.

Gig Harbor/Peninsula College Center offers credit courses for an associate degree, professional/technical and Worker Retraining Programs, Adult Basic Education, personal noncredit enrichment classes, and customized business training. The center participates in the “Running Start” program enrolling numerous early-entry high school students. The Gig Harbor/Peninsula Center enrolls more than 800 students per quarter in credit courses and between 500-600 students per quarter in non-credit personal enrichment classes. It provides a full range of student services (assessment, advising, registration, book store, library, etc.). A goal of TCC is to provide the full associate level degree course offerings at this center in the near future. The large majority of courses offered at Gig Harbor, are taught by part-time faculty. The Center is staffed with excellent administrators, classified staff and faculty who provide quality leadership and direction. Although the reality remains that the center must function with a significant majority of part-time faculty, the overall quality of education and variety of offerings is excellent.

The Gig Harbor/Peninsula Center has excellent leadership and a facility that is well-maintained. Faculty are dedicated and work well with academic divisions at the main campus. Student services and library resources seem to be adequate. Overall, management of the Gig Harbor/Peninsula Center facility should be commended for their leadership toward providing comprehensive offerings for the community.

The institution should be concerned that they are experiencing a substantial growth in enrollment at Gig Harbor with no commitment towards the acquisition of full-time faculty. This not only causes problems for a cohesive academic program, but also causes concerns for student advisement. In addition, a major concern is the lack of security during evening hours at the center. (Standards 3. D. 10, 2. C. 5., 4. A., 2. C. 7).

At the Washington Correctional Center for Women, TCC operates classes for approximately 500 students. Programs offered include ABE/GED, Offender Change, and Vocational training. The ABE/GED program enrolls more than 200 students; employs three full time and
four parttime faculty and provides classroom instruction through the ninth grade. The
Offender Change program enrolls more than 120 students, employs two full-time and one
part-time faculty, and provides instruction in parenting skills and life skills (victim
awareness). TCC also provides vocational training in horticulture, information technology,
drafting, industrial safety, and Braille transcription. More than 115 students are enrolled each
quarter in these vocational programs, and the college employs three full-time and three part-
time faculty to conduct these programs. Each program has a waiting list of prospective
students. Funding for the program at WCCW is received through a legislative appropriation
allocated to the Department of Corrections and flowing through to the college. Full-time
instructors at WCCW have recently achieved full faculty status at TCC. The basic education
and vocational programs at WCCW are quality programs, and a commitment for consistent
state funding seems to be long-lasting.

TCC is commended for its successful program at WCCW that meets the life skills and
vocational needs of its inmates. The ABE/GED and vocational programs are well staffed
with full-time faculty, and faculty seems to feel a part of the TCC faculty, as they are
included in campus faculty development and social events.

Waiting lists to enter TCC’s WCCW programs are long. With the expansion of programs,
many more students could be served.

The TCC Downtown Center is the home for the office of the Continuing Professional
Education Center. The Center provides certificates and enhanced skills in a variety of
business and professional fields of employment (i.e. home inspection program, professional
herbalist, payroll professional mortgage brokerage and lending specialist, etc.) With its
proximity to the downtown location of the University of Washington-Tacoma, the TCC
Downtown Center also provides individually paced business courses, and a variety of credit
classes for students interested in university-level transfer. Course syllabi, faculty evaluation
processes, and program evaluation procedures align with institutional policies and practices.
Programs offered align with the college’s mission and are designed, approved, administered,
and evaluated under established procedures. Programs are taught by part-time faculty who
have expertise in the content area and who are responsible for the development of the course.
Students in some programs receive continuing education and appropriate records are
maintained. Facilities are adequate for the programs.

The location and proximity to downtown redevelopment and the University of Washington-
Tacoma is ideal for educational and business partnerships. The activities of the Continuing
Professional Education Center to provide certification training in a multitude of professions
is excellent and provides a valuable link with industry for the college.

The utilization of the Downtown Center as a full service instructional center is under
scrutiny. It is important that the institution evaluate its commitment to access and be mindful
that the center provides that access to a large segment of its downtown student body and
workforce.

The TCC Center for Business and Professional Development (Contracted Training and
Services) provides a unique approach to customized education and training services designed specifically to meet local business and industry needs. Often this education and training is provided at the convenience of employers at the work site. Some of the areas of concentration are: computer applications, supervision and management, small business management, employee development, customer service/customer relations, conflict resolution, team building/communication.

It is clear that the contract training area of the college is functioning at a high level and provides up-to-date education and training needed by the local businesses and industries. Contract training conducted by the Center for Business and Professional Development provides a valuable link to the area’s businesses and industries.

The Information Technology Certification Center (ITCC) at the Tacoma Mall provides computerbased hardware and software applications training. Programs are designed to prepare area employees and TCC students for certification exams and provide a means of verifying computer hardware and software competencies. The partnership that has been molded between mall officials and TCC is commendable and with creativity and continued program development, will serve the institution well as it continues to commit to its mission to provide access to specialized training and certification.

TCC leadership has the vision that the ITCC must stay on the cutting-edge of technology in order to maintain its stature as a certification and training provider. The institutional leadership should be commended for its ability to work cooperatively to provide the facility at the Tacoma Mall at no cost to the institution.

The Continuing Professional Education Center and the Center for Business and Professional Development (TCC Downtown) provide training and educational services to business, government and other agencies, establishing TCC as a recognized leader in improving the quality of life for community residents and as a partner in the economic vitality of the City of Tacoma and Pierce County.

Non-credit programs and courses are consistent with the mission and goals of the institution in regards to providing “accessible, flexible courses that shall address personal, professional, and social needs of its diverse community.” Non-credit classes are available at the main TCC campus and various off-campus locations. Non-credit programs and courses are administered under the direction of the Dean of Business and Continuing Education and adherence to appropriate institutional policies, regulations, and procedures is demonstrated. The institution maintains records for audit purposes that describe the nature, level and quantity of service provided.

TCC does not regularly provide Continuing Education Units (CEU’s), but will provide these services when requested by professional organizations. When doing so, TCC follows national guidelines for awarding such units and maintains appropriate records.

Program activities are designed, approved, administered, and evaluated under established institutional procedures. In locations where credit bearing courses are offered (Gig Harbor,
Downtown, Tacoma Mall, and WCCW), full-time faculty are involved in the planning and approval of continuing education program activities. This is most evident through the collaboration and consistency of the involvement of deans, center directors, department chairs, and student services personnel in the Instruction Administrative Team meetings conducted regularly by the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.

Continuing Education and special learning activities are integral organizational components of the institution. The organizational structure of the institution provides a well-defined link as the center directors and directors of special programs report directly to the Dean of Business and Continuing Education, and the Dean reports directly to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.

All credit granting courses and programs must meet the standards and guidelines established by the College Curriculum Committee and must be approved in advance by the appropriate academic division. This policy applies to any courses for credit conducted at off-campus locations through the Department of Continuing Education.

Credit for prior experiential learning is offered only at the undergraduate level and is in accordance with Commission policy. Although TCC is considered to be a traditional community college and is not often asked to initiate the process to evaluate experiential learning, policies and procedures have been establish and are clearly available in the college catalog (pg. 30 – 33).

The Division of Continuing Education provides an excellent example of how the college reaches out to area communities and businesses. As its primary mission, its operation provides education and training for employer and workforce development in Tacoma and Pierce County. Through these programs, TCC is able to provide credit and non-credit training customized to employer’s needs. By providing these services, the Continuing Education Division maintains a valuable link between the TCC Business Division and the local economic development authority, businesses, and industries.

The TCC Continuing Education Division provides private industry and state and local agencies with customized vocational training that is consistent with the institution’s mission and goals. The division has no degree program of its own. All decisions to offer degree and certificate programs for credit or contractual agreements for training remain under sole and direct control of TCC which exercise ultimate and continuing responsibility for the performance of these programs or contractual agreements. Duly designated officers of the institution sign contractual agreements and all tuition and extra charges incidental to training are disclosed before the implementation of individual courses and/or programs.

The Division of Continuing Education is commended for its creative and proactive methods of coordinating academic related programs among the academic divisions headquartered at the main campus and various off campus instructional centers. In addition, the division is commended for its entrepreneurial spirit as it moves forward in the non-credit, certification and contract training realm.
Mathematics; Science; Engineering Programs: Electronics/Wireless Engineering and Security; Dual Credit Programs (Running Start, Fresh Start, Tech Prep)

The Division of Science and Mathematics promotes the recently adopted statewide Associate of Science degree for transfer majors. The Associate of Science degree allows for specializations in Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Earth Sciences, Engineering, Environmental Sciences and Physics. Additionally, selected courses from all of the disciplines listed above contribute significantly to preparing students for Allied Health programs and the General Education offerings.

The areas surveyed appear to have adequate physical and financial resources to support the current educational offering. Facilities supporting these programs are well maintained and appropriate although the science building has been identified by the institution as near the end of its useful life. Consequently, capital funding has been secured through the state to support the construction of a new 70,000 sq. ft. science building. This building will replace existing space and will minimally increase instructional space (net increase of one laboratory). Faculty has actively been involved in facility design with a consultant.

Overall, equipment is adequate to provide relevant instruction. However, it should be noted that much of the equipment recently purchased has been from the student technology fee. While it is widely recognized that the Division of Science and Mathematics has greatly benefited from this fee, some concern was expressed about stable funding for on-going equipment needs. It should be noted that the continuance of the student technology fee will be determined this quarter by a vote of the students. Operation budgets have been adequate and have had experienced two incremental increases over the last five years. Unique to Washington community colleges, TCC has a cadaver laboratory that supports Anatomy and Physiology classes. This lab and the experience it provides are greatly appreciated by biology students.

Large enrollment increases have been realized over the past two years in both natural and physical science courses (approximately 200 FTE). These increases appear to be largely due to more demand for science prerequisite courses required for Allied Health program admission (i.e., Introduction to Biology, Anatomy and Physiology, Introduction to Chemistry). It should be noted that several of these courses have large unmet demand but additional sections are limited now by space constraints on campus. Additionally, students expressed dissatisfaction about the low frequency of high demand course offerings such as Anatomy and Physiology (BIOL 240 sequence). Some science discipline areas have developed hybrid on-line courses in an effort to reduce physical classroom requirements. It is hoped that when the new construction projects are completed these issues will be able to be addressed to a greater degree. While it is notable that full and part-time instructors were outwardly dedicated to ensuring student success by providing quality instruction and support, the number of full-time faculty assigned to this division has remained relatively flat over the last five year period. (Standard 4. A., 2. C. 7.).

The Mathematics Department offers a comprehensive set of courses ranging from developmental to collegiate-level. Courses provide required general education/related
instruction for both transfer and professional technical programs. It is notable that 70% of the mathematics offerings are at the developmental level.

TCC requires placement testing for all pre-college and college level math courses and in collaboration with the ESL and Reading faculty has developed a specialized version of the test for non-native English speakers. TCC has also developed a unique placement procedure for entering high school students that considers previous math course work.

TCC has an excellent model of collaborative development of related instruction in TMATH 100, Mathematics for the Health Sciences. This class was designed by mathematics instructors with input from Allied Health faculty. It is important to note that while this class is numbered 100 it does not satisfy a distribution or college level math quantitative skills requirement for the transfer degree. The department should be clear in its advertisement of this course to avoid student confusion. TCC should review the recent Clarification of Requirements for General Education and Related Instruction issued by the Northwest Commission in June of 2003. The clarification states that applied degree programs intended for transfer (i.e., articulated Associate of Applied Science programs) must contain collegiate level related instruction course work. In consideration of courses taught in other discipline areas that satisfy related instruction/general education requirements (i.e., BUS 110 and 256), discussion and collaboration with the Mathematics department in determining course outcomes should be more frequent. All courses that fulfill quantitative skills degree/certificate requirements should have outcomes and assessment mechanisms consistent with the “core of knowledge” quantitative skills outcomes identified in the self-study.

Math programs appear to have adequate physical and financial resources to support the current educational offering. Overall, equipment was thought to be adequate to provide relevant instruction. Operation budgets appear adequate and have experienced two incremental increases over the last five years.

Mathematics, like the sciences, has experienced significant enrollment growth (2X) over the past two years. During the same time frame, full-time faculty levels in the area have not increased. The high dependence on part-time instruction required to address enrollment increases has led the math faculty to develop methods to provide consistency in instruction. The department chair and lead faculty have developed excellent “Course Guidelines” for the majority of the developmental mathematics courses. These documents are distributed to part-time math instructors and provide guidance on syllabus development, pace of instruction and effective strategies when addressing specific concepts. Part-time mathematics instructors praised the guides and how helpful they were to them.

Developmental mathematics instruction is provided in two formats at TCC, traditional face-to-face lecture and in a self-directed Math Lab format. As was noted in the self-study, completion rates of students participating in the Math Lab format are very low in comparison to face-to-face instruction. The Math Department has made many changes to this mode of instruction over several years with very little observed change in completion rates. They have recently constituted a Math Lab Taskforce to develop and implement more effective strategies for addressing this concern. Most recently a decision was made to lower the cap on
the Math Lab to 480 students/quarter and have them progress in a cohort model. In consideration of the large number of students participating in this format of instruction and the low completion rate observed over time, TCC should carefully evaluate whether the Math Lab is “planned for optimal learning and accessible scheduling”. (Standard 2.A.9, also Standard 4 A) or whether another format should be considered to provide math instruction. The Mathematics Department has also begun offering selected developmental math courses in a hybrid on-line format.

The Electronics/Wireless Engineering and Security Program (offered through the Business Division) offer both a one-year certificate and an Associate of Applied Science degree. It is a new program at TCC and was redesigned from the previous Electronics curriculum. The redesign involved industry representatives from the Pierce County Careers Consortium who participated in a formal needs assessment for wireless technicians in the area. The curriculum appears to be sequenced logically and is of appropriate rigor to meet entry-level employment expectations. The program is well supported financially and has a designated physical lab on campus. One full-time faculty member currently coordinates the program with the help of two part-time instructors. Initial enrollment (Fall 2003) was 8 students but the program chair is confident through partnerships in development and paid student internship opportunities that the number will increase. A permanent advisory committee is being constructed. Program outcomes exist and are advertised to students; however, no formal assessment tools have been developed to assess them upon graduation. The program chair is currently focusing on negotiating articulation agreements with local universities and marketing efforts.

While it is clear that much effort has been placed in developing “core of knowledge” outcomes for academic discipline areas (i.e., natural sciences and quantitative skills) there does not appear to be an assessment in place to measure whether degree completers are exiting with the knowledge/ability presented. Additionally, there is no formal review process in place for transfer curricula in comparison to professional technical programs. Lastly, while faculty indicated knowledge of the Nichols Model of assessment used on campus it was unclear how it was related to other review processes on campus. It is suggested that the institution develop and utilize results from systematic evaluation activities to improve instructional offerings. (Standard 2. B, Policy 2.2).

It is clear that assessment is being done at the course level. Using the adopted tool (i.e., Nichols), faculty in the division have developed creative, meaningful projects addressing instructional issues. The projects were narrow in focus but addressed key concerns such as prerequisite validation, reviewing course outlines and linking college-wide outcomes to individual course outcomes, assessing graphing skills at the completion of a wide range of developmental math courses, linking a developmental math course with a human development course addressing math anxiety, etc. It should also be noted that the science faculty attempted to assess science graduates to determine their preparedness for upper-division course work. While much effort was placed on this project, it met with minimal success due to the small response rate. The division is creating an on-line version of the survey instrument in an effort to reach more students.
A review of credentials and experience indicate a well-qualified, dedicated full-time and part-time faculty. Student interviews were filled with compliments regarding the approachability and accessibility of TCC instructors.

Advising loads for faculty in the Division of Science and Mathematics are minimally 40 students/instructor.

Both full and part-time faculty were aware of current evaluation practices and had been evaluated in accordance with the faculty contract timelines. Faculty and administration exhibited great satisfaction with the tenure process, most notably the value of the mentoring that occurred in the tenure committee.

Of special note was the high morale of part-time employees in this division. During interviews, part-time employees indicated that they felt highly supported and an integral part of the instructional team.

Faculty demonstrated a clear understanding of the process for traditional curriculum design and approval.

Faculty expresses a sincere appreciation of library support staff and indicates that holdings support their instructional units. Numerous examples of how library holdings, both traditional and computer based, were utilized in instruction. Some faculty expressed concern that library collection development was largely funded by outside grant monies versus stable funding sources.

The Running Start program has been in existence since 1990 and was born out of a State of Washington legislative action that mandated public K-12 school districts collaborate with state community colleges to provide opportunities for junior and senior high school students to earn dual credit (attain college credit at TCC and simultaneously apply that credit to their high school diploma requirements). Students can participate full-time or part-time and earn up to 18 credits per quarter through this program. All college courses are taught by TCC faculty on the main campus. Participating students must place into college-level Reading and English. Since its inception, the program has steadily grown in enrollment, currently serving 673 students from all around the state of Washington. Student completion/success appears to be very high, although only anecdotal evidence supports this claim. The unit performs no formal follow-up surveys on program participants but reports that many students often achieve their two-year college degree in tandem with their high school diploma.

The program provides one-stop services to these students, coordinating with home high school counselors to provide advising, registration assistance, tutoring, placement testing, etc. Current staffing includes two full time professional technical exempt employees and two part time counselors who participate in their operations on an as needed basis. Due to the increased participation in this program, they have recently received approval to hire a third full-time person. Staff in this area is clearly dedicated to their mission and appear to participate in the college’s program review process and the Nichol’s institutional assessment model in accordance with college timelines. They have been concerned with a negative
college perception of under age students on campus and have been working to alleviate faculty and staff concerns. Running Start is part of the student services unit and works in close collaboration with the advising center.

College tuition for these students is paid by the home school district and TCC claims 97% of the FTE reimbursement. Students are financially responsible for books and transportation, although Running Start has developed a book loan program for low-income participants.

The Fresh Start program was founded 5 years ago through a TCC initiated agreement with the Tacoma School District. It serves as a drop out retrieval program for Tacoma School District students age 16-21. The design of the program allows for students to complete their high school diploma through completion of college coursework and achieve some work-based skill sets to help them gain employment. Students enter as a cohort and participate in a developmental ten credit introductory course, Fresh Start 93. Additionally, students take a 3-credit Information Technology course to build computer literacy. A placement test is administered to students when they enter the program. The program currently serves approximately 340 students, admitting 90 new students each quarter. Students may be self-referred or referred by high school counselors. The program does no direct advertising and currently has waiting lists in excess of 50 students.

The program utilizes an intrusive advising model and the staff develops strong mentoring relationships with students to foster completion. Recently, they have re-evaluated their program mission and outcomes to introduce more strategies that they feel will improve retention such as developing a two-year academic plan for all students, and improving transition into TCC’s professional technical programs and linking Fresh Start 93 course outcomes with computer skills outcomes. The program feels staffing is adequate for the current student load.

Fresh Start is currently facing external challenges imposed by new Washington State requirements for attaining a high school diploma. Internal challenges include the need to develop stronger outreach programs to diverse communities and continuing to work on negative perceptions of underage students on the campus.

Dual professional technical credit is awarded to high school students participating in a program coordinated by the Pierce County Careers Consortium. The consortium is composed of 5 community colleges and all of the Pierce County K-12 school districts. County-wide course articulation agreements are developed and reviewed annually. Students take articulated courses in their high school, obtain a grade of B or better, pay a $10.00 transcription fee and obtain community college professional technical credit. The consortium markets and enrolls students in the program. TCC has approximately 431 students currently participating in the program. The program is coordinated by the Dean of Workforce Education.

The connection TCC has made with local high schools through all three of these programs is commendable. The programs are all highly enrolled and appear to have excellent success rates in consideration of the student population served. There is strong evidence that students
are transitioning into college programs through their participation.

**Allied Health, Physical Education, and Gig Harbor Medical Office programs:**

The Allied Health programs are located in the Health, Justice and Human Services Division. The Division is administered by a Dean. Each program (nursing, Radiologic Technology, Respiratory Therapy, Health Information Technology, Sonography and Paramedic) has a Program Chairperson, who directs the day-to-day program activities.

The Division of Allied Health is respected across the campus and the greater community. The faculty serves on campus committees, are members of the faculty organization, and interact with peers or General Education faculty who are involved in delivery of program components.

The Dean is respected and complimented for her efforts in the administration of the educational programs. She holds the appropriate education and occupational experience to lead the Allied Health programs. She reports to the VP of Instruction and Student Services. All indications are that the Dean is respected across the campus for her innovative educational practices, her support of faculty, and her ability to obtain funding from grants and community resources.

Faculty workload is appropriate and comparable to other faculty on campus. The average workload for the nursing program was negotiated to 16 hours of contact time per week. There are adequate numbers of full time and part time instructional staff to support the programs of learning. Of special note is the increased funding to allow for increased full time faculty in the nursing program. Of further note, the Program Chairperson of the Respiratory Therapy program is filled by a former employee on a part time contract, due to the resignation of the current Chair. A search is being done to hire a permanent Chair.

All faculty are evaluated according to the college policy. New faculty report that a mentor was provided to them and that the Part Time Faculty Institute was very helpful to their professional development.

Professional development for faculty is supported by the college. Individuals are vocationally certified. For those who desire to attend local, state or national conferences, funding is provided through Perkins grants, Professional Development funding, and department budgets. Most faculty stated that all Continuing Education activities were fully funded. Several faculty maintain current clinical expertise and knowledge by working or volunteering in the local medical or health centers. Others attend workshops, conferences or complete professional reading on a regular basis.

Faculty are qualified for their positions. All full time nursing faculty hold a graduate degree in nursing. The Program Chairperson of the Paramedic program will complete a baccalaureate degree within the year, and then will comply with the national accreditation requirements. Full time faculty have classroom and clinical assignments. Adjunct or part time
faculty generally teach in the clinical area. The Respiratory Therapy program employs part time faculty who teach in the campus classroom. The ratio of Full time faculty to part time is appropriate and supports the programs of learning.

Each Allied Health program has written program goals and objectives. Faculty identified the mission of the individual programs, and also how the program exemplifies the college mission statement and vision. Faculty stated that allied health and physical education program were instrumental in meeting the mission for access to education, responded to community workforce needs, and graduated employees who were competent and able to enter the workforce. Each program is accredited by a national body, or in the case of the Sonography program, is working to meet the national requirements. The exceptions are the Medical Professional/Assistant programs. The Physical Education program is not accredited by a national body.

Each educational program has syllabi for individual courses that contain course objectives. Additionally course syllabi contain all College Learning Outcomes. Most syllabi identify the CLO within the course objectives. All programs have measurable outcome objectives and benchmarks. Most programs measure attrition, retention, graduate satisfaction, pass rates on national examinations, and employment statistics including employer satisfaction. Nichol’s evaluation methods are used as a tool to further identify means to revise the program when revisions are identified from the other surveys. Evidence and examples of program revisions were discussed by each program faculty members. A strength of the Allied Health programs is the adherence to the national accreditation standards. Several faculty members are site visitors for the respective program accreditation bodies.

General education courses provide a basis of knowledge to each of the Allied Health programs. Classes, which support the programs, include English 101, Speech, Science, Mathematics and humanities. Care must be taken to identify the balance of General Education (or related instruction) and to take into consideration the courses that might be required as pre-requisite to support courses. In some cases, the Allied Health programs contain embedded related instruction, most remarkably in the Leadership category. Students, faculty and administrators easily identified course objectives and assessment measures that addressed the specific topics. Leadership competencies are addressed within the framework of each Allied Health program; for example, Radiologic Technology students offer a seminar each year where currently registered rad techs obtain Continuing Education Units, necessary to maintain national certification. Paramedic students are also engaged in offering annual seminars and workshops for local personnel.

Students have access to a wide variety of services. There is a full time counselor housed in the Allied Health Building-19. Personal counseling is available. Academic advising falls to the faculty, and in some cases the student to instructor ratio is more than 1:35. Program capacities are increasing due to increased interest in the health career programs. Additional faculty have been hired, either through grants or Workforce Training funding, to accommodate the increased enrollment numbers.
Students are admitted to Allied Health programs by qualifying for a seat through a thorough competitive application process. Students are aware of the application process. Clear information is contained in program handbooks, flyers and brochures.

Resources are adequate to support the Allied Health educational programs. Funding is adequate for hiring qualified personnel. Laboratory space is limited, especially for the Rad Tech and Sonography programs, which share a common space. Modern equipment and specialized manikins or models are evident in all program learning labs. A retention specialist has been hired to support the nursing program.

The Learning Resource Center supports the Allied Health programs by providing both print and electronic databases. Additionally, the library supports the Medical Office Professional Assistant programs by storing printed materials at the Gig Harbor center. These references are current and accessible to the students in the educational programs at the off-campus site. The nursing program includes a Library Science requirement where students receive instruction in research methodology, critical review of published research in health areas, and support for personal research. Office space for full time faculty and Program Chairs is generous. Part time faculty have limited office space, telephone and computer access. Grant money and student technology funds have supported the acquisition of multi-media in the classrooms and laboratory settings. Tutors are available and funded by grants.

The Medical Office Assistant/Professional and the Medical Transcription programs are located at the Gig Harbor facility. These programs were developed and updated with a new first quarter WorkFirst component.
General Education/Related Instruction (Overview)

The college appears to be in compliance with Policy 2.1. The required general education courses for the Associate degree and the AAS are outlined in the catalog. Further delineation is found in various program handbooks and brochures. All professional technical programs contain identifiable courses or embedded objectives, which are communication, computation, human relations, and leadership. Course syllabi also contain references to the College Learning Outcomes.

General education courses are deemed acceptable to be included in the Distribution areas by application to the Curriculum Committee. The course must meet specific requirements to be accepted as a General Education class. One of the most important considerations is that the course must be transferable to a senior university. Other considerations are specific to the Distribution area.

Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Division

The Division’s leadership and faculty have a great deal of energy and especially focus their enthusiasm on the best interest of students. As evident by their involvement in the advising process, the faculty understand the importance of helping students progress towards the goals they set in their educational plans. Also, communication within this very large division is very good; both full-time and adjunct instructors are connected and informed about department, division, and college news and events. Those interviewed commended the decision-making processes, the open-door policy, and effectiveness of the divisional leadership. Division members, both full-time and adjuncts are involved in campus governance at all levels and feel encouraged to participate. Because of these opportunities to participate and to have a voice in the decision-making process, overall morale in the Division is very high. In particular, adjuncts feel supported and appreciated.

The Division’s full-time and adjunct faculty is properly degreed and trained. Instructors reflect a genuine passion for their content areas and students. For the most part, they feel well compensated and appreciated, and they see the combination of student evaluations and classroom observations as a very consistent and fair evaluation process, but adjunct faculty would like a student evaluation tool created that better reflects their limited involvement with students (Policy 4.1). Meanwhile, across the Division curricula are coherent and adequate. Several instructors emphasized that faculty involvement in curriculum design is very extensive. The Division is to be commended on its diverse delivery options, like hybrid classes and coordinating studies classes. Also, faculty teaching loads are fair and consistent, but the number of student advisees assigned to each faculty needs to be reviewed by the institution. (Standards 3. D. 10, 2. C. 5.). Finally, the Division faculty view the self-study process and assessment planning (Nichols Model) as important; both have resulted in the improvement of teaching and learning.

However, the number of full-time faculty members is not adequate (Standards 4. A., 2.C.7). TCC needs to examine how the institution “periodically assesses institutional policies
concerning the use of part-time and adjunct faculty in light of the mission and goals of the institution” (4.A.10). Furthermore, even though the Future Focus Priorities adopted in 1998 and revised in 2001 list “improving the ratio of full- to part-time faculty and staff as a high priority at Tacoma Community College,” there does not appear to be much growth in these departments. The Division has seen a significant increase in FTE over that last four years, but the number of full-time faculty has remained flat while the number of adjuncts has risen. This deficit is particularly a problem in advising and mentoring (3.D.10 & 2.C.5). Services normally provided by full-time faculty are not consistently being provided to students because adjuncts are not generally contracted to provide the same services. Student concerns include the large number of advisees of each full-time faculty (3.D.10), adjunct unavailability for tutorial (2.A.1), and instructional consistency and continuity within a department (2.A.2).

Educational assessment is being done at the department level; however, these assessment pieces are arbitrary and not the result of systematic departmental reviews (Policy 2.2). While division syllabi consistency list student outcomes and some assessment tools are evident, there does not seem to be a coordinated process of assessing how effectively students are mastering these outcomes in multiple sections within departments (2.B.3). Some departments, like English and Speech, have developed departmental grading criteria and rubrics to achieve consistency in course standards and grading in multiple sections; however, assessment tools are needed at the departmental level to see if, in fact, consistency is really taking place. For instance, the English Department “holds periodic paper-norming sessions in which full-and parttime faculty collaborate to read and orally evaluate” 4 or 5 papers once or twice a year, but there is no evidence of random sampling within Eng 101 classes to ensure that instructors are evaluating according to the paper-norming standards within a real classroom setting. Consequently, there are some interesting and useful educational studies being done at the course level, like in sociology, reading and foreign language, and these projects are to be commended for trying to improve student retention and learning.

The Division also does an excellent job helping TCC fulfill its goals of community connectivity and marketing. Of particular note are the Music Department’s quarterly concerts; the Journalism Department’s award-winning newspaper, The Challenge, the English Department’s student writing collections, Trillium and Una Voce; and TCC’s new gallery, featuring works of students, faculty, and community members. TCC should continue to work with its community to share the space of the gallery in order to promote artistic expression of all media, both on campus and in the Tacoma area.

The Bridge Program, co-located at the Evergreen State College’s Tacoma campus, is of concern. The turnover of three coordinators in the last five years has lead to some inconsistency in this program. It is recommended that the TCC look at a systematic review and evaluation of the procedures and administration of the location to guarantee the program is “compatible with the institution’s missions and goals” (2.G.1). TCC full-time faculty “representing the appropriate disciplines” seem to have little connection with the “planning and evaluations” at the location (2.G.3).

In Summary, The Division of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences is an asset to Tacoma
Community College. The two main areas of concern, educational assessment and full- to parttime ratio, are linked directly to the enrollment increases over the last few years. However, the leadership, collegial environment, student dedication, and commitment to the institutions mission and vision of this division are to be applauded.

WorkFirst

The WorkFirst Program serves approximately 700 students per year with the goal of preparing students for employment within the confines of state and federal Welfare to Work rules. Participants receive needed basic skills education, work readiness and employment skills, and transition to work services. Students are assessed and guided appropriately to programs that meet their interests, abilities and needs. They are provided with effective support services both during the time they are in the instructional components of the program and during their subsequent employment. This latter service is aimed at increasing students’ likelihood of succeeding in their employment and continuing with training while they are employed so that wage and skill progression goals are met. A student can reenter the program if his or her job is lost. WorkFirst’s service delivery system is a model for similar programs in the state and country.

The staff is appropriate to carry out the functions of the program and the program assesses each function on a regular basis to ensure that it meets its goals. Staff are highly dedicated to the program’s mission and are creative and flexible in continually improving services to students. The team recognizes the WorkFirst Director’s success in collaborating with WorkFirst’s key partners, including the Department of Human Service, Vocational Rehabilitation, the College’s Adult Basic Skills Program and local employers. As a result of this collaborative approach, partners have adjusted services, regulations, policies and staffing to support WorkFirst goals for students. These efforts have resulted in valuable training programs being developed and funded, support services being offered, restrictive rules being changed to the benefit of students, and thoughtful sequencing of educational offerings that could not exist without the cooperation of all partners.

WorkFirst is funded entirely by federal and state grants, including funds for the rental of college facilities. The program facilities are well maintained and appropriate to its purposes; however, it clearly needs additional instructional space that is in close proximity to its main office.

Developmental Education

The college’s developmental education instruction and support is administered in three separate divisions. Developmental reading instruction is provided by the Reading Department, a part of the Humanities Division. Developmental writing is provided by the English Department, also a part of the Humanities Division. Developmental math is provided by the Mathematics Department, a part of the Science and Math Division. Developmental ESL and instructional support services, including the CAL Lab (computer assisted learning)
and the Reading and Writing Centers, are administered by the Dean of the Learning Resource Center/ESL Division.

Students’ reading, writing, and math skills are assessed at entry using the Accuplacer or a review of high school or college transcripts. These assessment methods are appropriate and result in accurate placement of students into development courses if skill levels warrant.

Developmental reading focuses on textbook reading and study skills. Faculty report that higher level reading classes are offered, but demand is not high. Most reading instruction is offered in stand-alone courses. Two courses, Textbook Mastery and College Textbook Mastery, are similar to the foundation developmental reading courses taught in many other community college DE reading programs. Both reading courses include a lab component. Reading instructors are present in the lab to oversee lab based credit courses. While lab instruction is recognized nationally as an effective approach to enhancing reading instruction, the Reading Lab materials available at TCC are extremely dated and limited. The newly hired Reading Lab Coordinator recognizes this shortcoming and is in the process of updating the lab. Recently she has equipped the lab with computers so reading students can use state of the art reading software and access the many excellent reading materials offered by other colleges through the Internet. A review of the individual reading courses, textbooks and syllabi reveals that these courses are taught in accordance with the course outlines. In addition to the textbook oriented reading classes, students may work on targeted skills in the Reading Lab; this work can be awarded non-transferable credit.

As a result of their Nichol’s model assessment findings regarding reading courses, reading and English instructors have recently collaborated to develop linked Reading and Writing courses. This process included one instructor who condensed material from two separate textbooks into one and convinced the publisher to publish this hybrid book for TCC students. The linked courses have increased retention as demonstrated in Nichol’s model outcomes assessment.

The English Department offers two developmental writing courses, Beginning Writing (English 90) and Composition (English 91). These foundation courses teach sequenced skills that are appropriate to the goal of preparing students for college level writing courses. In addition, the department offers one- and two-credit classes through the Writing Lab that teach students specific skills such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation. A review of the course outlines, syllabi, textbooks and related material shows that the courses are in alignment with similar DE writing courses at other community colleges. Adequate numbers of sections of the foundation courses are offered to meet the needs of developmental education students. The English instructors work closely with the Writing Lab coordinator to ensure that writing tutors have appropriate training and that lab materials are appropriate and up-to-date.

As part of the Nichol’s assessment process, the department has set an effectiveness goal for English 91. The goal is that 80% English 91 completers will earn grades of C or better in the next course in the writing sequence, English 101. The goal was achieved, but instructors
discovered through the assessment process that a surprisingly low number of completers were continuing on to English 101. The program is now addressing this unexpected finding.

Developmental math courses, covering fractions through intermediate algebra, are offered in traditional classroom (face-to-face instruction) and in textbook based, independent tutorials offered in the Math Lab. Math instructors are present in the lab and oversee instruction there. The content of all developmental math courses is appropriate and sequenced so that students’ are able to build skills in preparation for college level math courses.

As part of the Nichol’s assessment process, the math program has evaluated the effectiveness of the self paced classes—measured by course completion—and has compiled ample evidence that the delivery mode results in an attrition rate that faculty consider to be unacceptably high. Instructors have implemented a number of changes to address this problem, but none has proven to be a remedy. The program is focusing on resolving this problem and is considering a number of possible solutions. Since over 400 developmental education students are enrolled in these self paced classes, the College will be challenged to provide sufficient sections in the traditional format if that turns out to be the best solution to the problem. The team encourages the College to continue its efforts to resolve this problem since developmental math functions as a gatekeeper. Without it students do not have access transfer and professional technical degree programs. (Standard 2. C. 7.). Furthermore, the Standards require instruction to be designed for optimal learning, assessment of student learning outcomes for those students enrolled in Lab classes calls into question whether this instructional mode results in optimal learning. (Standard 2 A. 9. and 4. A.).

Two English as a Second Language programs operate at the college, one administered by the Learning Resource Center and one by the Adult Basic Education program. The ESL program operated by the LRC is a developmental education program designed to teach approximately 150 students each term the English skills needed to succeed in academic programs. It is considered by the College to be developmental ESL and serves international and resident students (refugees, immigrants and citizens). The second ABE-ESL program is designed for teaching students with low literacy skills (also refugees, immigrants and citizens) who will use their English skills primarily in the workplace and in their roles as family and community members, not in college level courses.

The developmental education ESL is staffed with three full time and up to ten part time instructors. Instructors are well qualified and bring many years of experience to the classroom. Faculty report the need for additional release time for the department chair because compensation for this work is not considered adequate for the amount of time required to perform all of the chair’s responsibilities. Faculty point out that one duty of the chair is advising non-native English speakers, the majority of whom are international students, adding many hours of responsibility each term to the chair’s role.

The program offers six levels of English and over 25 class sections each term. Course content and sequencing are appropriate to meet the needs of English language learners. Courses have adequate rigor to prepare students to succeed in college certificate and degree programs.
Upon completion of the ESL program, students are required to take the college placement test to verify that they have acquired the reading and writing skills to place into lower division transfer and professional technical courses. The team found general agreement among college faculty that students completing the ESL academic program have acquired the language skills needed to be successful.

The faculty report that their students receive good support from the International Student Services office and are successful in matriculating into college programs if that is their goal. The college community--faculty, staff and students--are very supportive of English learners. The College’s focus on diversity, manifested in many ways on campus, may be credited with creating this atmosphere of acceptance.

The college Future Focus Priority of student diversity states that it will “eliminate barriers which hinder student access and success.” The evaluation team found that there is a barrier to access to college certificate and degree programs for limited English speakers in the ABE-ESL program. A complete lack of coordination exists between the developmental ESL academic program and the ABE-ESL program. Neither the deans nor the faculty are able describe how students from ABE-ESL transition into developmental ESL. No data exist to determine whether the immigrant, refugee and citizens in the developmental ESL transitioned from ABE-ESL. There is no outreach done by developmental ESL to encourage or guide ABE-ESL students to transition into the college preparatory classes. In many colleges, there is a close collaboration between the two functions (ABE- and DE-ESL) with the result that many basic skills students transition into developmental courses. For low literacy students who are often also low income, this creates a pipeline into professional-technical and lower division college programs.

At TCC, the two programs could assess how or whether basic skills students are transitioning into the developmental ESL. They could examine how their curricula articulate. They could develop a process for recruiting ABE students into the college preparatory ESL and explore the advising and financial aid needs of ABE students so that the College could support this transition. At TCC, it is difficult to see how ABE English language learners would be able to prepare for degree programs without completing the developmental level of ESL. Articulation between the two programs and active efforts to transition students from ABE to the DE level, therefore, becomes a critical access issue. The administrators of both programs recognize this as a weakness and have begun discussions on how to remediate this problem.

The developmental education programs and related support services have a dedicated and qualified faculty who have worked within their discrete components to create and offer appropriate courses and services. They have supportive administrators who effectively advocate for their programs. The programs have conducted meaningful assessment at the course level that has improved services to students. This dedication to student success could be capitalized upon if more collaboration existed among the now separate areas. Developmental education students share a set of academic readiness characteristics that can and should be addressed using a cohesive approach to serving their needs. This approach includes a regular assessment of student needs, review of instruction and services as a system to determine if needs are met. Such an approach does not currently exist. The College might
consider engaging the various entities involved in providing DE services—the testing and advising services, the reading, English and math departments, ESL and the Learning Resource Center labs—in a formal process to achieve this goal. In addition, the two ESL programs could focus on the access issue for ABE level English language learners described above. At the minimum, the staff and faculty of the various components that make up developmental education at TCC should meet regularly to communicate about their separate programs.

**Adult Basic Education**

The Adult Basic Education Program (ABE) is made up of three components: Adult Basic Education, GED Preparation, and English as a Second Language. In 2002-2003, the program had approximately 3,500 duplicated headcount and served students at multiple sites throughout the college district, including the main campus, the James Center, the Madison School, and Sacred Heart School. The program has experienced considerable enrollment growth during the past five years, particularly in its ESL program. The programs are supported by a variety of grant and district funds. The program has one full time tenured instructor who teaches ABE. Part time instructors provide all other instruction. The program has no full time ESL instructors. (ER 6, ER 7, Standard 2. C. 7.).

Leadership and coordination of the Adult Basic Education Program has been the program’s greatest challenge. There are three large distinct instructional programs administered under the ABE umbrella each with its own curriculum, assessment requirements, and instructional support challenges. It provides virtually all of the student services and instruction that students receive. It administers a complex and labor-intensive skills assessment process. Extreme reliance on part time instruction and staff increases the demands for coordination. In order to provide much needed coordination, the College converted one full time faculty position to a Director position at the end of last year. The program faculty and staff praised the new Director for bringing visionary leadership to the program. They appreciate how quickly she has documented existing operational processes and procedures or created new ones where needed. Faculty evaluation, which had languished for want of a program coordinator, is back on track under her supervision.

At all sites, the team found well qualified instructors, enthusiastic about teaching, and caring staff who went to extraordinary effort to serve students. The program has adopted the Equipped for the Future (EFF) instructional model, recognized nationally for its focus on developing life-long learners. Instructors regularly engage in professional development activities directly related to teaching the EFF curriculum. The program sets goals for student learning and student progression to higher levels and regularly assesses whether it meets these goals. Goal setting begins at the individual student level with staff assessing students’ needs and educational goals upon entry. Students are regularly tested to determine their progress in acquiring basic skill competencies. The assessment process allows staff to assess success at the individual student level, the course level and ultimately at the program level. The results of assessment are used to advise students, to inform instruction, and to plan for program improvements. These uses of assessment results are well documented in program
records. Annually, the program staff meet to review assessment results and to set goals for the coming year. Strategies are developed to meet the goals and changes are made to operationalize the strategies.

The program has excellent partnerships with WorkFirst, community agencies, district K-12 schools, Head Start, volunteer literacy program, and other organizations that serve low income and low literacy residents. These partnerships provide students with much of the support that allows them to focus on achieving their educational goals. In addition, the WorkFirst partnership provides a pathway to moderate wage jobs through its work readiness programs. Building and nurturing these partnerships takes considerable time on the part of the Director and faculty. The program should be commended for its exemplary work in this regard.

The program has a learning disabilities specialist whose primary role is to assess and document students’ learning disabilities for ADA accommodations. She has developed a process that features collaboration between herself and a board certified psychologist so that affordable disabilities assessment is available to program students. She also helps instructors to understand how students’ disabilities affect learning and to use effective teaching strategies for specific disabilities. The TCC ABE program is recognized throughout the Northwest for creating this innovative approach to disabilities assessment that makes such assessment affordable, and she consults with other colleges who are interested in adopting this model. Since many ABE students have learning disabilities, this is a valuable program component.

Considering the extreme reliance on part time faculty, morale is high among faculty, staff and students. The skeleton crew of full time staff and large numbers of part time instructors, in their words, are “making it work.” There are great pressures to continue expanding the program, to collaborate with partners, and to implement new assessment processes that are mandated by the state. Addressing the demands without adequate full time faculty put the program in peril. Full time faculty members with discipline expertise have a central role in ensuring the integrity of the curriculum. The ABE program does not have adequate full time faculty to provide this leadership. Furthermore, ABE program students’ needs are not well represented on college committees because there simply is not a faculty member available to attend meetings. ABE/GED and ESL programs should be a pipeline into college certificate and degree programs for the most disenfranchised residents in the community. Currently, they are not. Creating such a pipeline requires collaboration among ABE and college level programs, work that is carried out by full time faculty. The new Director who certainly serves as a strong advocate for the program within the college cannot assume the full time faculty role in this important endeavor.

The standards require that the college “has a faculty adequate for the educational level offered, including a full-time core faculty representing every discipline in which it offers major work” (ER 7) and that the institution demonstrate its “commitment to high standards of teaching and learning by providing sufficient human, physical, and financial resources to support its educational programs and to facilitate student achievement of program objectives whenever and however they are offered” (2.A.1). The standard does not differentiate between
adult basic education programs and other college programs. The ABE program is among the largest in the college; because the program has only one full time faculty member in this program, the team recommends that the College address this concern. (ER 6, ER 7, Standards 2. C. 7., 4. A.).

There was much evidence of the ABE program’s effectiveness, morale is high, necessary administration is in place and effective. This results in collaborative and effective leadership. Student outcomes are good. Many challenges that plague adult basic education programs across the country have been addressed, for example collaborating with essential partners and creating affordable learning disabilities assessment. The program is severely hampered, however, by its over-reliance on part time faculty.

Distance Learning

The TCC Mission statement contains two words that describe the mission of Distance Learning: accessible and flexible. Formed in January, 2004, the Distance Learning Advisory committee is working toward a third aspect of the TCC Mission, comprehensive. The third item on the DL Advisory Committee agenda for February 24, 2004 is “(Discuss) Progress toward online AA degree.”

While Distance Learning is, perhaps, several years from realizing that goal, the fully online DL offerings (24 classes) range from Politics and Film, to Math for Non-Science Majors. The latter is offered through Washington Online, “a cooperative effort by the Washington State Community and Technical College System.” WAOL classes comprise 21% of the total DL classes.

TCC also offers 28 Hybrid online courses that have a few on-campus meetings and a major online component. DL classes are expected by the faculty to meet the same rigor as their traditional counterparts and DL classes are approved by the same process as traditional classes.

At the beginning of Spring Quarter 324 DL students were surveyed and 95% believed communication in the DL class was handled effectively. 94% thought assignment instructions were clear and easy to follow and 94% found their DL class easy to navigate.

The same survey revealed that 74% of the students had visited the DL website which has a test where students may assess their readiness for a DL class. The DL website has links to the online bookstore, advising, student services, financial aid application, registration, tuition payment and the LRC. A full-time librarian is assigned to Distance Learning, which includes Information Competency instruction at the branch campuses. With funding from a grant the TTC librarians in collaboration with a librarian at Highland CC audited three different DL classes. In consultation with the Faculty Computing Advocate the librarians developed an online service within Blackboard called the Librarian’s Corner.

To evaluate teaching effectiveness, DL faculty use a slightly modified version of the Student
Opinion Survey used in traditional classes. Because the Student Opinion Survey is linked to the tenure and post-tenure processes the DL Student Opinion Survey can be modified (to more accurately evaluate the unique online environment) only when the traditional Student Opinion Survey is updated.

DL has initiated the Nichols Assessment process and has created the following objective: “Between July 1, 2003 and June 30, 2004, 12 new hybrid and fully on-line courses will be developed and added to the college’s distance education offerings.” DL has a budget for the creation of 5 classes per quarter and the staffing to accomplish this goal. Another objective was, “The number of courses delivered using distance technologies during Spring Quarter 2003 will be 25% higher than the number of courses delivered using distance technologies during Spring Quarter 2002.” Headcounts for Spring 2002 were 455. Headcounts for Spring 2003 were 1103, a 142% increase.

The sudden growth of student enrollment in Distance Learning classes demonstrates there is a demand for DL classes. DL has the funding and staffing to help faculty create at least 15 new classes a year and TCC has agreed in the Faculty Negotiated Agreement to provide an incentive of either one-third release time, or compensation in accordance with the part-time salary schedule, to reward faculty for creating DL classes. DL should continue to experience large leaps in growth. This growth should not affect quality because assessment instruments are in place at the department level and through Distance Learning. The DL program very much supports the mission of the Tacoma Community College.
STANDARD 3-STUDENTS

Tacoma Community College provides a welcoming, well-designed, educational support community for students. It has a reputation for being a place that all students can come and feel safe to be themselves, express diverse opinions, and have opportunity to assume leadership roles. It is a place where students are valued and honored. It is a place where staff in the Student Services division serve with a passion and commitment to students.

The Student Services Division is guided by a clear mission and set of goals that are tied to the overall mission and goals of the college. Each department has developed goals and objectives that relate to the division plan. These are reviewed on a regular basis through a process of program review. The organizational structure is designed effectively to provide student support services but because of recent staff changes and enrollment growth with no overall staffing increases, the division is being stretched to meet the challenges they face. Meeting these challenges has required staff to split time between departments, rely heavily on part time staff, and be very flexible in their duties. As an example, the Associate Vice President for Student Services, who reports to the Vice President for Academic and Student Services, is on leave and will retire this year. The Dean of Enrollment Services is currently serving as interim Associate Vice President. She had been filling in for the Director of Financial Aid, who had left and was not able to be replaced for over a year. It is a credit to the well-qualified and dedicated staff in the division that to this point service levels have not significantly suffered. If enrollment continues to grow without a review of staffing needs, there may be problems in delivering even the essential services to students.

The College has seen a steady increase in special programs such as Running Start, Fresh Start, and its TRIO SSS grant. Given that all of these programs bring with them significant funds for student support the College has been able to provide educational planners and other staff to assist these students. This has not been the case, however, for the general student population that has not seen a comparative increase in staff to the increases in students being served.

Since 1999 TCC has followed a schedule of program reviews in Student Services that is comprehensive and involves a process that is inclusive of all constituents in the institution. The process is a model for others to follow. The reviews look at mission and goals, assess the effectiveness of the program, and develop goals and objectives for the future. In the years between the reviews a progress report on those goals is completed. The process assures that the focus of each department is clear, understood by everyone, and is closely tied to the college mission and priorities. The program review cycle has just begun to repeat itself and the division may find that because of the comprehensiveness of the reviews it may not be necessary to keep to a three-year cycle. This is especially true given the practice of reviewing the goals annually. The program review process is supplemented by departmental annual goals that are tied to the overall college goals. These are reviewed in annual reports every year. Staff are also evaluated every year in a process that includes progress made towards the institutional goals. In addition to these continuous improvement mechanisms, the division uses the Nichols Model of assessment to look at specific areas where changes have been made and the departments wish to see if there has been measurable improvement. This
overall effort at assessment and planning within the division is exemplary and should be continued.

The development of policies that impact students does not include a process involving a committee of faculty, students and staff specifically designed to consider student issues. Instead, the Instructional Council, whose membership includes all faculty who come and some administrative staff, has as a regular part of its agenda student policy issues. Students are represented on most committees throughout the college and they feel strongly that they are in the decisions that impact their lives. These committees include the College Council, tenure review committees and the Instructional Council. The student body president gives a regular report at each College Board meeting. Besides representation on committee’s, the administration brings issues and potential policy changes to the student government senate for discussion. This is viewed by the students involved as a good faith effort to include them in the policy development process. There is no forum for faculty, students and administration to meet and discuss student policies however. In fact there seems to be a lack of faculty involvement in general in student services, despite the organizational structure that places the division under the Vice President for Academic and Student Services. One method of institutionalizing faculty involvement might be to develop a parallel council to the Instructional council to review and recommend student polices and procedures. Another suggestion would be to include student representatives on the Instructional Council. In general though, TCC is to be commended for its practice of involving students at every level of institutional decision making.

Until recently the College only provided campus safety staff from 8am-5pm. An appeal was made to the ASTCC for passage of a Community Enhancement Fee to support campus safety through better staffing and improved lighting on campus. The students passed the fee and the improvements have been made. There is some confusion on the part of students as to whether or not this fee is permanent or will need to be voted on periodically by the student body. The College views the fee as permanent, but should clarify this point with students. There is also a perception among some students that their safety on campus was not a high priority and it took the passage of this fee to provide for this service.

It has become difficult for TCC to track transfer student success since the university system in Washington has raised concerns about student privacy. It is hoped that this can be resolved soon to enable TCC and other community colleges to gain feedback on the success of their transfer students, even at the course specific level. It is reported that some professional technical programs have a good process to track the success of their graduates but that does not appear uniform across the college. It is suggested that the college take some action to systematically collect data on student success once they leave TCC, and that information is used to inform programmatic changes.

The awarding of academic credit is based on published criteria and course syllabi. College programs that involve special student populations of high school age are integrated into the regular academic program and are awarded credit based on standard college assessments. Grading criteria is clearly stated in the college catalog and well understood by both faculty and students.
The college as part of the Washington State Community and Technical College system has secured records and databases stored both electronically and physically in multiple locations. Staff have ready access to historical data when needed. In addition to the state wide system of data storage, TCC has gone to great lengths to comply with all national standards on student record maintenance and storage.

Tacoma Community College has an open admission policy for adults over 18 years of age. Students younger than 18 or who have not yet graduated from high school have special admission requirements. The college has a process by which new students are assessed in writing, reading and math at entry to determine readiness for college credit programs. Students not yet achieving college level skills in these areas are encouraged to take developmental education courses in the area of need. Once admitted the college advises and registers each student based on their academic goals, and provides an orientation to the college. Although there is no mandatory placement into developmental education prior to taking credit courses there does not seem to be a problem with students registering for classes they are not prepared for. One reason for this is that many credit courses have writing prerequisites that must be met before registering. New students have recently experienced difficulty registering for entry level courses because of enrollment demands. Some students report that the first term is often wasted on many courses not needed for their degree. It appears that the college is not adding additional sections of courses at the same rate as the growth in student enrollment. The student faculty ratio has increased significantly in the last three years, which would indicate that courses are enrolling more students per section. However this does not seem to be a strategy that can continue much longer without significantly slowing student progress towards degrees.

Once a new student enrolls they are assigned a faculty advisor. Students report many concerns with the faculty-based advising system. The system requires students to retrieve a registration pin number from their faculty advisor prior to registering for each term. The original purpose of the plan was to ensure students were properly advised before they registered. However students report that many faculty simply hand out the pin numbers without any advising assistance. The college designates one day each term as advising day and it often leads to an impossible task for faculty to meet with each student and advise them in one day in a way that’s helpful much less accurate. Advising loads of forty or more are reported by both faculty and students. The college just implemented a degree audit system that hopefully will help with advising but faculty report that they don’t have access to it nor do they have access to any of their advisee’s records or transcripts. (The college administration disputes this contention.)

Some students who have used the system report that it’s helpful but that it is not always accurate. Students report that some of the best advising occurs within student clubs or between individual students themselves. During the course of several student interviews there were a significant number of reports of advising that has resulted in students delaying their educational progress and wasting financial resources on courses they did not need. It is recommended that the college take immediate action to improve student advising. Every staff, student and faculty member interviewed identified this as the biggest problem at the college. It must be addressed soon. (Standards 3. A. 1., 3. D. 10., 2. C. 5.).
It should be noted that the College has identified advising as an important area in need of improvement. An Advising Task Force was appointed to make recommendations to improve advising systems. The campus focused on improvements to advising during three professional development inservice days in 2003-04. Two national experts were brought to campus to conduct workshops on advising and the President met with every campus department to review advising concerns. These are important initial steps to address this critical campus issue.

TCC is to be commended for its support of international students and students of color. The International Student support office is staffed by a qualified committed staff. Students report that the office has been very helpful in the process of applying to TCC, arranging home stays, orientating them to the various systems in this country that they need to negotiate, (e.g. health care, financial), academic advising and transfer, and attending to their social needs as well. TCC has had a long history of recruiting and supporting international students. The students report feeling welcomed by everyone on campus and that many opportunities exist for them to gain a great education.

Students of color are advised by MECA, a multicultural student support office that is seen as supportive and very helpful by students. There are active student clubs for Black, Asian, and Native American students. Hispanic students report that few local Hispanic students come to TCC choosing instead to attend a neighboring college where there is a significant Hispanic enrollment. There is no campus organization for Hispanic students. All students reported that TCC was very welcoming for students of color, that there was a great respect for diversity at TCC, both within and outside the classroom.

TCC has a clearly defined and published process of placing students on academic deficiency, academic probation and academic suspension. This year an attempt was made to bring the financial aid satisfactory progress requirements in line with the college’s academic warning and suspension policies. Although not perfectly aligned they have made great progress to eliminate confusion to the students on these two processes. The college takes great care in advising students who return from academic suspension to try and prevent failure the second time around.

In the last three years the college has administered two student surveys, Faces of the Future, and the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, which have provided valuable information to guide student services planning. There is some evidence in the division’s annual goals that they are addressing the issues and concerns raised in these surveys. However the student services departments are attempting to address both the colleges Focus on the Future goals and the issues identified in the surveys at the same time. The college’s goals were developed several years ago and it is suggested that given the results of these surveys and the reports on advising, elements of the college plan should change soon.

The Financial Aid Office has gone through two leadership changes in the past two years but now appears set. The staffing level has not changed significantly during these times of enrollment growth but they have been able to keep pace by using technology to simplify and
speed up processes. The loan default rates are within a normal range for a community college. The college recently decided to not pre-package loans for first term students if their tuition and book costs were being met by other means. At the same time this policy was implemented, the college experienced a drop in new student enrollment. It is not clear if the two are related and it is recommended that a study be done to determine if the loan policy has become an access issue for new students.

The college Counseling Center is staffed by six faculty counselors. Three counselors have additional assignments that take time away from general counseling. The Center has a good reputation among students as a place to go for help. The Career Center is adjacent to the counselor offices and is used frequently by students. Although the services provided are well organized and ample for the needs of the college, students report that few of them know about what’s available in the two centers. More outreach is needed. Some students avoid going to Building 18 where the services are provided because of a general feeling of being unwelcome. Given that many essential student services such as registration and financial aid are located in this building the college may want to examine why this perception exists.

The co-curricular program at TCC is outstanding. Well-qualified professional staff support several student leadership programs such as STAGE, the Student Ambassadors, the Student Senate, and many clubs and organizations. For those students who wish to be involved in a leadership role, TCC has provided the opportunity. Students are enthusiastic about their roles, about the support they receive from staff, and about the input they have into college decisions. One strength of TCC is its involvement of students at most every level of decision making. This was often noted by students and given as a reason why TCC is such a good place to go to college. The students have a tremendous sense of ownership with the college, and for good reason. The Student Center, where many of their programs are housed, was built using student fees. A recent addition to the Student Center to house the International Program and MECA was also financed by student fees. Students also support through their fee structure the purchase of educational equipment, tutors, athletics, and recreational programs. They vote on many of these fees each year giving them an opportunity to have a sense that they are directly contributing to the success of the college. This reliance on student fees by the college may have a downside as well. Fees voted on yearly may change. And as the administration becomes dependent on these fees for essential service they become more vulnerable to the funds going away.

The college bookstore and food service are reported adequate by students. The bookstore doubles as a food court after 2pm each day and for that reason, and the limitations of space, does not have a good collection of non-required books and other reading materials for sale. It does stock on the main floor required texts. It might be possible to sell textbooks from a different location at the beginning of each term and give the bookstore more space to provide other services to students. The main food court provides an acceptable fair of choices but closes around 1:30 each day.

The Intercollegiate Athletics program at TCC consists currently of 8 sports with two new women’s teams to be added this coming fall. The addition of the women’s teams is partly to address a shortage of opportunities for women athletes. The director of athletics is also the
faculty chair of physical education, a recently combined position created when the full time athletics director left the college. Everyone seems pleased with the combination of roles stating that it ensures the integration of the athletic and academic expectations of the program. There is a high retention rate among athletes, at least as high as the student body at large. The director reports to the Associate Vice President of Student Services and is a member of the student services administrative staff. The director reports regularly to the College Board on the direction of the program. Regular annual assessments are done within the process created for all student services departments. Goals are set and reviewed annually.

Scholarship limits are set by conference rules. A $200/term award is the maximum allowed for each student along with an award up to $1000 of work study funds to a student in any one year. The admission and aiding of student athletes appears to conform to standard college policy.

The program is heavily reliant on part time coaches. Next fall 8 of the 10 coaches will be part time. The ability to keep coaches and athletes focused on institutional mission and goals is challenged by the fact that most of the coaches are not regular employees of the college. However administrative staff report that the leadership of the athletics director has made the difference in keeping the program an integral part of the college and its mission.

The program receives strong support from the college and local community. Students report being turned away at games because there are no more seats for spectators. The TCC teams have generally been successful in competition and this is a huge source of pride among the student body. Much of the financial support for the program comes from the student activity fee.

The college in all its published materials portrays itself honestly and is not misleading in any apparent way. In questions asked of the international students about any misrepresentation of the college they reported that the information they received before they arrived understated the opportunities they would have.

The college publishes and makes available to students all materials required by law. The college catalog contains a complete description of all degrees and student policies. The Student Handbook is an excellent supplement to the catalog.

The college in all its publications accurately describes its accreditation status with the Commission on Colleges as well as other national accrediting bodies.
STANDARD 4-FACULTY

Faculty Evaluation Issues

Faculty Evaluation is a part of the Tacoma Community College and TCC Federation of Teachers Local 2196 Faculty Negotiated Agreement, July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2006, Sections 12 and 13. All categories of both full-time faculty and part-time faculty are covered by this contract. The term “Academic Employee” is used in place of the term “faculty” in the negotiated contract and includes any teacher, counselor, librarian, department head, or vocational program chair. Detail about evaluation in the negotiated contract includes all of these professional assignments.

Faculty Evaluation (Academic Employee Evaluation) is addressed in the Self Study and in the accompanying Appendices 4.1 and 4.3, *Guidelines for Tenure Review booklet*. Further documentation of specific faculty evaluation (academic employee evaluation) practices was verified in discussions with academic employees including faculty and by reviews of selected academic employees including faculty files by members of the evaluation team.

Academic Employee Evaluation including Faculty Evaluation is separately specified for Full-Time, Tenure Track; Full-Time Tenured; New Part-Time, and Continuing Part-Time Academic Employees. Temporary and Specially Funded Academic Employees are evaluated using the New Part-Time evaluation processes in their first three years and processes used for Full-Time Tenured Academic Employees thereafter. Differences in academic employee review by these groupings as verified by the visitation team are further summarized below.

Full-Time, Tenure Track Academic Employees (Includes Faculty)

In their first three years, tenure-track faculty are on probationary status and are observed by their tenure committee members on a quarterly basis. Tenure Committees are led by tenured faculty with student and administrative participation on the committees. Student opinion surveys are conducted in every course taught by these faculty, and each probationary faculty member completes a self evaluation and is evaluated by their managing supervisor.

The award of tenure or the extension of up to three quarters beyond the three-year probationary status may be made at the discretion of the appointing authority in special circumstances.

Full-Time Tenured Academic Employees (Includes Faculty)

Tenured academic employees complete evaluation cycles once every five years. The academic employee is responsible for remediation and the College is expected to assist in agreed upon development opportunities regardless of the evaluation cycle.

An initial meeting is held with the supervisor to outline the process the employee will be using and to review the professional developmental plan for the five-year cycle. Other evaluation components include student opinion surveys conducted in one class each year for
faculty, a self evaluation, a course syllabus review by a tenured academic employee peer or management supervisor for evaluatees who teach, a managing supervisor written evaluation, and a meeting with the managing supervisor in the fifth year.

**New Part-Time Academic Employees (Includes Faculty)**

Part-time academic employees are considered to be new for their first three quarters at Tacoma Community College. Student opinion surveys are conducted in every class for each of the employee’s first three quarters. New part-time academic employees complete a self-evaluation and their management supervisor completes an administrative evaluation at the end of the third quarter.

**Continuing Part-Time Academic Employees (Includes Faculty)**

A part-time academic employee who teaches a fourth quarter and beyond is considered to be a continuing part-time academic employee. Student opinion surveys are conducted in at least one course per year. The academic employee completes a self-evaluation and the management supervisor completes an administrative evaluation, which includes a classroom, lab or clinical observation report, once every five years.

**Full-Time Academic Employees Accepting Additional Part-Time Teaching Assignments**

Full-time academic employees who also accept part-time teaching assignments do not follow the part-time academic employee evaluation process although student opinion surveys may be administered in these classes.

**Faculty Evaluation Summary**

The Evaluation Team found that full-time and part-time faculty evaluation is in apparent compliance with Policy 4.1 and consistent with the criteria established and adopted by TCC. The update of the evaluation plan was collegially developed and implemented and supports faculty development. The process and criteria are clear and faculty are evaluated on a continuing basis. Multiple indices are used and resources are in place and used to support faculty member performance improvement.

There appears to be some inconsistency in the completion and sharing of part-time faculty written evaluations on a timely basis. Some part-time faculty also noted that the student evaluation form is designed for full-time faculty, and they recommended that forms used to request student opinion about office hours and other work assignments that do not apply to part-time faculty not be used for part-time faculty.

**Faculty Issues (Generally)**

As evidenced in the Self Study, other TCC documentation, and reviews of the evaluation team members, Tacoma Community College employs professionally qualified faculty with
primary commitment to the institution and representative of their fields or programs in which major work is offered.

Faculty participate in academic planning both within their program or discipline areas and across the College through their own participation or that of their Faculty Department or Program representatives on the College-wide committees.

There appears to be uneven usage of the College-adopted Nichols model with usage of the model at several stages and levels of selection and application of goals, assessment, and outcomes-based changes. There appears to be a need for further systematized, College-wide planning and incorporation of Nichols outcome assessments as they relate to such areas as College-wide planning and budgeting. (Policy 2.2, Standard 2.B.).

Faculty, as evidenced in the Self Study, other TCC documentation and reviews by the evaluation team, substantiate a high degree of involvement in the institutional governance of TCC through such involvement as participation on college-wide committees; academic planning, curriculum development and review; and in academic advising. Increased student enrollment and limitations on funding available to hire full-time faculty have contributed to increasing the challenges of comprehensive faculty advising, particularly in some disciplines where there are high student enrollments and limited numbers of full-time faculty. (Standards 3. D. 10, 2. C. 5., 2. C. 7.).

Faculty workloads reflect the mission and goals of the institution and the talents and competencies of faculty. There is strong support for faculty involvement in the community and in other professional endeavors as evidenced in TCC documentation and team member visitation review.

While TCC faculty salaries are shown to be among the highest in the state of Washington, there is concern that salary increases have not been provided through legislative funding due to economic challenges throughout the state of Washington in recent years.

Faculty can increase their salaries through the performance of professional activities, but that was instituted and intended as a supplement to the base salary increases including cost of living increases anticipated through legislative base funding. Policies on salaries and benefits are clearly stated, extensively available, and fairly administered.

While important in hiring well-qualified part time faculty and assisting them in meeting their benefits needs, the legislative mandates regarding funding of benefits for part-time faculty have further decreased base dollars available for other institutional needs including hiring additional full-time faculty.

As documented in the Self Study, the Faculty Negotiated Agreement and other TCC documentation and as verified by evaluation team members, processes for recruitment and appointment of full-time faculty are clear. TCC has a goal of hiring more full-time faculty from under represented groups to support and encourage students from those groups to
attend, thrive, and achieve their TCC college goals. There was some concern expressed that the budget calendaring process may discourage timely filling of tenure-track full-time faculty positions.

TCC documents including the Faculty Negotiated Agreement, the Self Study, and Evaluation team member discussions with faculty support that TCC fosters and protects academic freedom for faculty consistent with Policy A.8.

Evaluation Team member reviews of TCC documentation and visitations with faculty, administrators, and students support that part time faculty are qualified by academic background and/or professional experience and appropriate credentials to carry out their teaching assignments and other duties and responsibilities.

Evaluation team members found that employment practices for part-time faculty are clearly documented and widely disseminated regarding TCC, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, and conditions of employment. There was some concern expressed in the Self Study that ongoing correspondence with part-time faculty, particularly those at off-campus sites, is somewhat challenging because of computer network challenges. Sufficient part-time faculty office space availability with computer and phone access continues to be a challenge. TCC written documentation indicates that the College is working to address these challenges.

Documentation clearly supports that TCC assesses institutional policies on an ongoing basis concerning the use of part-time faculty in light of the TCC mission and goals. There is concern that the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty is not as supportive of those goals as the TCC mission indicates it wants and needs. The College is working to achieve a higher percentage of full-time faculty, but feels very challenged to accomplish this under current economic funding conditions. (Standard 2. C. 7.).
STANDARD 5-LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

Information Resources

The Information Systems Department has sufficient staff and funding to support the Mission of the Tacoma Community College. $236,000 budgeted for annual replacement of PCs is the backbone of the Information Systems’ maintenance plan. Annually the Information Systems Department identifies about 220 of the oldest computers and targets them for replacement. The targeted PCs are usually scattered throughout the campus and distribution of new computers is perceived as equitable.

A “trickle-down” option permits a manager to replace a computer that was just replaced last year with the new computer and keep certain high-demand applications on the best computers.

The IS Department is responsible for about 1200 PCs on the Tacoma campus and at the branches. The replacement cycle is about five and a half years. PCs that were purchased with grant funds, or self-funding departments like the Bookstore, or programs that are not funded by TCC such as the WorkFirst Program are not replaced as part of the cycle. PCs that are purchased with the Student Technology fee become part of the replacement cycle. As more computers are purchased, and total number of PCs grows, the length of the replacement cycle may grow. This is a concern and may require rethinking within a couple years.

The list of PCs the Information Systems Department expects to replace is posted on the College intranet. The policies and procedures for systematic replacement of computers are not documented and made available to the institution’s constituents; this should be remedied.

Lab and office PCs at the Downtown Center, Tacoma Mall, Gig Harbor and the James Center are replaced as part of the five and a half year cycle. A part-time (19 hours a week) IS tech person is responsible for maintenance of the Branch campuses. Eight full-time employees and five part-time employees service the main campus. This is accomplished fluidly with thoughtful plans such as stockpiled spare computers that can quickly replace a malfunctioning machine so the staff person or customer aren’t waiting for time-consuming repairs.

The IS Department receives input from faculty, administrators and staff through two committees, the Information Technology Advisory Group (ITAG) and the Academic Technology Committee (ATC). ITAG advises the IS Department on technology purchases and on-campus technology initiatives. ACT advises the IS Department on technology that supports teaching and learning.

There are 29 Lead Technology Persons and their names are listed on the College Intranet. Every building has a Lead Technology Person and they receive advanced training when new software is released. Their first responsibility is to be a resource person for staff and faculty with simple questions. If the question is beyond the training of the Lead Technology Person then they refer the problem to the IS Department Help Desk. The Lead Technology Persons
also have an advisory function and are consulted by the IS Department when arranging schedules such as upgrades.

The Lead Technology Persons are considered an important part of the IS Department’s staff and are described as a less formal “opportunity for involvement in planning and design.” (5.B.4) The policies and procedures for the Lead Technology Persons are not documented and made available to the institution’s constituents. Once again the absence of documentation is a concern that can be easily remedied.

Similar to the Lead Technology Person plan is the Web Support Person plan. A person from each department is given responsibility for web content and web updates. Training is provided by the Webmaster.

The current Webmaster is a full-time shared position between the IS Department and Marketing. A job announcement for a full-time Marketing Webmaster has been posted and responsibility for web content should transfer to marketing as soon as the new Webmaster is hired.

In 2004-05 the IS Department plans to use funds from the operating budget to hire a consultant that will help them draft a Request for Proposal (RFP) to replace a telephone system that is 15 years old. By 2005-06 the goal is to have a new telephone system that will seamlessly connect the branch campuses with the main campus. The new telephone system should also share voicemail and an operator.

The IS Department has streamlined its workload and made efficient use of its budget by adhering to a philosophy of standardized platforms. Instead of dozens of competing computer brands across campuses, the IS Department has researched and recommended one vendor for hardware and one vendor for software. This same philosophy is being used for telephone replacement and Rehosting of the Hewlett-Packard minicomputer. It is a philosophy that should continue to keep faculty and staff satisfied with service and keep faculty and staff working productively.

**Library Resources**

Consistent with the mission of Tacoma Community College (TCC) and Standard 5.A, the mission of the Learning Resource Center (LRC) is to serve, “Tacoma Community College students, faculty and staff at all campuses and in distance learning programs by providing access to collections, facilities, technology, instruction, and services that support teaching and learning.” (SS 5-2) In the LRC Strategic Plan the LRC describes nine customer-focused goals in the Wanamaker Library, the Language Listening Lab and the Media Services Department, the components of the LRC. These goals may be summarized as the promotion of information competency, the development of collections, barrier-free access to collections, support of professional development, assessment of effectiveness and the pursuit of funding outside of the College budget.
The LRC has the resources and staffing to promote information competency that reflects one of the College-wide Student Learning Outcomes (Appendix 1.1, p.3). Information competency is defined as the recognition of when information is needed and the ability to “locate, evaluate and use the needed information…” Four full-time faculty teach information competency in three ways: reference service, for-credit classes, and 50 minute (time may vary) instruction sessions. (Self Study, 5-4)

In 1998-99 the librarians instructed 5,760 students at the reference desk. The number of students instructed at the reference desk grew to 7,375 in 2002-03. Two part-time librarians assist at the reference desk. The quality of Reference instruction is assessed by a reference assessment form at the reference desk. Every quarter each reference librarian requests that six students fill out the reference assessment form. In the past three quarters 17 students have been assessed and 82% strongly agreed that, “The librarian taught me something about the process of research.”

In 1998-99 a librarian taught one 2-credit class. In 2002-03 the librarians taught eight 2-credit classes and one 1-credit class. The for-credit classes are evaluated by students near the end of the quarter using the Student Opinion Survey that is part of the probationary/post-tenure processes. The 5-credit online Library Science was not taught by TCC librarians and will be dropped from the catalog this year.

The for-credit classes are only a small portion of library usage. The majority of library use is from instruction sessions. Instruction sessions are usually assignment-specific and provided at the request of a full-time or part-time faculty person. In 1998-99 the four librarians taught 152 instruction sessions and the librarians taught 246 instruction sessions in 2002-03, a 62% increase. The quality of instruction sessions is assessed informally. The faculty person and the instructing librarian discuss the desired learning outcomes before the session. Then later in that same quarter, or in the next quarter the faculty person and the instructing librarian discuss what worked and what did not work in the instruction session. Then the instruction session is taught again. This assessment process is ongoing. The following comments illustrate the tremendous value of this informal assessment process:

“Librarians prove quick in responding to our (sometimes changing) course needs…”

“I discuss (with the librarian) the quality of the papers -- what went well and what we may need to emphasize next time. (The Librarian) then incorporates those ideas into her next presentation.”

About 122 full-time and part-time faculty collaborated with librarians in this process between the Fall of 1998 and the Spring of 2001. According to a Modified Nichols Assessment a student is exposed to the Information and Information Technology College-wide Student Learning Outcome an average of 12.72 times before graduating from TCC.

To assess the effectiveness of instruction sessions the Modified Nichols Assessment was used on another occasion to determine if at least “80% of student research projects will meet the instructor’s criteria for use of appropriate resources. Furthermore, 80% of faculty will
claim that there is no substantial difference in use of appropriate resources between on-line, hybrid, and traditional student projects.” (Assessment Report for LRC, September 24, 2002.) 12 classes were surveyed and in traditional classes 76% of the student’s research was deemed to be appropriate. 85% in the full online classes and 79% in the hybrid classes were viewed as appropriate. (exhibit 5.10).

Continued use and strengthening of the Nichols Model, and other informal assessment strategies, is strongly encouraged.

The Goals of developing of collections, providing barrier-free access to collections, and the pursuit of funding outside of the College budget are tied together by funding. Media Services and the Wannamaker Library have a thoughtful, written collection development policy that is easily accessible on the library’s webpage (Standard 5.B.3). Faculty, staff and students provide input into the management of the collection (5.B.4) and a Modified Nichols Assessment shows that “67 individual faculty members participated in collection development throughout the year. Those individuals represent 61% of the full-time faculty and 1% of the part-time faculty.” (Assessment Report for LRC, June 16, 2003) The library is exploring ways to involve more fulltime and part-time faculty in collection development.

Such explorations may be compromised by inconsistent funding. In 1998-99, $73,469 was allocated to fund code JD for library resources. This dollar amount has not grown in recent years. $72,500 is budgeted for the current academic year (2003-04). Subscriptions to electronic resources such as Books 24x7.com, Infotrac, Proquest, Opposing Viewpoints and Ethnic Newswatch are paid from another fund code, and that account grew from $25,000 in 2003-04 to $27,000 in 2004-05. Electronic resources are effective but expensive resources and annual subscriptions will continue to inflate. Still, electronic resources are important to the goal of barrier-free access to collections. Electronic resources are easily accessible to students with disabilities. Electronic resources are easily accessible at Branch campuses and to Distance Learning students. Electronic resources fulfill precisely the Future Focus Priority of Technology. “Acquire, maintain and support state-of-the-art technology as part of a comprehensive plan to meet the ever-changing needs of the college and the community.” In the month of October, 2003, the electronic databases received only 800 hits less, 6,594, as the number of students instructed at the reference desk for the whole year, 7,375. However, electronic resources are only a part of the Wannamaker Library’s core collection.

Books and media are equally important parts of the core collection. As an example, circulation statistics for the main collection, print periodicals and videocassettes were 22,559 in 1998 and 14,964 in 2003 (exhibit 5.12). Electronic databases have impacted the circulation of books, print periodicals and videocassettes, but not replaced them.

To access electronic databases requires a computer with internet access. The library has 38 computers with internet access and the computers were purchased with “College operating funds, along with allocations from a student technology fee implemented in 1998 ($1,029.28) and reauthorized in 2001 ($1,692.96).” (SS, xvi) In the Self-study the LRC writes, “The LRC will request additional workstations from the Student Technology Fee…”
This effort and other grants demonstrate a long-term commitment by the LRC to the Future Focus Priority of Funding. “Continue to pursue grants and alternative funding that supports the mission of the college.” And a commitment to the LRC Goal of partnering with “The Foundation and other groups to seek funding outside the College budget.”

However, outside sources should supplement the LRC budget, not replace it. The LRC recognized the LRC budget may not be sufficient to build the core collection and in the selfstudy the first identified Challenge is that outside funding has allowed the LRC to “significantly improve the print collection, (but) this level of support will be difficult to sustain.” The Plans and Solutions that follow the Challenges do not identify a plan to remedy this challenge and the LRC faculty are not aware of any plans for sustained funding at or near the 2001-02 level. This is a serious concern voiced by all the library faculty and the LRC/ESL/Distance Learning Dean. It is a concern that bears repeating, without continued outside funding the core collection could become insufficient to support the curriculum.

In conclusion the LRC has built a superb core collection according to a detailed plan and annually evaluates the effectiveness of that collection. Access to the core collection is facilitated by Information Competency that is taught online, at the branch campuses and on the main campus. The faculty and staff participate in opportunities for professional growth and then use their enthusiasm to make the LRC a harbor for intellectual freedom, learning and diversity.
STANDARD 6-GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

All colleges and universities have experienced difficulty in the current economic environment. Tacoma Community College is no exception as it struggles to meet growing student demand with its constrained resources. As noted frequently throughout this report by the Evaluation Team the pressure on resources is most evident in a full-time faculty resource that appears to be undersized when matched against the demands of the academic infrastructure.

Despite these struggles, it is worth noting that TCC’s strong leadership has made careful and deliberate choices that have helped the college avoid the crisis atmosphere that exists at many other colleges. TCC enrolls more students than the State of Washington supports through its funding formula and TCC has managed to create financial reserves from the tuition received from these additional students. Reserves have also been enhanced by the enrollment of a number of international students.

While the Evaluation Team does not retreat from its General Recommendation regarding the college’s need to more nearly balance its service reach with its available faculty resources, the leadership of the college deserves substantial credit for creating a sense of stability on campus. The fiscal leadership of the President and the Chief Financial Officer enjoy the confidence of the entire college community.

Tacoma Community College is something of a contradiction. Workload and staffing concerns were a part of nearly every conversation held by Evaluation Team members. Nevertheless, the level of morale among all employee groups and the student body was remarkably high. It is absolutely clear that employees support the work of the college, enjoy working for the college, and have confidence in its future. Likewise, students are enthusiastic about the quality of education they are receiving and demonstrate their support of the college in all manner of ways. This near universal support for the college is not accidental. The high morale and support that the college enjoys grows out of good leadership at all levels; e.g., the President, Board of Trustees, employee associations, student government. Respect and collegiality are reinforced values on campus.

TCC’s Board of Trustees is composed of engaged and thoughtful policy makers. They understand at a deep level the issues confronting the college, but present a stable and calm demeanor that positively impacts the overall campus culture. The Board’s attentiveness to the FFP process is a subtle, but crucial, signal to the whole campus that planning and “on purpose” behavior is a paramount value.

Internal governance at the college is dominated by committees. At least 30 regular committees exist to serve the college and representation on committees is pervasively democratic. The College’s Instructional Council is a key committee that enjoys the active and enthusiastic support of the faculty.

The college’s Budget Committee is another important committee that is charged with making key policy choices during the budget development process. A few voices were heard that
claimed the committee’s decisions were “pre-digested”, but the overwhelming view is that the committee is effective.

More important than any single committee is the sense on campus that participation opportunities are numerous and college decision-making is a shared process that respects all points of view.

The Evaluation Team is concerned that this remarkably healthy college culture is at risk of being overwhelmed by the corrosive effects of what are truly serious workload issues.
STANDARD 7-FINANCE

Tacoma Community College is part of a statewide system of 34 community and Technical Colleges that fall under the broad regulatory authority of the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Accordingly, the college is dependent on funding from the State. In FY 2002-03 State support was $16,504,515.

Two factors underscore the need for strong financial planning at TCC. State support for community colleges was reduced by 4.9 percent for the 2003-05 biennium and secondly State supported enrollment at TCC grew by 21.4 percent between 2000 and 2004. Growth in enrollment causes a revenue problem because State allocations are set in advance and additional growth is not funded by the State. The unfunded enrollment for TCC was 137 FTE in 1998-99. The unfunded enrollment increased to 968 FTE in 2002-03. The college does retain the tuition earned from unfunded enrollment.

TCC has positioned itself to be prepared in the event that State appropriations are further reduced. At June 30, 2003 TCC had an ending fund balance of approximately $4.9 million in unrestricted funds.

Funding for construction projects is provided by the State in the form of capital appropriations. Many of the buildings at TCC are approaching the end of their useful life and need to be replaced. The State appropriated 11 million for capital projects during the 2001-03 biennium and 26.5 million was appropriated during the current biennium.

A well-defined budgeting process is in place. The budget process is tied to the strategic goals identified in the ‘Future Focus’ document. The final budget adopted by the Board of Trustees is made available in the library and also posted on the College intranet site.

Despite overall decreases in State Support to community colleges, TCC has not had to cut its operating budget. Unlike many of its sister community colleges in Washington, TCC reports that it has not had to reduce its operating budget. The portion of revenues derived from tuition and fees has increased in recent years. In FY 2001-02 tuition increased by 6.2% and in FY 2002-03 tuition increased by 12%. A technology fee and a community safety fee were also recently authorized. The technology fee is managed by student government and must be reauthorized periodically. The college is dependent on these fees for basic equipment needs and campus security; the contingent nature of the technology fee is a concern to the Evaluation Team.

The college resources are supplemented with a strong stream of unrestricted revenue. In 2002-03 the Running Start program, Fresh Start program and the international student program generated $3.9 million in unrestricted revenue. Revenues from these programs have exceeded the expenses. This has allowed TCC to build up a reserve to provide a financial cushion in the event that State appropriations are reduced in the future.

The college reports to the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and also a local board. Both boards provide financial oversight. Tacoma Community College
has the positions necessary to perform the financial functions necessary for a college this size. The incumbents have appropriate education and experience to complete their duties. Financial functions are centralized under the Vice President for College Services. The Vice President for College Services reports directly to the President. The Governing Board receives regular reports concerning the college’s finances.

The Washington State Auditors Office conducts an independent accountability audit annually. The most recent audit notes that ‘The College has consistently exhibited a strong control environment. The audit marked the fifth consecutive year no findings were reported for the college.’ The College has an internal auditor who focuses on identifying potential risks. Assistance with internal controls or development of appropriate procedures is provided by the internal auditor.

The Office of Institutional Advancement and the Tacoma Community College Foundation carry out the institutional advancement activities. The Foundation is a separate 501(C) 3 corporation with the sole mission of providing support to the College. A new Vice President for Institutional Advancement was recently recruited. She is well qualified to provide leadership in the area of institutional advancement. During the transition in leadership, the Foundation’s annual audit for the year ending June 30, 2003 was delayed. At the time of the accreditation review a new audit firm had been retained and fieldwork for the audit had been scheduled.
STANDARD 8-PHYSICAL RESOURCES

TCC has three campuses. The main campus occupies 150 acres in west Tacoma. Smaller campuses are located at Gig Harbor and downtown. The downtown campus is leased and serves business and industry. The Bridge program is located on the Evergreen State College site. The College also occupies leased space at the James Center for the WorkFirst program. Adult Basic Skills classes are offered at two additional locations that are not owned by TCC. Many buildings on the main campus are approaching the end of their useful life. The college has been active in securing funds to replace and upgrade the buildings on the main campus.

Three State funded construction projects are under way. A 54,000 square foot information technology building is being built to prove much need new space for information and technology. A 68,000 square foot science building, and a 16,000 square foot classroom and administration building are being built to replace existing facilities. A 19,575 square foot Student Center is being funded with a student fee initiative.

TCC believes that student needs for computers are being met. The student/PC ratio is 13 to one. There is an adequately staffed information systems department to provide support. The college is commitment to providing computing resources. This is evidenced by the establishment of a budget line item to replace the oldest computers. The current replacement cycle for computers is five and a half years.

Pressures to replace instructional equipment are being met with a student technology fee that was authorized in 1998. To date this source has provided for over a million dollars of equipment for the college.

A Facilities Master Plan exists for the period of 2001 to 2011. The plan was developed in 2001 and updated in 2003. The plan was reviewed and approved by the governing board. The College’s planning process is supplemented with a process at the State level that ranks all capital requests. Furthermore the State contracts for an objective ranking of the condition of each building at all community colleges statewide. The process seems to be objective and TCC has made significant advances in implementing the facilities master plan. In the 2001-03 biennium the college was allocated $11 million for capital projects and $26.5 million was allocated for the current biennium. The planning of buildings includes universal access. The standards for universal access exceed the current ADA standards.

The college has a security staff of 5 full time positions and 4 half time positions. The security function is staffed on campus twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Approximately 1,400 calls are received by the security department annually. There were recently three instances of armed robbery on the main campus. According to the security personnel this was the first instance of serious crime on campus in thirty years.
STANDARD 9-INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

Tacoma Community College demonstrates its commitment to institutional integrity in a number of important ways.

The college conscientiously reviews publications and important documents to ensure that its representations to students and the public are accurate and timely. The college catalog is published every other year and may, at times, contain slightly outdated information. But, even in this case, substantive program of study catalog representations are honored by the college for full two-year periods.

The College Board of Trustees also operates under an adopted Code of Ethics. This pattern is carried over to the college staff by an adopted Code of Ethics published as a separate booklet and distributed to all employees. Periodic training on ethical issues is made available to staff and students.

Perhaps most significantly, the college has enhanced its mission statement by the addition of a Vision and Values statement. The core values of TCC, as expressed in the values statement, speak to “Integrity”, “Responsibility”, “Mutual Respect”, “Trust”, “Collegiality”, among others. These values are lived out at TCC as evidenced by a campus culture that so obviously reflects respect, courtesy, and high morale at all levels.

Academic Freedom issues are appropriately addressed in collective bargaining agreements and other policy documents. The Evaluation Team found no evidence of faculty concern regarding issues of academic freedom. Likewise, no evidence was found that students had concerns relating to academic freedom.

Student discipline codes and other college rules and regulations are published and most are available through college intranet postings. Appropriate provisions for due process hearings are made in all college disciplinary processes.
GENERAL COMMENDATIONS

1. Tacoma Community College is commended for the exceptional morale and collegiality demonstrated by its leadership, students, and all employee groups. The Evaluation Team was deeply impressed by the near uniform enthusiasm for the work and mission of the College as expressed by all those associated with it.

2. Tacoma Community College maintains a strong and vibrant culture that values participation at all levels of the organization. The College is commended for its strong system of internal governance that nurtures and supports this positive culture.

3. Tacoma Community College is commended for its institutional effectiveness program. The College’s Future Focus Priorities are embedded in college operations and guide institutional behaviors.

4. Tacoma Community College is commended for creating an exceptionally supportive environment for student government and the development of student leadership. The College has been rewarded for its efforts by the emergence of student leaders who are tireless advocates for the College.

5. Tacoma Community College is commended for the quality, breadth, and number of its partnerships with diverse community organizations, area high schools, and local business and industry. The College is deeply connected to the larger Tacoma community. Its growing entrepreneurial and international commitments will only strengthen its already robust community connections.
GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Student academic advising resources at Tacoma Community College are stretched to the breaking point. There is ample evidence that large numbers of students are seriously disadvantaged because they do not have access to quality academic advising. The Evaluation Team recommends the college quickly address this issue. (Standards 2.C.5, 3.A.1, 3.D.10)

2. The Evaluation Team recommends that Tacoma Community College carefully review fulltime faculty staffing levels. The Evaluation Team is concerned that the number of full-time faculty may be inadequate to support the academic infrastructure of the College. Particular concerns were noted in staffing levels for the ABE program, developmental math (as taught in a lab format), and advising, but...in truth...the team’s concerns are pervasive. A similar concern was noted in the General Recommendations of the College’s 1994 Full-Scale Evaluation. Further, the College seems to have acknowledged this issue in its own Future Focus Priorities. It is critical that the College size and tailor its goals, reach, and service mission to its available faculty resources. (ER 6, ER 7, Standards 2.C.7, 4A)

3. Tacoma Community College has invested considerable time and institutional energy in the development of an educational assessment program. While a great deal of progress has been made in implementing this model, much more work needs to be done. Not all programs and disciplines have developed program learning objectives and/or assessment tools, and great deal of the actual assessment work is being done at the course level rather than the program or discipline level (course level assessments should, of course, continue). The College’s overall educational assessment efforts are inconsistent and incomplete. The Evaluation Team recommends that the college develop a complete and coherent education assessment program (Standard 2.B.2, Policy 2.2)