REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM

SPECIAL VISIT

SAN DIEGO CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

April 7-9, 2014

Team Roster

Bob Brower, Team Chair
President, Point Loma Nazarene University

John A. Hughes, Team Assistant Chair
Vice President for Institutional Planning and Research, The Master’s College and Seminary

Mark Linden Sargent, Team Member
Provost, Westmont College

Christopher Oberg, WASC Liaison

The Team evaluated the institution under the 2013 WASC Senior College and University Commission Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the WASC Senior College and University Commission.

The formal action concerning the institution’s status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. This report and the Commission letter are made available to the public by publication on the WASC website.
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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Visit

San Diego Christian College (SDC) is a private, non-profit college now located in Santee, California in the greater San Diego metropolitan area. SDC was founded as Christian Heritage College in 1970 through the efforts of what is now Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon.

In 2005 the College changed its name to San Diego Christian College as part of its commitment to establish its identity as an independent, faith-based liberal arts college. In January 2014 the College completed an additional step in establishing its identity, moving from its original, church-owned facilities in El Cajon, California to a new campus being developed in nearby Santee.

The College had its initial visit by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) in 1975 and was granted Candidacy in 1976. Accreditation was granted in 1984 and was followed by numerous challenges and Commission actions requiring several focused and special visits to the College. The College has been placed on Probation twice and was under Show Cause action by the Commission in 2006.

In 2007 changes to the Board of Trustees and the hiring of a full-time president provided a foundation to address the issues identified by the Commission in its 2006 Show Cause action. The College had its last Comprehensive Visit in 2008 and a Special Visit in 2012. This Special Visit focuses upon the Commission’s concerns regarding achieving financial sustainability, a revision of strategic planning, and the maturing of program review and assessment.

Since the last special visit in 2012, the College has had Substantive Change Site Visits in June 2012 and April 2013. These two visits began the process for Commission approval of an Associate of Arts (AA) in Liberal Arts off-campus program and an online AA in General Studies.
With the approved changes, an off-campus program has also begun in Minnesota. During the past two years the campus and online enrollments have grown by a combined 40%. The relocation of the College in January has been the focus of much of the planning efforts in recent years and has brought about what is described as a “total reset” of the College and a new optimism about the future.

The Commission has scheduled the offsite review for the fall of 2015 and the accreditation team visit for spring 2016.

The Team arrived on April 6, 2014 for consultation and planning. From April 7-9 the Team conducted onsite reviews of institutional documents and interviews with administrative personnel, trustees, faculty, staff, and students to further refine its initial findings.

B. The Institution’s Self-Study Report: Quality of the Report and Evidence

The Team reviewed the *Special Visit Report* and the supporting document prior to the visit. In the Team conference call, a number of questions and lines of inquiry were defined to extend the Team review during the visit. The Report and supporting documents provided the foundation for the campus visit and the interviews during the visit provided the necessary information to answer Team questions and shape the findings for the recommendations to the Commission.

Additional documents identified in the pre-visit Team conference call regarding budgets, enrollment projections, graduation and retention rates, and the strategic plan were requested and provided to the Team either prior to arrival or during the visit.

The Team found that the *Special Visit Report* addressed the three central issues and concerns raised by the Commission. The Report focused on initiating actions and progress that have been taken to begin addressing the concerns. The progress indicated in the Report was confirmed in the interviews and appears to have gained momentum with the recent campus move. However, while progress is underway
and prospects for continued improvement are present, there has not yet been sufficient time to ensure that the Commission’s concerns have been fully achieved at a deep and mature level.

C. Description of the Team Review Process

During the email communication prior to the team conference call, the Team members divided the responsibilities for the writing and inquiry that would be conducted during the visit. The breadth of professional experiences of the Team enabled them to explore questions, prepare lines of questioning, and draft preliminary documents to guide the visit.

The Team took the opportunity to more precisely plan its inquiry and interview process in a preliminary meeting during the evening before the on-site visit began. This meeting enabled the Team to efficiently conduct interviews and discussions which extended the Team’s understanding so that it could confirm or correct preliminary findings.

The Team had adequate time throughout the visit to discuss various findings and to shape the conclusions of the visit report into a coherent whole that extended beyond the initial findings presented in the report and supporting documents.

The Team presented an overview of its findings to the representatives of San Diego Christian College at the exit meeting on April 9 as it concluded its campus visit.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF ISSUES UNDER THE STANDARDS

A. Achieving Financial Sustainability

In the Commission's letter, "Achieving Financial Sustainability" was the first area of concern for SDC to address (CFR 3.4). The need to achieve financial sustainability was further identified by three key areas for attention; 1) a commitment to maintain "enrollment, tuition revenue, and fundraising;" 2)
the need to formalize a budget planning model; and 3) the establishment of clear financial management and reporting structures to "protect the interest of the college."

The Team reviewed the College's *Special Visit Report* and the supporting documents provided, including the audited financial statements, the recently developed budget planning model, and the budget and enrollment projections identified in the report and supporting documents. Additionally, current enrollment and financial data were requested and reviewed for the 2013 - 2014 academic year in order to update the analysis of the College's performance against its projections.

The Team discovered in interviews with the President and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) three significant findings that have enhanced the financial stability of SDC. First, in the College’s move from its previous church-owned facilities to its new campus (CFR 1.5), the College has experienced a reduction in operational expenses for facilities and support services (e.g., IT, finance, utilities) while realizing a substantial improvement in facilities and campus services. In addition to these savings, the College has achieved larger than projected enrollments in both its traditional and non-traditional enrollments, thus producing unbudgeted net revenues for the College. Finally, the budgeting process instituted by the President and Cabinet now builds the budget based on the past year’s actual performance rather than upon hoped for, and generally unrealized, projections of future enrollment (CFR 3.4). This budgeting change, in an environment of enrollment growth, has created new net revenues beyond previous year’s levels and has resulted in the College moving from a pattern of deficit spending to a budget surplus, thus enhancing prospects for building financial sustainability. These three factors have played an important role in what many have described as a “total reset” of the College in its new identity, growing enrollment, and financial strength.

Prior to the above results, and following the last WASC visit, initial efforts to achieve financial sustainability (CFR 3.4) were taken by the President's Cabinet through the development of an integrated
and adaptive five-year financial plan that is modeled through a multi-factor spreadsheet. This model is
designed to include each element of the Commission’s concerns for financial sustainability by
incorporating data on enrollment, tuition, and fundraising from current operations and the projections for
the next five years.

The Cabinet indicated that this model is updated on a monthly basis to reflect the new data from the
College's operations and enrollments, which in turn updates the future projections and enables timelier
decision-making and budget planning. The Team reviewed the elements in the model and sought to
understand its administrative use and predictive effectiveness in providing management with planning
and decision making capabilities toward developing financial sustainability. The Team found that this
model is frequently being used as a tool for considering multiple factors and scenarios for various
enrollments and projected costs associated with the College’s planned growth.

The Team found that this budget model adequately provides the Cabinet with the capacity to do
longer term planning and prediction of the financial condition of the College as various changes occur in
their planning assumptions. However, the CFO acknowledges that as the College grows and becomes
more complex, additional sophistication will be needed in their model to better capture the assumptions
necessary for future financial modeling. The CFO has begun exploration of additional options for their
budget modeling in anticipation of increasing institutional complexity.

The College is also attempting to address the issue of financial sustainability through increased
efforts to build enrollment and to establish the personnel structure that would provide more
comprehensive oversight for admissions and retention. In the summer of 2012 the President's Cabinet
was reconfigured by appointing a Vice President for Student Services who now oversees Admissions,
Athletics, Student Financial Services, and Student Life (CFRs 3.6 & 3.7). These staff changes are
intended to bring together multiple, related functions in order to focus the College’s efforts more
comprehensively across enrollment, student life, and the factors affecting student retention. These initial strategies will require further evaluation and probably refinement as the College matures these practices toward increased student success and retention.

In addition to these internal staff changes designed for enrollment growth, the College has recently signed a contract with Join-ed Inc. for recruitment services in the College’s online program enrollment. This revenue-sharing agreement provides a more sophisticated process of student prospect identification and recruitment for the College’s online programs than was previously possible. This strategy of recruitment has been identified as a key component in the projections for the College’s enrollment growth and thus, a key factor in the financial modeling for the College’s future sustainability.

The College has also attempted to broaden its enrollment attractiveness to prospective students by adding additional academic programs over the past two years. An AA program has been added through a partnership with an established “Great Books” program in Minnesota as well as an online AA degree that was approved and is now being offered by the College. SDC administrators indicated that additional new academic programs will be considered and developed within the current academic planning process to further enhance enrollment growth.

As these potential programs develop, the College will need to ensure it is planning effectively to provide the necessary financial and human resources required to launch and sustain quality academic programs from initiation to full program operation (CFRs 3.7 & 4.7).

Enrollment growth and enrollment management are key factors in future financial projections for the College’s goal of achieving financial sustainability. While strategies to build enrollment are being put in place, attention to student retention and the rate of graduation should be a priority for the College in its enrollment management efforts (CFR 2.10). The most recent six-year cohort graduation rates reported
are 38% for entering freshmen and 54% for transfer students and little disaggregation of the data is available for analysis.

The College has recently begun to focus upon retention efforts through the creation of a new Retention Committee, the acquisition of a software program to optimize enrollment and financial aid management - Regent 8, and the addition of Student Graduation (formerly Success) Coaches in its Adult Professional Studies (APS) program. The Team found that initial structures and functions are being implemented. However, it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies. Further analysis of the outcomes of these strategies and interventions will be necessary to accurately evaluate their use and role in strengthening retention and graduation rates which will contribute to financial and institutional sustainability (CFR 3.4).

The College also responded to the comments of the 2012 Visiting Team regarding the complexity of the financial personnel structure and its lack of defined job descriptions. The appointment of a full-time CFO (CFR 3.8) has enabled the College to establish more effective accounting procedures, refine its internal controls, and automate its reporting of financial data to budget managers. The Team found that the new financial team, and the structures and systems being put in place have begun the process of improving and strengthening the financial reporting and oversight of budgets throughout the College (CFR 3.7). The CFO and the Director of Finance reported that since the new reporting and budget system has been put in place, budget variance expenditures have virtually been eliminated as managers now weekly updated budget information for decision-making. In addition, budget training sessions have been conducted by finance personnel with budget managers in order to develop the expertise of budget managers in their oversight responsibilities (CFRs 3.7 & 3.8).

In summary, the Team found that in regard to the Commission's concerns for achieving financial sustainability, SDC has taken several steps to strengthen its capacity to achieve sustainability. The
establishment of a multi-faceted budget planning model - linking enrollment, tuition, and fundraising - provides a potential tool to improve both management and predictive effectiveness in monitoring and planning for the future of its financial position (CFR 3.4). The move to the new campus has reduced operational costs and provided an independent identity for the College (CFR 1.5) that provides an opportunity for enrollment growth and financial stability. The addition of new academic programs and the growth of APS/Online enrollments have provided recent enrollment and financial growth.

Further review and analysis should be conducted on the long-term use and accuracy of the budget model to facilitate planning and decision-making and on the predictive accuracy of enrollment projections for achieving long-term financial sustainability. The additional steps taken by the College to establish financial personnel in more clearly defined positions and to create reporting procedures have further enhanced the capacity of the College regarding its financial management. The personnel in these positions bring professional experience and expertise not previously available to the financial management of the College (CFRs 3.2 & 3.8).

The enrollment and retention strategies being developed also provide new potential to bolster the financial future of the College through building enrollment and thus, the revenue necessary for a tuition-driven institution. Since many of these strategies and structures are new, further evaluation and refinement of them will be necessary to more fully provide the confidence in the assumptions of the five-year budget planning model and its capacity to be an effective planning tool for establishing long-term financial stability of the College.

B. Revisioning Strategic Planning

The Team reviewed the College’s Special Visit Report and the supporting documents provided, including the latest draft of the institution’s strategic plan and various departmental plans. During interviews with numerous administrators and faculty (the President, the Cabinet, the CFO, the CAO, the
Dean of the APS program, the department chairs, the Strategic Planning Committee, the Dean of Assessment, among others), the Team observed a number of planning procedures that have been bolstered since the Commission’s 2012 Action Letter.

According to the Special Visit Report, there has been “an active Strategic Planning Committee at SDC since 1992,” although in “some years it has been more productive than others.” At present, the Strategic Planning Committee appears to be have been reinvigorated, inspired in many ways by the need to prepare for relocation to the Santee campus. The current strategic planning process engages a wide sampling of the College community, and there is a good spirit of collaboration among participants, even when they are pressed with tougher choices about priorities (CFRs 3.10 & 4.4). For the most part, the strategic planning process has focused on annual requests, identifying some specific items to be approved and funded each year. Not surprisingly, the relocation has commanded considerable attention from all employees and focused planning on the immediate transition. Conversations with faculty and staff about planning primarily stressed the recent preparations for the move. From all reports, the planning for the relocation was thorough, communication was excellent, and the changeover proceeded gracefully and collegially.

The Strategic Planning Committee has also been developing a long-term plan, though that plan remained a work-in-progress at the time of the Team’s visit. As the College looks to its future, this planning process has taken its wings from the President’s articulation of three principal initiatives: 1) building a strong community; 2) cultivating a dynamic learning environment; and 3) securing a sustainable future. Those initiatives have given shape to planning within the various sectors of the College, as departments have organized their own lists of objectives and aspirations under these overarching themes (CFR 3.10). Departments now complete annual plans, using a template made accessible through LiveText. In these plans, departments develop goals and budgets requests in five-year timelines. Many of the faculty members even acknowledge citing the three initiatives in their own
personal goals and annual reports. While the strategic plan is still in construction, the various departments have drafted specific goals, identified the person or committee with primary responsibilities for the tasks, and, in many cases, ranked the objectives. The Strategic Planning Committee has yet to synthesize all of these departmental proposals and visions into a single coherent plan, with the necessary pruning and prioritizing.

While much planning remains to be done, the relocation and the President’s Vision have fostered optimism and aspiration which has been amplified by an increased sense of independence from the church (CFR 1.5). Faculty and administration speak very positively about the opportunity to contribute to the community of Santee, evident in the plans for a new Institute for Community Engagement (ICE). The enhancement of the new facilities and the expansion of the campus continue to be high priorities in the planning. The College plans to purchase and develop some adjacent property for new housing facilities and a new athletic complex. The CFO has been developing models for integrating such purchases into the five-year financial plan.

The College also anticipates a major expansion of its curriculum, in large measure to provide opportunities for new revenue streams and enrollment growth. The President’s Vision for 2019 forecasts a substantial increase in non-traditional student enrollments, including online courses, new majors, and multiple master’s degrees. The new five-year financial planning model has been designed with the hope that it can adjust budget allocations in response to an increase in the enrollment.

The Team recognizes notable progress in SDC’s strategic planning since the Commission’s letter of 2012, yet it still recognizes several persistent challenges and the need for improvement. Program review within the academic departments has been uneven, and there was little evidence that the assessment of student learning has informed recent budgeting (CFR 4.1). The strategic planning process has been focused predominantly on the traditional programs at the new Santee campus, even
though the President’s Vision calls for the nontraditional enrollment to swell far beyond the traditional student body. In the current strategic planning materials, the APS/Online department represents only one strand among many, as if it were a single department. Members of the trustees and the Strategic Planning Committee were primarily focused on the traditional campus, with several admitting that they had not yet engaged questions about APS and its future with the same attentiveness as they did the traditional programs. Most of the strategic initiatives in the APS program are focused on program expansion and growth, rather than on academic quality and mission.

Since SDC does anticipate a tilt of the enrollment toward the nontraditional student, the ongoing planning efforts should ensure that sufficient portions of the new revenue are invested in enhancing quality in APS programs. This would include, among other matters, adequate full-time faculty, professional development resources, and budgets to cover opportunity costs for crafting new programs (CFRs 2.1 & 3.1). At the current moment, APS entrusts a large portion of its instruction to adjunct faculty, and the College needs to consider how those faculty have meaningful roles in assessment and participatory governance (CFRs 2.4 & 3.10). Faculty and staff are all committed to ensuring that the nontraditional programs reflect the core values and mission of the institution, though efforts to define how such distinct values will be sustained in the nontraditional environments are still nascent (CFR 1.1).

In the Special Visit Report and in conversation with trustees and employees, the Team encountered multiple comments about the prospects for adding graduate degrees. A few cite the necessity of graduate study for teachers’ licensure. Some contend that graduate programs represent the next step in the institution’s advancement, and others perceive the need to find new sources of tuition revenue. The Team voices a strong caution about SDC’s preparedness to move into graduate programming before it strengthens its academic base. Increasing the percentage of terminal degrees among faculty, building a stronger core of full-time faculty in APS, and cultivating a stronger culture of
scholarship and leadership of faculty within their academic guilds should be prerequisites to moving into
graduate-level instruction (CFRs 2.1, 2.2b, 2.8, & 3.1).

All told, SDC has taken notable strides in its planning protocols and displays a buoyant spirit as it enters this new chapter on the Santee campus. Completing the new strategic document and connecting it clearly to the new five-year financial forecasts could represent a new level of coherence and effectiveness in planning. As it links its aspirations with budgeting, SDC needs to ensure that the planning process focuses on the full scope of the institution’s programs (CFR 3.7). It should be cautious about adopting a financial model that relies too heavily on nontraditional programs to underwrite operations and facilities in the traditional program.

C. Deepening and Maturing Program Review and Assessment

The July 2012 WASC Commission Action Letter identified the following four specific assessment-related areas needing continued development and attention by SDC in anticipation of their next comprehensive review: 1) sustaining a strong commitment to and use of the capstone review process, 2) continuing concerns relative to assuring regular program review and assessment cycles, 3) refining assessment processes and guidelines, and 4) establishing a robust implementation plan to include the College's multi-faceted co-curricular programs and activities.

In the Special Visit Report, SDC organized its response to this recommendation around CFRs 2.3 & 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 4.4, and 4.6. Embedded in these six sub-sections was a clear presentation of the steps that SDC had taken to respond to each of the four assessment-related issues listed above. There were eight assessment-related supporting documents provided which included three academic program reviews, program-level learning outcomes (PLOs) for two co-curricular departments, and several templates and handbooks. Additional print copy documentation was provided by SDC in the team room for review during the visit that included fifteen academic department self-study reports from 2008 and
fourteen academic department assessment reports from 2012. Update materials had been inserted into some of those reports. SDC also provided guest access to their *LiveText* site which contained a wide variety of current assessment-related information including department assessment plans, in-process program reviews, summaries from the annual review of capstone projects, etc.

SDC has structured its approach to assessment of program-level student learning to rely heavily on the use of a significant capstone project in a required senior-level major course (CFR 2.6). This is true across all majors in both the traditional and the APS/Online programs. Most capstones require the student to develop some type of major written project, and to then formally present that project to the departmental faculty. Often additional individuals including parents, friends, and other students also attend their capstone presentations. Some departments have begun to invite alumni to attend the student presentations. SDC may want to consider expanding this practice, and also explore the possible value of inviting additional “outsiders” from industry and colleges in order to obtain external assessments of student mastery levels (CFRs 4.1 & 4.5).

Capstone projects have been purposefully designed to provide faculty insight relating to student mastery of all PLOs in the major. However, in a few instances, the capstone could not incorporate every major program outcome, and an additional assessment assignment was developed to ensure coverage of that expected PLO (CFRs 2.6, 4.3, & 4.4).

Most of the academic department assessment plans include a five year schedule during which the department examines 1-3 of the major PLOs in greater depth each year. Department will often create an additional assessment strategy (beyond the capstone project) to gain focused data and insights about student performance levels on the PLOs schedule for review that year (CFRs 2.7, 4.1, & 4.6).

Capstone review meetings are held annually during May in each academic department to enable faculty to examine and discuss the results of the student capstone assignments (CFRs 4.4 & 4.6). The
meetings typically include some discussion about the findings from that year’s capstones relating to all major PLOs, and also a more focused review of the capstone and other data relating to the 1-3 PLOs scheduled for review that year. During the campus visit, the Team was able to review the minutes from a number of the annual capstone meetings. In addition, the Team was able to discuss the use of capstones and the annual review of capstone data with the faculty. There widespread support for this assessment strategy with a number of faculty reporting sharing improvements that had been made to their majors as a result of those review discussions. In addition, students who are currently completing their capstone course were interviewed, and shared (with some excitement) an overview of their project’s topic and the development process. SDC’s capstone approach to assessing student mastery of major PLOs seems to have become a part of their institutional culture.

A total of twelve of the College’s nineteen academic programs have been or are at some stage in the Program Review (PR) process (CFRs 2.7 & 4.1). Three of the departments completed their reviews under an older, fairly extensive set of PR guidelines. During the 2012-13 school year, the PR template and procedures were revised to make the process more focused and efficient. Six academic programs (three traditional and three APS/Online majors) are currently completing their reviews using some form of this updated process. During the Special Visit, the Team was able to examine the updated PR template, discuss its use with a number of the faculty, and review several of the PRs that have been developed using this new template. It appears that the revised template has provided a complete, concise, and organized structure for guiding both traditional and APS/Online academic departments through the PR process (CFRs 2.7, 4.1, & 4.3). SDC is currently in the process of updating the original PR Handbook to relate more clearly to the revised categories and format in the template. There is some amount of ongoing refinement in the template and the handbook as a result of lessons learned during the first cycle of PRs using this new process.
A nine-year schedule of academic department PRs has been published to ensure all majors are reviewed on a regularly schedule basis. All current major programs will have completed the current review cycle by the 2018-19 school year.

Once a department has completed a PR (which includes a recommended action plan), the department chairperson meets with the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) to review the report and discuss the action plan. The plan is revised based on that discussion, and resubmitted in final form. The action plan serves as a basis for departmental and financial planning going forward (CFRs 3.4 & 4.1). Based on interviews with department chairpersons and the VPAA, this process seems to be working as much as can be expected given the financial challenges faced by SDC in previous years, and the financial resources associated with the campus relocation this past year.

SDC has adopted LiveText to support the PR and assessment processes (CFR 3.5). Department chairpersons and faculty spoke very positively about their experience using LiveText. A number of SDC assessment templates have been developed and implemented which have provided significant guidance to faculty involved in assessment activities. Assessment rubrics for capstone and other assignments have been developed in LiveText which faculty use when evaluating student-uploaded signature assignments.

With the acquisition of LiveText, the transition to Edvance 360 as their LMS, the adoption of Regent 8 as their enrollment and financial aid management system, the use of Intacct as their accounting software, it will be critical that SDC develops strong interfaces between these and other software systems to enable reliable and efficient exchange of institutional data. The ability to store, summarize, analyze, aggregate/disaggregate, and report student demographic, assessment, retention, and graduation data will be critical to SDC’s continued academic and institutional assessment activities (CFRs 3.5 & 4.2).
SDC has taken significant steps to respond to the WASC 2012 Action Letter recommendation to refine its assessment-related processes and guidelines (CFR 4.1). As already cited above, the PR template has been significantly revised, and updating of the accompanying handbook is now in process. A new standardized template for course syllabi has been developed to provide a clearer link between course, program, and institutional level student learning outcomes. In addition, the Special Visit Report described the development of assessment rubrics to be used in the evaluation of student capstone major projects. The Dean for Assessment has worked with the departments to develop these rubrics, and has coordinated a session each fall and spring during which the between-evaluator ratings can be calibrated. The English department has developed a set of rubrics to assist faculty in assessing students’ writing development. This rubric has been adopted by the GE Committee as part of its work to assess student writing across the curriculum using designated “writing intensive” course signature assignments. Discussions with faculty during the visit indicated that these assessment tools have been widely implemented, and are regularly used. This also appears to be the case in the APS/Online programs although the Team did not have an opportunity to interact directly with APS adjunct faculty.

As it relates to use of externally benchmarked assessments of student performance (CFR 2.6), the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Major Field Test (MFT) is currently being used in the Biology Department, and is under consideration for use in Psychology. Scores and pass rates on several state and national certifying examinations have been implemented several other departments. SDC Business student scores on the international business simulation (their capstone for the major) provide a strong base for external comparisons of educational quality. SDC is encouraged to explore additional strategies for external review and comparison of SDC student mastery levels with those of students from peer institutions.

The WASC Commission 2012 Action Letter also contained a recommendation for SDC to “establish a robust implementation plan to include the College's multi-faceted co-curricular programs and
activities.” Less progress has been made by the Institution in responding to this recommendation. Work in Student Services has only recently begun to develop student learning outcomes for the various programs and services offered through that department (CFR 2.11). Draft sets of mission statements and learning outcomes were provided in the supporting documentation for two Student Service areas: Commuter Assistant and Resident Assistant. There was significant variability between the focus and level of detail in these two sets of outcomes. They appeared to be somewhat of a cross between job-position descriptions and statements defining expected student learning. Both sets of outcomes shared three common organizing categories of 1) administration, 2) leadership, and 3) diversity. First draft versions of PLOs were provided during the visit for a number of other co-curricular programs. However, discussions with Student Services staff indicated that no clear strategies for identifying and collecting “student work samples” to provide insight into student mastery of those PLOs have been formulated at this time.

A LiveText-based Co-curricular Program Review template was drafted just this spring and there is a published schedule for review of the eleven co-curricular programs once every five years. The PR for the Spiritual Life department was started in the 2012-13 school year. Due to the time involved to adapt the PR template for use in the co-curricular area and to begin the development of program level learning outcomes, the PR is only now being completed (CFRs 2.11 & 4.1). The Spiritual Life program director was placed on the Assessment Committee this year in order to deepen his understanding of the assessment process and to provide ready support as he developed the PR. Additional efforts will still be needed to refine learning outcomes and identify effective mechanisms for collecting student work relating to each outcome.

Given that development of assessment in the co-curricular program area was identified in the WASC 2012 Action Letter, SDC is strongly encouraged to give immediate and focused attention to development and implementation of techniques and processes in this area.
SECTION III – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Commendations:

1. The Team commends the College for developing its new 5-year budget planning process, the financial modeling tool, and the recent enrollment gains as a framework for developing financial sustainability (CFR 3.4).

2. The Team commends the hiring of a full-time CFO, the clarification of position responsibilities in finance, and the implementation of regular budget reporting as steps toward strengthening the College’s capacity for financial management (CFRs 3.7 & 3.8).

3. The Team commends the College for its planning efforts and work to achieve the recent campus relocation to its newly-developed, dedicated campus facilities. Further, the Team recognizes the significance of the College establishing its independent identity (CFR 1.5) and achieving the resulting financial savings and operational improvements achieved by its relocation.

4. The Team commends the development of its broadly participative strategic planning process and the resulting detailed, prioritized departmental plans supporting the three mission-linked initiatives of the President and the Board of Trustees (CFRs 4.4, 4.6, & 4.7). These initiatives have provided valuable input to the annual budgeting process and the five-year financial forecasting model.

5. The Team commends the faculty and academic leadership for development and use of student capstones as an effective assessment strategy. This practice is contributing to substantive faculty discussions about improvement of student learning across all academic programs (CFRs 2.4, 2.6, & 2.7). This assessment approach has also increased the motivation of senior class students to produce their best work to demonstrate mastery of program learning outcomes near the point of graduation.
B. Recommendations:

1. The Team recommends continued attention be given to refining SDCC’s enrollment management practices and developing necessary student support programs (in both the traditional and APS/online programs) to increase student retention and graduation rates to a level that are comparable to those of an identified set of peer institutions (CFRs 1.2, 2.10, & 2.13).

2. The Team recommends that, with the all-consuming tasks of relocating the campus nearing completion, the institution frame a unified vision and plan for the future development of SDCC that clearly encompasses both the traditional and APS/online academic programs as input to the next cycle of strategic planning (CFRs 3.7, 4.1, & 4.4).

3. The Team recommends that the College build upon its assessment foundation, provided through the use of capstone projects, annual reviews, and updated program review processes, to incorporate assessment mechanisms that can provide comparisons of educational quality internally between traditional and APS programs and also externally to national and selected peer institution benchmark standards (CFRs 2.4, 2.6, & 2.7).

4. The Team recommends that significant, focused effort be given to the recently begun process of defining learning outcomes for student co-curricular programs and the development of appropriate assessment strategies to systematically evaluate student mastery relating to those desired outcomes (CFR 2.11).

5. The Team recommends that attention be given to the acquisition, development, and integration of administrative technology systems that can provide efficient access, summarization, and reporting of the institutional information critical to data-informed decision making across the College (CFRs 3.5 & 4.2).