

Responses to the 2009 ACCJC Recommendations

Abstract of the 2015 Self Evaluation Report



SANTA ROSA JUNIOR COLLEGE



Our Mission *Santa Rosa Junior College passionately cultivates learning through the creative, intellectual, physical, social, emotional, aesthetic and ethical development of our diverse community.*



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Responses to 2009 ACCJC Recommendations

Recommendation 1

In order to increase effectiveness after the first full cycle of the new PRPP is completed, the college should evaluate the effectiveness of the process to ensure the inclusion of information beyond data collection and survey results. The college should also use the results and report the findings to the communities served by the college and also integrate research into all future planning processes. (I.B.3, I.B.6, I.B.7, III.A.6, III.D.1.a, III.D.1.d, III.D.2.g, III.D.3)

SRJC RESPONSE

The College has taken actions to fully meet these recommendations. Now in its seventh year, the Program and Resources Planning Process (PRPP), depicted in Illustration 1, has undergone systematic evaluations and, based on those results, has significantly improved each year. The content of every PRPP report includes detailed analysis of data and explanation of each program's activities and requests in relation to the College's mission and goals. Dialogue and planning based on the PRPP, along with information through the Office of Institutional Research (OIR), reflect integrated institutional planning processes and budget allocation that are clearly linked to research (1).

Results from the PRPP and subsequent plans, changes, and improvements are available to the college community and the public through links on the newly revised Institutional Planning website (2).

All of the Standards in this 2015 Self Evaluation Report, including the sections referenced in the above recommendation, demonstrate the pervasiveness of the PRPP in SRJC's institutional prioritization and planning. Standard I.B describes the specifics of the process and how it is evaluated and improved by the institution. The fact that the PRPP has evolved into the primary planning mechanism for the District stands as evidence that it operates as an effective tool and is responsive to institutional changes and improvement.

Evaluation of the PRPP

The PRPP has been regularly evaluated every year since its implementation and has used a variety of methods for this purpose. One main method has been surveys, which at first went to PRPP editors: department chairs, faculty coordinators, administrative assistants, deans, managers, and other staff directly involved in providing information and analysis. These early surveys asked users about the mechanics of the process since the College was still adjusting to the PRPP's structure and role in planning and the Information Technology (IT) department was still working out technical aspects of the system (3).

Later surveys requested broader feedback regarding transparency, dialogue, and usefulness. Responses to two major employee surveys in 2011 and 2013 show that employees' understanding of and involvement in the PRPP has increased over the past three years (4, 5). Details about the surveys are in Standard I.B.3.

Results from the surveys have been reported to the Institutional Planning Council (IPC) and have contributed to discussions about improving the PRPP. IPC also receives feedback and requests from administrators and committees directly involved in decision-making processes regarding the kind of information the PRPP should provide. For instance, the Faculty Staffing Committee (FSC), which prioritizes requests for full-time faculty, shifted from requiring a separate form and narrative to relying primarily on sections of the PRPP for consistent information from requesting departments about their requests for full-time faculty. While the FSC later decided that a supplemental form was still necessary, the guidelines for the PRPP section on faculty staffing have been fully aligned with the criteria used by the FSC so that the combination of the FSC form and PRPP provide a complete picture of each department's needs (6, 7).

Finally, to strengthen the annual evaluation and revision cycle of the PRPP, IPC established a cross-constituent PRPP Coordinating Committee in 2010 to make recommendations on all matters pertaining to the PRPP. The PRPP Coordinating Committee, now a sub-committee of IPC, meets twice per month during the academic year and has served as a "rapid response" team focused on continuous quality improvement of the PRPP. The committee submits periodic reports and recommendations to IPC, and, as a result, the PRPP has evolved over time to meet the needs of the College and end users.

Functions of the PRPP Coordinating Committee include:

- Creating an annual timeline and calendar of deadlines for all program/units in the District (8).
- Communicating with the college community about the impacts of the previous PRPP in terms of budget allocations; the launch of each PRPP cycle; and the parameters for the upcoming year regarding the budget and District goals (9).
- Discussing and implementing changes and improvements to the process (10), such as:
 - o The prompts, the process, and the server-based template
 - o The specific sections, such as instructional equipment requests or SLO assessment summaries, that can be extracted and downloaded as distinct reports
 - o The data sets needed by any program/unit in the District
 - o Specific sections in response to evaluations or surveys conducted of users and/or the college community
 - o Programming and IT support

Examples of recent improvements based on evaluations, committee review and discussion, and institutional changes include (11):

- Replacing reference to College Initiatives with new mission and Strategic Plan goals.
- Providing additional Student Equity Data.
- Repurposing certain fields to gather information at the unit level regarding progress towards specific Strategic Plan goals such as “Serve Our Diverse Communities” (examples of cultural competence); “Cultivate a Healthy Organization” (departmental professional development); and “Develop Financial Resources” (such as grants or contracts).
- Including a field for user response about the process within the PRPP template itself.

Ensuring Appropriate and Adequate Information

The ACCJC recommendation stated that the evaluation of the PRPP should “ensure the inclusion of information beyond data collection and survey results.” The PRPP has accomplished this. Prompts require that presentation of data be accompanied with analysis, discussion of external trends, and explanation of other factors, such as grant funding, that might not be immediately apparent to reviewers.

Proposed departmental and institutional actions towards improvements must be based on a holistic assessment of the situation and how requested changes support the College’s mission and Strategic Plan goals. For instance, requests for full-time faculty must present data not only on the ratio of part-time to full-time faculty, but other factors such as program enrollment figures, student success percentages, labor demand, assessment results of student learning outcomes, and relationship to any current institutional efforts such the Student Success and Equity plan or Hispanic Serving Institution grant (6).

Using Results

The Standard sections of this Self Evaluation illustrate that since 2009, when the above recommendation was made, the PRPP has evolved into the primary mechanism for all planning and budget decisions. Results of data analysis and synthesis of other information support all departmental, unit, and program requests regarding staffing, space allocation, equipment, facilities improvement, and other resources. These requests are discussed at the cluster or unit level, prioritized, and then brought to the President’s Cabinet for in-depth discussion, prioritization against College goals, and the final budget allocation decisions. Ultimately, IPC reviews and affirms the process used to determine the proposed budget and sends it forward to the Board of Trustees. In this way, results from the PRPP are used directly toward institutional improvement (12).

Reporting the Findings

The College reports PRPP findings, as well as institutional responses, to the college community through several means. The most direct communication occurs when the IPC and Budget Advisory Committee co-chairs send the annual PRPP Update email to all SRJC employees each November to “close the loop” on the last PRPP cycle (13). This message summarizes information regarding budget assumptions, PRPP resource priorities, results of the annual PRPP evaluation, the annual Measures of Institutional Effectiveness Report, and other relevant planning activities.

This update sets the stage for the annual “launch” email, sent at the beginning of each cycle to all SRJC employees by the IPC and BAC Co-chairs. The launch message initiates the next PRPP cycle and makes public the beginning of the process. It includes a summary of the previous year’s impact, the current year’s improvements, the implications of any budgetary issues, the College’s mission statement and Strategic Plan goals; links to more detailed information; and a timeline of PRPP activities for that cycle (9).

Other summaries of the results and decisions based on those results are communicated through:

- Board of Trustee meeting minutes (14)
- Community messages from the President (15)
- Summaries on the Institutional Planning website (16)
- Reports at meetings of shared governance groups, standing committees, and other College leadership groups, including the Academic and Classified Senates, Department Chairs Council, Academic Affairs Council, Student Services Council, Associated Students, and the Faculty Staffing Committee (17)

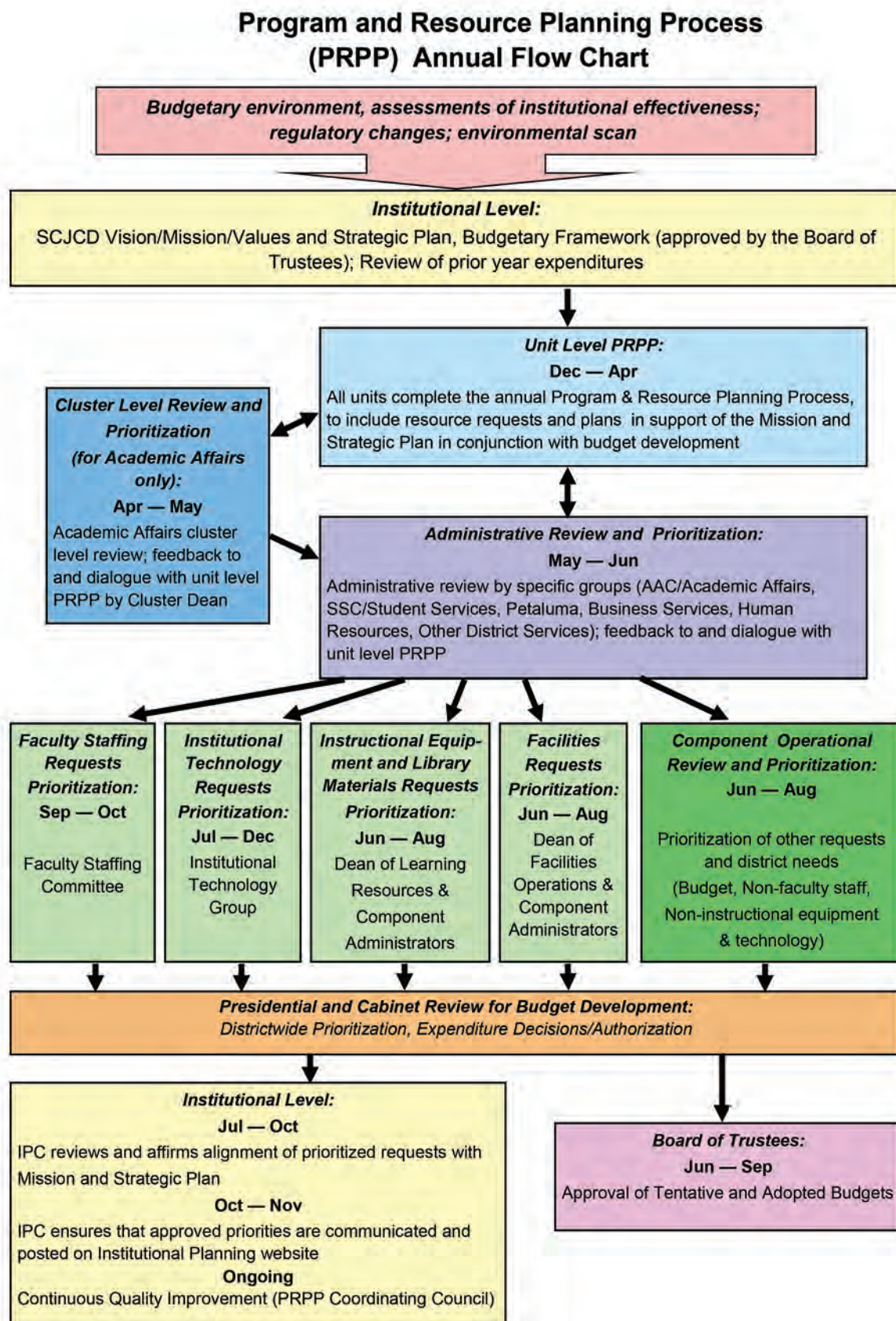
For reference, the PRPPs themselves are now available to the college community and public through links on the Institutional Planning website (18).

Integrating Research into Planning

As part of the PRPP launch, Academic Affairs and IT provide essential data to department chairs and program managers. Chairs, administrators, and other PRPP editors also have access to more detailed data through the Enrollment Management System (EMS), data-mining, SLO assessment website, student and employee surveys, and specific requests through the office of Institutional Research. Since research and analysis of data are essential components at every level of the PRPP, and the PRPP has proven to be an effective integrated planning mechanism, it is clear that research is indeed a driving force in planning. Integration of research with all aspects of the College will become more prevalent since OIR has acquired additional staffing, more sophisticated data representation tools, and a more accessible and comprehensive website.

To confirm, SRJC has addressed the recommendation. The College has increased its effectiveness by continuously evaluating the PRPP to ensure the inclusion of relevant data, information, and analysis of its data. The College consistently uses the results and reports the findings to the communities it serves, integrating research into all of its planning processes.

Illustration 1
SRJC's Program and Resource Planning Process



Recommendation 2

In order to attain proficiency level with the ACCJC Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness by the 2012 Commission deadline, the college should aggressively pursue the development of measurements and the completion of assessment cycles for all course, program, and degree SLOs. (IIA.1.c, IIA.2.b, IIA.2.f, IIIA.2, IIIA.5.a)

SRJC RESPONSE

To address the recommendation and to meet its own goals, SRJC pursued the activities needed to reach the "Proficiency" level of the ACCJC Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness in terms of Student Learning Outcomes. The College's progress is described in its 2012 Midterm Report, the 2013 ACCJC College Status Report on Student Learning Outcomes, and in Standard II.A of this Self Evaluation Report (19, 20). SRJC has integrated SLO assessment into its institutional Program and Resource Planning Process (PRPP) and Strategic Plan (21, 22). Specific to this recommendation are the steps the College took to develop measurements and to promote the completion of assessment cycles for all course, program, and degree SLOs.

Development of Measurements

The College's development of measurements of SLOs can be characterized by increased efforts to clarify, simplify, and streamline the processes involved in assessment at all levels. From 2006-2009, the College asked departments to launch Learning Assessment Projects (LAPs) to assess course, major, and certificate outcomes. Collaboration and dialogue among faculty was encouraged in designing assessment

tools that were implemented across sections. However, as SLOs were established for all courses, this process proved to be cumbersome and overly time-consuming, often taking so long to reach completion that the results were not very useful.

Realizing that with over 2500 courses and 250 academic programs the ideals behind these projects were impossible to reach, Project LEARN, the steering committee which oversees the College's SLO assessment process, and the Student Learning Outcome coordinators worked closely with the Academic Senate and Student Services to make significant changes in both the structure and expectation of course and program assessment. The shift in emphasis to a more individualized, faculty-driven approach led to the development of a range of methods of assessment across disciplines, and often the increased use of authentic and embedded assessment strategies (23).

The assessment report postings in the SLO SharePoint site reflect the array of measurements that faculty and staff have developed, adapted, and implemented since 2009 (24). These include:

- Pre- and post-surveys
- Embedded assessment via final exam or other comprehensive test
- Projects and presentations
- Extended written assignment
- Skill demonstration (often related to occupational skills)
- "Cumulative" (based on results from multiple assessments)

Illustration 2: SLO Assessment Reports for Courses and Certificates, 2008-2014

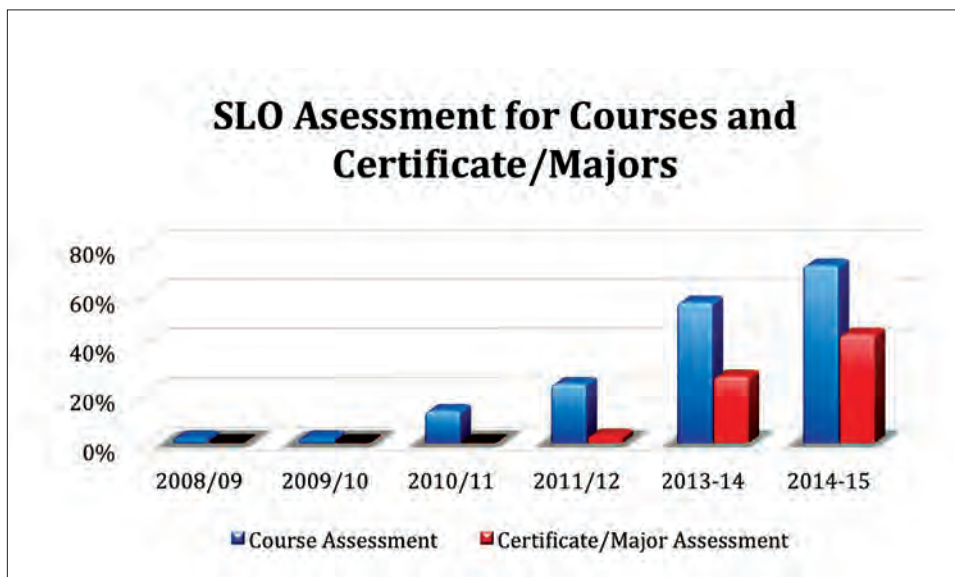


Illustration 3: Timeline of SRJC's Progress Towards Completing SLO Assessment Cycles

2009/2010	Workshops, email communications, and Project LEARN website examples of assessment tools
	SLO coordinators meet with departments and individual faculty and staff members about using embedded assessment
	"Five-row" report form adopted to clarify steps and display of learning assessment
	Course review process revised so review process and dialogue occur at cluster level, including discussion of SLOs and potential methods of evaluation
	Student Services Survey adds Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment component to reflect student perception of progress in relation to college ILOs
	Project LEARN disbands Assessment Project review committees to promote more authentic, faculty-driven assessment tools
2010/2011	SLO coordinators offer weekly workshops to assist faculty and managers develop usable assessment tools and identify embedded assessment activities within courses
	Certificates and majors required to create "curriculum maps" to represent alignment of course and program SLOs, an essential step in program assessment process adopted in 2012
	New SLO website created to extend explanation, examples, and access to resources regarding assessment tools.
2011/2012	SharePoint adopted as the electronic system to house SLO assessment reports for courses, majors, certificates, and Student Services programs, improving transparency, examples of measurements, and use of results
	SLO coordinators offer PDA workshops on rubrics and other methods of assessment
	Methods of assessment for certificates and majors presented in workshops, listed on website, and included in SharePoint
2012/2013	College accepted to participate in Degree Qualifications Profile Project, allowing for development of General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs) and planning for GE assessment methods
	Dramatic increase in number of SLO Assessment reports posted on SharePoint, many reflecting embedded assessment as a means to measure student achievement
	Certificate and major assessments posted in SharePoint using methods listed on SLO website and provided in PDA workshops
2013/2014	GELOs approved by Academic Senate and added to SLO website
	College adds references to SLO assessment to classified staff and management evaluations
	Policy and faculty contract require that syllabi include SLOs or at minimum link to course outline or record
	Some courses complete first cycle of assessment and begin the next
	PRPP reflects six-year assessment cycle plans for all departments
2014/2015	Completion of SLO Assessment Reports for courses reaches 82% by Dec. 1
	Over half of certificates/majors are assessed by Dec. 1
	100% of Student Services programs have completed at least one assessment cycle

On a broader scale, the development of the SLO SharePoint site itself allows the College to more easily track its progress in assessing its course, program, and degree SLOs. While the College seriously considered commercial SLO assessment-tracking programs such as eLumen, none of them interfaced with SRJC's unique Student Information System. Budgetary restrictions required IT to adapt a SharePoint site to serve this purpose. With the recent passage of a bond to fund technology upgrades, the College may be able to purchase a more comprehensive program that links SLO assessment with existing data systems.

Cycles of Assessment

SRJC defined a six-year assessment cycle. The first SLO assessments were formally conducted and posted in 2006/2007, and most departments assessed a single course, which was the minimum requirement at that time. Therefore, it was only in 2013 that a significant number of courses began to complete six-year cycles, though some courses had been reassessed more frequently within the their cycle. As of December 1, 2014, over 82 percent of courses show a completion of the first assessment cycle. Efforts to complete one full cycle for every course and program have been ongoing and accelerating for the past five years, as shown in Illustration 2.

Certificates and majors have been posting assessments over the past two years, and currently, over 54 percent of majors and certificates are in their first cycle. The College is still determining the best methods of assessment of the new General Education Learning Outcomes. However, many of these parallel the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and thus have been assessed through the Student Survey at least twice (25).

Overall, despite the fact that the College had a late start in some areas of assessment, the support of the Academic Senate and the concerted college wide effort to complete SLO assessment cycles for courses and programs and use the results towards improvement has led the College beyond the level of proficiency. SRJC expects to approach 100% in spring 2015.

Standard II.A provides a deeper discussion about the College's progress. Illustration 3 shows a timeline of the College's activities that address the above recommendation.

Recommendation 3

In order to increase efficiency the college needs to factor the total cost of ownership including financial and personnel resources in all future decisions, particularly in the addition of facilities and technology to ensure health, safety, access and security. (IIIA.2, IIIB.2.a, IIIC.1.c, IIIC.1.d, IIIC.2, IIID.1.a)

SRJC RESPONSE

The District addressed this recommendation immediately after the ACCJC External Evaluation Report in 2009 through communications and clarification with the Commission. Certain concerns that triggered this recommendation had resulted from miscommunication about two specific facilities-related issues and were resolved in letters between the College and ACCJC (26). SRJC's actions to fully meet this recommendation were described in the 2012 Midterm Report. Since 2012, the College has continued to follow practices that address all components of physical expansion and improvement, including Total Cost of Ownership, through its integrated planning processes, as represented in the PRPP. This is fully described in Standard III.B.2.a.

In summary, the Office of Facilities Planning and Operations (FPO) is responsible for the Sonoma County Junior College District's planning, design, and construction of both physical and environmental facilities. At the same time, communications, planning, and action are fully integrated within the formal PRPP and the resulting plans and priorities that come out of the President's Cabinet and IPC. "Facilities Life Cycle Stages" is an integral part of facilities planning and incorporates the concept of total cost of ownership (TCO). It is part of the Five-Year Capital Outlay Plan, which FPO updates annually, presents to the Institutional Planning Council for affirmation, and presents to the Board of Trustees for their approval (27). Through the Program and Resource Planning Process (PRPP), Facilities, Planning and Operations annually identifies specific staffing and budgetary augmentations needed to maintain proper maintenance and operations of the District's facilities.

The institution has fulfilled the requirements to meet the recommendation and continues to factor the TCO, including financial and personnel resources, into its planning, especially to ensure health, safety, access, and security for all members of the College and the community.

Recommendation 4

The institution should develop a holistic and systematic evaluation process for its current governance structures and new planning efforts. The findings should be disseminated campus wide and then used for continuous improvement. (IVA.5)

SRJC RESPONSE

The College has taken action and now fully meets this recommendation. Since the last accreditation evaluation, the College has not only implemented a holistic and systematic evaluation process for its governance structure, it also launched an institutional strategic planning process that includes communications and evaluation as key elements. Through a two pronged approach—one attending to the traditional structures of governance, and the other integrated in the Strategic Plan—the College is achieving a high level of communication, inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability. Communications about evaluation results and institutional efforts to improve are college wide and supported by its upgraded websites, email systems, and Program and Resource Planning Process (PRPP).

Evaluating Governance Structures

Standard IV.A in this 2015 Self Evaluation Report covers SRJC's participatory (also referred to as "shared") governance structures and decision-making processes in depth. To summarize, College Council, the highest policy recommending body in the District, has continued its leadership in reviewing and supervising all College committee systems. These efforts have initiated a number of activities to address the recommendation and existing College goals for improvement.

- College Council surveyed SRJC employees in 2011 to gauge their understanding of College governance structures and opportunities to participate in committees (4). Results, while generally high (see Standard IV.A.2.a), led to the presentation of a workshop on the SRJC governance structure, the development of module on shared governance available through the Staff Resource Center, and the inclusion of information on committees and governance in new staff and adjunct faculty orientations and the mandatory workshops for new contract faculty.
- The College established a SharePoint site for all College councils and committees. The site is accessible directly from the "Administration" menu on the SRJC homepage. It lists all committees and councils and has links to each committee's web page. Agendas, minutes, and non-confidential committee documents are available to the college community from that site.
- College Council coordinated the revision of Policy and Procedure 2.5/2.5P, Governance and the Committee System, which was substantively changed to update information and increase clarity and transparency of the institutional governance system. The new version was approved by the Board of Trustees in February 2014 (28, 29).
- College Council does an annual self evaluation and communicates the results of this assessment through the college wide email distribution list to all SRJC employees (30).
- The Council also created a Committee System Best Practices document that is available on the Committees and Councils homepage and is sent to the administrative chairs of all standing committees and councils at the beginning of each academic year. The Best Practices document supports optimal participation by all constituent groups in shared governance (31).
- Using that document, every standing committee or council, including the Institutional Planning Council (IPC) must regularly conduct a self evaluation. Periodically, each committee or council submits to College Council a review sheet reflecting that assessment, describing elements such as the committee or council's recent major accomplishments; its relationship to the Strategic Plan; and whether PRPP information could be or is used in its decision-making (32). Many committees completed this review in 2014.
- As part of the cycle of evaluation, the chair or co-chairs of each committee meet with College Council to discuss the committee's function and effectiveness of its role based on the above documentation (33).

Rigorous application of the review process has resulted in a more coordinated, efficient, and transparent governance system over the past five years, as shown in Illustration 4. College wide emails about shared governance activities and evaluation results, as well as the Committees and Council website, have enhanced communications about the processes and roles of shared governance groups. This is reflected in the 2013 Accreditation Survey for employees, which used the same questions regarding participation and planning as the 2011 survey. Percentages rose in all areas, particularly in regard to planning (5). See Standard IV.A.2.a. for further information.

Evaluating Institutional Planning

In 2009, when the above recommendation was written, the “new planning effort” referred to the Program and Resource Planning Process (PRPP), which had been in place for only one full cycle. Since then, the PRPP has not only remained instrumental in all planning and resource allocation processes, it has been integrated into SRJC’s Strategic Plan. Thus, the application of principles of evaluation and communication extend broadly and deeply throughout the institution on both philosophical and pragmatic levels.

The Strategic Plan

Every Standard narrative in this Self Evaluation Report refers to the Strategic Plan, with Standard I.A describing in depth this exceptionally inclusive institution wide effort. Pertinent to this recommendation are the themes of communication, self reflection, and evaluation that ran through the process and carry on into the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan, which was approved in spring 2014 (34).

From its beginning in fall 2012, the Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) identified guiding principles and supported them by forming six work groups to maintain those principles. Among them were “Continuous Communications” and “Evaluation.” The Continuous Communications group was charged with reaching all stakeholders—faculty, classified staff, administrators, students, Board members, and the community—and building a sense of community in the District around strategic planning. The group achieved this through a comprehensive Strategic Planning website, District wide emails, press releases, forums, and discussion boards (35). The group also maintained ongoing internal communications within the SPTF and other work groups. These efforts set the stage for the collaboration and dialogue that has taken place as the Strategic Plan began implementation in 2014. The Planning Summit in spring 2014, which involved representatives from all components of the District, reflected the ongoing nature of communications regarding the Strategic Plan. Further work continues as the Strategic Plan website is being finalized.

The Evaluation work group was initially responsible for two evaluative activities:

- monitoring the strategic planning process through check-ins with work groups and SPTF members.
- gathering feedback from internal and external stakeholders through surveys.

As elements of the Strategic Plan such as the vision, mission, values, and goals were finalized, the Evaluation group took on its next charge: to develop a plan to evaluate results achieved throughout implementation of the Strategic Plan. Working with SPTF members to define objects and the means for measuring progress, the Evaluation work group helped set a foundation for the spring 2014 Planning Summit, where

core indicators were identified for each Strategic Plan goal and objectives.

Goal H of the Strategic Plan is “Improve Institutional Effectiveness,” and it lists two objectives:

- *Fully implement continuous quality improvement strategies to achieve greater transparency, effectiveness, efficiency, and participation*
- *Enhance internal and external communication systems to ensure effectiveness*

Because these objectives also have core indicators and will appear on the Strategic Plan Scorecard, the College has now ensured that both self evaluation and communication are integrated into the Strategic Plan. This is described further in Standards I.B and IV.A.

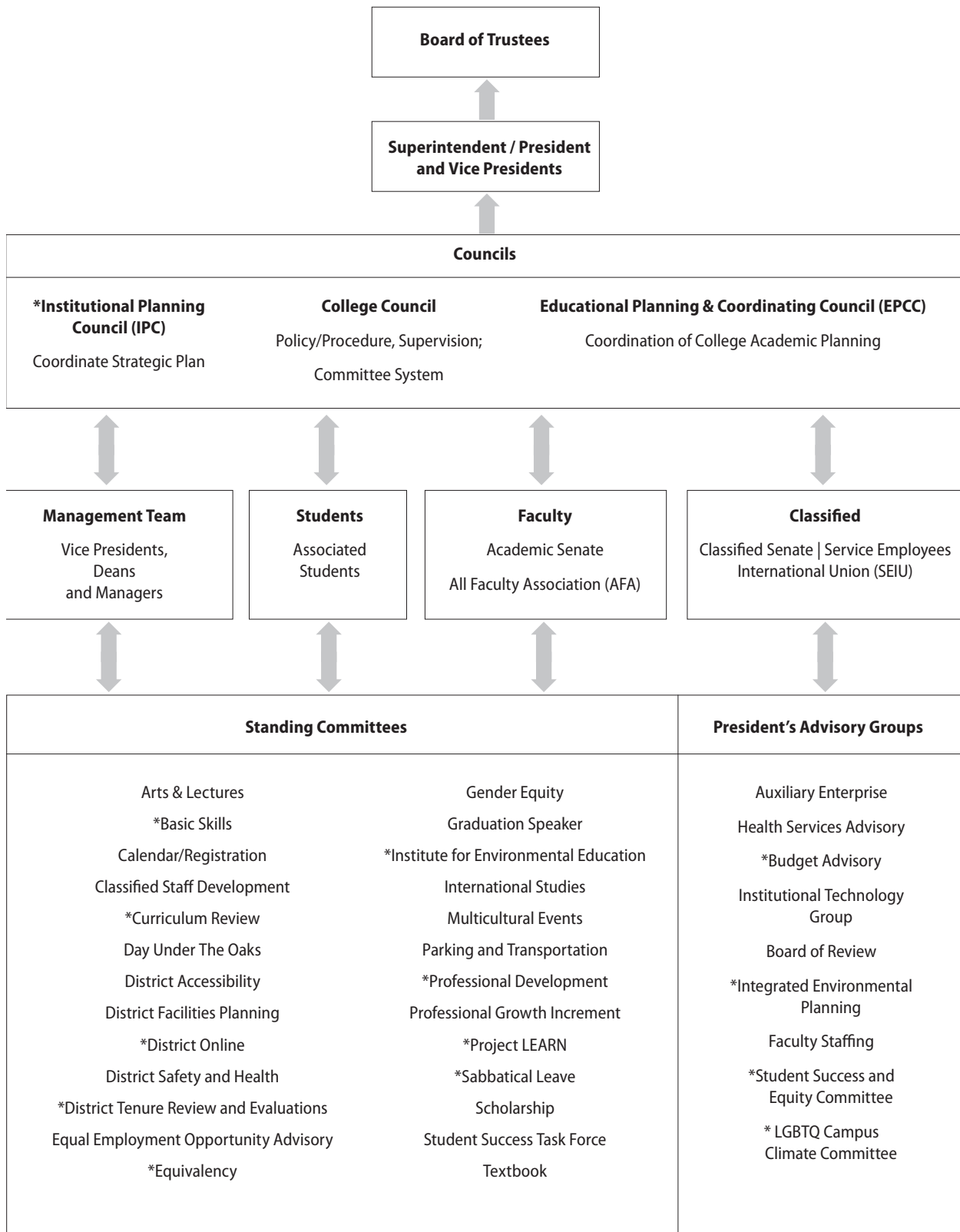
The Program and Resource Planning Process (PRPP)

The evaluation of the role of the PRPP has been discussed in Recommendation 1. In brief, the Institutional Planning Council (IPC), which oversees all District planning and resource allocation, created the cross-constituent PRPP Coordinating Committee to regularly evaluate the PRPP through formal and informal feedback from users and the college community along with its own analysis of the PRPP’s effectiveness for planning. The committee also communicates at least twice a year through college wide emails about the results of program and institutional improvements based on PRPPs, including resource allocations; improvements made in the PRPP itself based on constituent feedback; and specific changes to the PRPP that relate to College goals or processes.

The most recent major change to the PRPP was the alignment of the template with the new mission and Strategic Plan goals. This was well communicated to the College through the PRPP launch email and presentations to department chairs, unit leaders, and others who are responsible for the first level of PRPP input. Assessment of how effective the PRPP has been in linking resource requests to the Strategic Plan will be a part of the above Strategic Plan evaluation and will be communicated to the College through the Institutional Plan website and the annual college wide email at the close of each PRPP cycle.

In conclusion, SRJC has developed holistic and systematic evaluation processes for its governance structure, Strategic Plan, and Program and Resource Planning Process. Communications about all three areas are achieved through college wide emails from specific committees plus three institutional websites: the Committees and Council website; the Strategic Planning website; and the Institutional Planning website. The Strategic Plan and the PRPP hold the College accountable for sustained continuous improvement.

Illustration 4
Participatory Governance Organization Chart



*Academic Senate Consultation Committees