

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

PALAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**P.O. Box 9
Koror, Republic of Palau PW**

A confidential report prepared for
The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

This report represents the findings of the External Evaluation Team that visited
PALAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE on February 29 – March 3, 2016

Melinda Nish, Ed.D., Chair

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

DATE: July 8, 2016

INSTITUTION: Palau Community College
P.O. Box 9
Koror, Republic of Palau 96940

TEAM REPORT: Comprehensive Evaluation Report

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited Palau Community College February 29 – March 3, 2016.

SUBJECT: Commission Revisions to the Team Report

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

1. The Commission finds that the College has addressed Recommendation 1 and meets Standards I.B.2, II.A.1, II.A.3.
2. The Commission has changed Recommendation 3 to a recommendation for improvement.

Roster of Site Visit Evaluation Team February 29 – March 3, 2016

Dr. Melinda Nish (Chair)
Superintendent/President
Southwestern College

Ms. Lillian Leopold (Team Assistant)
Chief Public Information & Government Relations Officer, Southwestern College

Dr. Mary Therese Perez Hattori
Outreach Director, Center for Pacific Island Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa

Ms. Bernadette Howard
State Director of CTE, University of Hawaii

Dr. Laurie Huffman
Professor, Chair World Languages Department, Lead, Calif. State Online Education Initiative
Los Medanos College

Mr. Tim Karas
Vice President of Instruction/ALO, College of Alameda

Dr. Theresa Koroivulaono
President, College of the Marshall Islands

Dr. Sarah McLemore
Assistant Professor of English, English Division Assistant Chair, Glendale Community
College

Dr. Arvid Spor
Vice President of Academic Affairs, Citrus College

Mr. Ken Stoppenbrink
Deputy Chancellor, West Hills Community College District

Dr. Duncan Sutton
Coordinator of Research and Institutional Effectiveness, Salvation Army College for
Officer Training at Crestmont

Summary of Evaluation Report

INSTITUTION: Palau Community College

DATE OF VISIT: February 29 – March 3, 2016

TEAM CHAIR: Dr. Melinda Nish, Superintendent/President
Southwestern College

Introduction

An 11-member accreditation team visited Palau Community College (PCC) February 29 – March 3, 2016, for the purpose of determining whether the College continues to meet Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies and USDE regulations. The team evaluated how well the College is achieving its stated mission, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement, and submitting recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for the Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) regarding the accredited status of the College.

In preparation for the visit, the team chair attended a team chair training session on December 2, 2015. Given the international distance, the chair and the team assistant and conducted a pre-visit phone call with the College President and Accreditation Liaison Officer on Thursday, January 14, 2016. All members, but one, of the evaluation team received team training provided by the ACCJC staff in Los Angeles on January 27, 2016. The sole member not in attendance on January 27, 2016 had served on five previous visits and worked directly with ACCJC staff to prepare prior to the current visit.

The evaluation team received the College's Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) and related evidence on December 27, 2015, well in advance of the team training and the visit. Team members found the ISER to be well-written and comprehensive. The ISER appropriately addressed the Eligibility Requirements, Commission Standards and Policies. The team confirmed that the ISER was created through a broad process of participation and was well vetted prior to submission to the Commission. The team found the ISER to be a thoughtful and largely accurate reflection of the state of the College with the inclusion of an Institutional Quality Focus Essay outlining three overarching plans of institutional improvement in the areas of Institution-Set Standards for Student Achievement, Academic Building and Student Center, and finally a four-year Degree Program.

The team chair and assistant arrived in Palau the night of February 25, 2016 and conducted their first tour and review of the College facilities and meeting rooms designated for the visit on February 29, 2016. All team members arrived in Palau by February 28, 2016 and the first team meeting was held that same day at noon. The team arrived on campus the morning of February 29, 2016. They were invited to a "meet and greet" morning meeting that included the attendance of Speaker Sabino Anastacio of the House of Representatives, Palau National Congress, and Ambassador Amy J. Hyatt, US Ambassador to the Republic of Palau.

Approximately 40 members of the College were in attendance as well. The team had the opportunity to introduce themselves as well as be greeted by the College President. The President included in his address a brief history of PCC which grew out of a trade school begun in 1927 by the Japanese administration prior to World War II. The first building on the current campus was in fact a Japanese hospital which is still standing and houses a myriad of administrative offices. PCC, as currently constituted, was established in March 1993, through the enactment of RPPL No. 4-2 of the Republic of Palau. The President also explained the tradition of the betel nut and set the stage for a warm and welcoming visit.

Following the formal “meet and greet,” the team participated in a campus tour. The team members not only were able to familiarize themselves with the campus lay out, facilities, and basic physical functionality, but they were also able to learn about international research funded by the European Community analyzing air quality, which is reputed to be amongst the “cleanest in the world,” as well as viewing the entrance to the Japanese tunnel which connected the former hospital building to the ocean. The campus grounds are noteworthy for their local flora, which includes numerous tropical fruit and flowering trees and plants.

During the visit, the team members originally scheduled over 40 meetings, but conducted 34 scheduled meetings, interviews, and observations. Given the small size of the college, the team was able to combine nine scheduled meetings into others which made the visit more efficient for both the team and the college. Of the 34 scheduled meetings, these included visiting four regular on-site classes. Additionally, all three of the online classes were observed. There were numerous informal exchanges with students, faculty, and staff. Students were particularly gregarious when approached informally while on the campus grounds. Five open forums were conducted: classified staff and directors; students; faculty; administrators; and the open exit report forum. Both the opening “meet and greet” and the open exit report forum provided the PCC community at large the opportunity to meet with the team members.

The team reviewed numerous items of evidence. Given the relatively limited access of reliable internet access, the team room was extremely well appointed and organized with hard copies of all evidence provided originally with the ISER via a separate USB drive. Additional requests for evidence were promptly addressed and the team was very easily able to confirm assertions within the ISER as well as address questions arising from the ISER and other materials.

The College included many “actionable improvement plans” throughout the ISER. The majority of these plans stated that “the College will continue to ...” The team understands the College’s desire to be comprehensive, but the team found that nearly all of these plans were redundant and did not need to be stated, which is consistent with current ACCJC training and practice.

The team appreciated the prompt support from the College staff when information or additional meetings were requested. All requests were not only promptly addressed but were done so with an authentic appreciation of the value of peer review and the accreditation

process. At numerous occasions, staff expressed their genuine regard for the team and its work.

The team found the College to be exemplary in fulfilling its mission and in a number of practices, issuing five commendations. The team found the College to be largely in compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Standards, Policies and USDE regulations, but issued some recommendations for improvement and compliance.

Major Findings, Commendations, and Recommendations of the 2016 External Evaluation Team

Team Commendations

During the visit the team recognized several aspects of the College worthy of commendation.

Commendation 1

Team commends the college for exhibiting authentic fulfillment of its missions, as demonstrated by the development of programs that meet the traditional and emerging needs of this community exemplified by development of stem and Palauan studies programs. (ER 9, 15, 16)

Commendation 2

The team commends the college for the Close collaborative working relationship between instructional faculty and counselors to improve student achievement as exemplified by the development of the course schedule and use of student progress reports. (I.B.2, II.C.5)

Commendation 3

The team commends the college's library and learning center for providing dynamic partnerships to enrich the lives of students and the people of the Palauan community. (II.B.4)

Commendation 4

The team commends the college for the effective use of scarce resources to provide a robust professional development program for all staff. (III.A.14)

Commendation 5

The College Board of Trustees is to be commended for their Protocol Manual and their direct commitment to upholding the strongest ethical position in requiring Board members to take the Board Services Commitment Pledge. The College is encouraged to broadly disseminate the Protocol Manual. (IV.C.4)

Team Recommendations

As a result of the external evaluation, the team makes the following recommendations.

Recommendations to Meet the Standards

Recommendation 1

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the College define and publish all program level outcomes, including certificates, and integrate their assessment into the ongoing assessment activities of the college. (I.B.2, II.A.1, II.A.3, ER11)

Recommendation 2

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the College complete its planned schedule of assessment for the institution-set standards and publish the results. (I.B.3, ER11)

Recommendation 3

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the College disaggregate and analyze learning outcomes and student achievement data for subpopulations of its students and implement strategies to mitigate any performance gaps that may be identified. (I.B.2, I.B.4, I.B.6, ER11)

Recommendation 4

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the College provide opportunity for third party comments prior to site visits in accordance with the Commission's policy on Rights and Responsibility of Commission and Member Institutions. (I.C.12)

Recommendation 5

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends Governing Board implement a mechanism to make public the results of its performance evaluation. (IV.C.10)

Recommendations to Improve Quality

Recommendation 6

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the College complete its scheduled assessment of recently developed and implemented service area outcomes. (I.B.2, I.B.5, ER11)

Recommendation 7

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the College improve its use of data to better determine how effectively it is achieving its mission. Further, the team recommends the college assure the broad distribution of this data. (I.A.2, I.A.3)

Recommendation 8

In order to increase its effectiveness, the team recommends the College develop and publish a Guide to Assessment that defines and communicates its assessment schedule, policies, and processes; details with whom data should be shared; and explains the role of data in planning and decision-making. (I.B.2)

Recommendation 9

In order to improve effectiveness, the team recommends the College assure its infrastructure provides sufficient transfer counseling and support services to students. (II.C.6, ER 16)

Recommendation 10

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the College formally define and implement a Part-Time faculty performance evaluation process and cycle. (III.A.5, III.A.6, III.A.8)

Recommendation 11

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the college ensure responsible use of technology by publishing the electronic resources use agreement in the student planner as well as other campus publications. (III.C.5)

Recommendation 12

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the Distance education committee publish a comprehensive Best Practices Manual for online faculty training and campus-wide reference. (III.A.14 and Commission Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education)

Recent Accreditation History of Palau Community College

Palau Community College is the only institution of higher learning in the Republic of Palau. Palau is the western most islands in Micronesia, a region of remote small islands and atolls in the western Pacific Ocean. Palau is approximately 2,200 kilometers north of Darwin, Australia, 3,000 kilometers south of Tokyo, Japan, 1,200 kilometers east of Manila, Philippines, and 12,800 kilometers west of Los Angeles, California. It is, therefore, geographically closer to the Asian Pacific Rim nations than to the United States. The Republic of Palau 2015 population is 21,054. About 70% of the population is Palauans with 30% foreigners and other Micronesians.

Palau Community College (PCC) was founded in 1966 as a two-year post-secondary vocational/technical institution. It grew out of a trade school that had its beginning in 1927 during the Japanese administration prior to World War II. PCC began with a small group of students enrolled in one vocational program on a campus with limited physical facilities. It was known at the time as Micronesian Occupational Center.

Until 1977, the Micronesian Occupational Center and the Community College of Micronesia were two autonomous post-secondary institutions servicing Micronesia. On March 29, 1977, Trust Territory Public Law No. 7-29, amended later by Public Law No. 7-130, created the College of Micronesia as a public corporation under its own Board of Regents. The law, which took effect on October 1, 1977, joined into a single post-secondary educational system the Micronesian Occupational Center and the Community College of Micronesia (which included the CCM affiliated School of Nursing). In May 1978, Micronesian Occupational Center officially became Micronesian Occupation College, a distinct and complementary part of the College of Micronesia. In September 1987, a treaty among the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau regarding the College of Micronesia was executed establishing complete autonomy of each college in the COM system to local governments. The treaty was terminated on March 31, 1993, which laid the foundation for Palau Community College.

On March 19, 1993, The Republic of Palau President, Kuniwo Nakamura, signed into law Republic of Palau Public Law (RPPL) No. 4-2, establishing Palau Community College. On April 2, 1993, Micronesian Occupational College officially became Palau Community College.

In 1977, the College was granted its first accreditation status, and to date, the College has been accredited for 38 years. Palau Community College serves mainly students from the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

The College offers 21 accredited degree programs and 12 accredited certificate programs. There were 627 students enrolled in fall 2015. In 2005, Palau Community College's substantive change proposal to offer its Nursing degree program in the State of Yap, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) was approved by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC-

WASC). The program offered is for the in-service nurses who are employed by the Department of Health (DOH), Yap State.

The most recent comprehensive site visit was in 2010. On June 30, 2010, the college was placed on warning and required to submit a follow up report with visit in 2011. On June 30, 2011, the warning sanction was removed and the college accreditation was reaffirmed with a follow up report due on March 15, 2012. The college has submitted all required reports and, as stated above, maintained accredited status since 1977.

Eligibility Requirements

1. Authority

Palau Community College was created by the Republic of Palau Public Law (RPPL) No. 4-2 in March 1993, which gives the college and its Board the authority to operate, develop, and provide education and training programs in the Republic of Palau, (RPPL 4-2). Palau Community College is authorized by to operate as a post-secondary educational institution and to award two-year degrees.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

2. Operational Status

Palau Community College is operational with 627 students pursuing degree/certificate programs in fall 2015. The college fact book contains data about student achievement, demographics, degrees, certificates and transfer information. Enrollment information is also available at the college Registrar & Records Office and at the IPEDS data system under NCES of the U.S. Department of Education.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

3. Degrees

All degrees offered at Palau Community College are at least two academic years in length. Most of the credit courses are integral to degree offerings. The majority of students take credit courses that lead to degrees.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

4. Chief Executive Officer

Palau Community College has a chief executive officer, the College President, who is appointed by the College Board of Trustees, whose full-time responsibility is to the institution. The College President possesses the requisite authority to administer the College Board of Trustees policies. Palau Community College will inform the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges immediately should there be a change in the institutional chief executive officer. The current College President was hired by the College Board of Trustees on January 4, 1999. January 4, 2016 will mark the 17th year of his employment with Palau Community College as the college President.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

5. Financial Responsibility

The audit reports for the organization have been completed in a timely fashion, and there have been no findings. There were not any responses that left any unanswered questions for the auditors. The fund balances are all in line with the required reserved requirements. There were more than adequate reserves for the organization to sustain its fiscal integrity. The last Actuarial Study was done last in 2011 with a liability of \$140 million and an investment balance of \$36 million for a net liability of \$104 million. The College has a funding plan to

meet these obligations. While this is a large liability for a small institution, there is a plan in place to address these liabilities. Vacation time is booked at the time it is accrued. This is a common practice and provides for an immediate funding of this liability when it is accrued. Insurance coverage work comp and Health is provided by the college. There is more than adequate insurance coverage for the staff and faculty on work comp as well as health insurance coverage. There are no union contracts for the organization to be concerned about as the policies cover what is necessary to handle the needs of the employees. There is no foundation. Procurement policies serve the organization very well and provide fiscal stability when obtaining quotes for projects. The facility master plan has been done and covers 15 years. As is common, the facilities plan covers a 15-year period of time that allows for planning to occur and the ability to look for funding sources and also solicit the needs of the stakeholders to achieve that necessary demands of students, faculty, and staff. The financial aid annual report was completed, and there is a Zero percent default rate. There is no default rate as the organization provides financial aid on a reimbursement basis thus no need for any potential of defaulting on loans. Internal documents support the purchasing and auditing protocol necessary for sound fiscal compliance. These policies are more than adequate to provide a well-rounded purchasing protocol to ensure the best possible prices for services and products are obtained.

The College meets Eligibility Requirements 1 – 5.

Checklist for Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Related Commission Policies

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

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

Public Notification of an Evaluation Team Visit and Third Party Comment

Evaluation Items:

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

[Regulation citation: 602.23(b).]

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

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

Narrative (add space as needed):

The College provided notification of the evaluation team visit by posting notifications on buildings, running a news story in Mesekiu's News, and alerting leaders of all constituent groups of the visit. All open forums were well attended by students, faculty, classified staff, managers, and a few public officials.

The College is not in compliance with the Commission Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions as to third party comment as the College did not

solicit third party comments prior to the visit or inform interested individuals how to submit such comments. See Recommendation 4.

Standards and Performance with Respect to Student Achievement

Evaluation Items:

The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance across the institution, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. Course completion is included as one of these elements of student achievement. Other elements of student achievement performance for measurement have been determined as appropriate to the institution’s mission.

The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance within each instructional program, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. The defined elements include, but are not limited to, job placement rates for program completers, and for programs in fields where licensure is required, the licensure examination passage rates for program completers.

The institution-set standards for programs and across the institution are relevant to guide self-evaluation and institutional improvement; the defined elements and expected performance levels are appropriate within higher education; the results are reported regularly across the campus; and the definition of elements and results are used in program-level and institution-wide planning to evaluate how well the institution fulfills its mission, to determine needed changes, to allocating resources, and to make improvements.

The institution analyzes its performance as to the institution-set standards and as to student achievement, and takes appropriate measures in areas where its performance is not at the expected level.

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

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

Narrative (add space as needed):

In 2015, the college implemented its institution-set standards for student achievement (ISSA) which were developed by the Institutional-Set Standards for Student Achievement committee through a year-long process of dialogue, involving all constituents of the college. The ISSAs are based on longitudinal data, and through review of relevant documents and dialogue with

the committee, the team was able to verify the reasonableness of these standards. The ISSAs are tied directly to the College's mission statement and include a measurement of course completion and job placement. ISSAs 1- 9 appear to be based upon data collected by the College whereas ISSAs 10 and 11 do not seem to be based on data.

The ISSAs do not indicate licensure requirements or licensure examination pass rates.

The ISSAs are printed on poster-size documents which are posted throughout the campus and on the College's website. The ISSAs are relatively new with the first round of reporting out due in the summer of 2016.

The team has reviewed the elements and found the College is not in compliance with the Commission's requirements. See Recommendation 2.

Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

Evaluation Items:

X Credit hour assignments and degree program lengths are within the range of good practice in higher education (in policy and procedure).

X The assignment of credit hours and degree program lengths is verified by the institution, and is reliable and accurate across classroom based courses, laboratory classes, distance education classes, and for courses that involve clinical practice (if applicable to the institution).

X Tuition is consistent across degree programs (or there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition).

Any clock hour conversions to credit hours adhere to the Department of Education's conversion formula, both in policy and procedure, and in practice.

X The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits*.

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

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

X The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

Narrative (add space as needed):

Course credit hours are consistent with courses offered at colleges throughout the United States. Degrees are at least 60 credit hours in length. Laboratories classes are appropriately structured. Distance education is virtually non-existent as there tends to be few offerings (on average two courses per semester).

The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission Policy on Institutional Degrees and Certificates.

Transfer Policies

Evaluation Items:

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

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

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

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

Narrative (add space as needed):

Information regarding transfers to another college are made available to the public through the Counseling Office. The College catalog contains information: regarding articulation to other colleges and universities (page 14); transfer applicants to Palau Community College (page 32); and pertaining to transfer credits (page 35).

The College complies with the Commission Policy on Transfer of Credit.

Distance Education and Correspondence Education

Evaluation Items:

- The institution has policies and procedures for defining and classifying a course as offered by distance education or correspondence education, in alignment with USDE definitions.
- There is an accurate and consistent application of the policies and procedures for

determining if a course is offered by distance education (with regular and substantive interaction with the instructor, initiated by the instructor, and online activities are included as part of a student's grade) or correspondence education (online activities are primarily "paperwork related," including reading posted materials, posting homework and completing examinations, and interaction with the instructor is initiated by the student as needed).

The institution has appropriate means and consistently applies those means for verifying the identity of a student who participates in a distance education or correspondence education course or program, and for ensuring that student information is protected.

The technology infrastructure is sufficient to maintain and sustain the distance education and correspondence education offerings.

The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education*.

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

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

Narrative (add space as needed):

The College prints information listing the few distance education courses that are offered. The College refers to distance education courses as online courses. The courses are not fully online as tests for these classes can only be taken on campus making the courses hybrid offerings. Interaction with the students initiated by the instructors is regular and substantive.

The College complies with the Commission Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education.

Student Complaints

Evaluation Items:

The institution has clear policies and procedures for handling student complaints, and the current policies and procedures are accessible to students in the college catalog and online.

The student complaint files for the previous six years (since the last comprehensive evaluation) are available; the files demonstrate accurate implementation of the

complaint policies and procedures.

- The team analysis of the student complaint files identifies any issues that may be indicative of the institution's noncompliance with any Accreditation Standards.
- The institution posts on its website the names of associations, agencies and governmental bodies that accredit, approve, or license the institution and any of its programs, and provides contact information for filing complaints with such entities.
- The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Representation of Accredited Status* and the *Policy on Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions*.

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

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

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

Narrative (add space as needed):

The College has written documentation in the College catalog (page 26) and step-by-step information in the student planner (page 22) informing public of the student complaint process. The student handbook is provided to all students and faculty. There have not been any student complaints filed with the College in the past six years.

The College posts the address of ACCJC in the College catalog, unfortunately with the wrong address.

The College is in compliance with the Commission Policy on Representation of Accredited Status but is not in compliance with the Policy on Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions as it relates to Third Party Comment.

Institutional Disclosure and Advertising and Recruitment Materials

Evaluation Items:

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

described above in the section on Student Complaints.

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

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

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

Narrative (add space as needed):

Palau Community College provides accurate, timely, and appropriately detailed information to students and the public regarding its programs, locations, and policies

The College is in compliance with the Commission Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status.

Title IV Compliance

Evaluation Items:

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

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(v); 602.16(a)(1)(x); 602.19(b); 668.5; 668.15;

668.16; 668.71 et seq.]

Conclusion Check-Off:

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

Narrative (add space as needed):

The College does not have audit findings from the USDE or other entities regarding the Title IV program. The College does not have a loan default rate as it does not provide loans. The College does not have contractual relations to offer or receive educational, library, or support services for meeting accreditation standards.

The College is in compliance with the Commission Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations and the Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV.

STANDARD I MISSION, ACADEMIC QUALITY AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Standard I.A – Mission

I. General Observations

The College mission statement clearly defines and reflects programs and services offered throughout the institution. The College’s mission, “Palau Community College (PCC) is an accessible public educational institution helping to meet the technical, academic, cultural, social, and economic needs of students and communities by promoting learning opportunities and developing personal excellence” was approved by the governing board. PCC’s mission identifies goals and objectives that are focused on the functions and purposes of each service area. Each department and division of the College exists to support the institutional mission. The institutional self evaluation report incorporates and defines student populations, degree and credential offerings. These are supported by a strong commitment to student learning and achievement at PCC as well as regions within Micronesia. PCC’s STEM degree offerings are an example of a program central to the mission of the College that supports the needs of the community. Students graduate and are prepared to work and/or transfer to mainland Colleges with degrees that are in demand and reflect current emerging trends in professional preparation. (IA.1, I.A.3, ER 15, ER 6, ER 9)

The vision statement reflects the College efforts in striving to guarantee quality and excellence. The College’s academic, student support programs and services align with both the mission and vision. The College uses an institutional process labeled FAMED (Formulate, Assess, Measure, Evaluate, and Develop) campus wide to assess and evaluate all programs and services. Additionally, the College has identified goals and objectives for its program and services that aligned with its mission. Further, course, program, and institutional learning outcomes support the mission of the College. (IA.2, ER6, ER9)

II. Findings and Evidence

The College ensures the success of its mission through the use of data and will continue to assure that the College priorities meet the education needs of the students. After fall 2015, the College will assess the institution-set standards and use the results to ensure that it is effectively accomplishing its mission and supporting educational needs of its students. PCC shares campus progress and updates with the community at large through its website, attachments to payroll stubs, radio broadcasts, the general catalog, management meetings, campus-wide dialogues and other mediums. Palau Community College regularly evaluates its policies and practices across all areas of the institution, including instructional programs, student and learning support services, resource management, and governance processes to assure effectiveness in supporting academic quality and accomplishment of mission. College policies and practices include those related to the College Board of Trustees, College administration, personnel and students. (I.A.2, I.A.4ER 11, ER9)

PCC's degree and certificate programs support the College mission in offering academic and technical programs to students from the Republic of Palau and the Micronesian region. In 2013, the college created a Community and Public Health (CPH) degree at the request of the Palau Ministry of Health. The team found limited evidence, however, that the decision to develop this program was based on the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and that the efficacy of the program to meet the needs of the community has been assessed. In 2012, an Academic Tutoring Center was opened to address concerns about completion of developmental courses. Though this decision was based on data, the team found no evidence that the effectiveness of this center has been evaluated. (I.A.2, I.A.3)

These examples are not sufficient evidence that the College uses data to assure itself of its effectiveness in accomplishing its mission or that the mission is central to determining institutional priorities. Additionally, though the College provided evidence of the alignment of program and service goals and objectives with its mission, the team found insufficient evidence of the direct role of the mission in decision-making, planning and resource allocation on a systematic, institution-wide basis. (I.A.3)

College publications containing policies, practices, data, and other accurate institutional information are shared within the College community as well as with the general public and beyond the Republic. An example of Palau's extension and sharing of campus information in 2014 was exemplary. The College invited the members of the Palau National Congress to the campus. The President and administrators provided to Palau elected leaders the status of the College including accreditation status, academic programs, and other vital matters, such as facilities, in support of student learning and achievement (I.A.3, I.A.4, ER9)

III. Conclusions

The mission of Palau Community College aligns and supports programs and services. It has been approved by the governing board and published throughout the College and community. The College regularly reviews and revisits the mission statement. Each department and division of the College exists to support the institutional mission. The Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) incorporates and defines student populations, degree and credential offerings. The mission of PCC is threaded throughout the ISER and is central to the success of the College. (I.A.4, ER6)

The College's program and services and the corresponding outcomes and objectives are aligned with and central to its mission. Implementation mechanisms are in place that ensures that the mission is being realized. (ER 9, ER15, ER16)

The College meets all the Standards and related Eligibility Requirements. A recommendation to improve institutional effectiveness is provided to ensure continued compliance with Standard I.A.2 and I.A.3.

IV. Recommendations

Recommendation 7

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the College improve its use of data

to better determine how effectively it is achieving its mission. Further, the team recommends the College assure the broad distribution of this data. (I.A.2, I.A.3)

Standard I.B – Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness

I. General Observations:

Palau Community College engages in college-wide, ongoing and systematic dialogue about student achievement and learning. The College focuses on its students and their learning and to this end has defined and assessed appropriate instructional and non-instructional learning outcomes. Further, the College engaged in broad-based, data-driven dialogue to develop and implement institution-set standards by which it can assess the learning and achievement of its students in pursuit of continuous improvement. Additionally, the College has demonstrated the incorporation of data into planning and the development and use of institutional policies that facilitate and support student learning. The degree to which this achieved is assessed through regular program reviews that feed into planning and resource allocation and the ongoing evaluation of these policies and procedures.

II. Findings and Evidence:

The team found evidence of dialogue about student achievement and learning occurring on a College-wide basis. This dialogue occurs informally between fellow faculty members (who demonstrate a high level of collaboration and support for each other), in department and faculty meetings, through program review, in the Retention Committee, and in the Committee for Programs and Curricula. Dialogue on Distance Education/Continuing Education specifically also occurs in the Distance Education Committee and the Technology Resource Committee. Further, through review of the evidence and interviews onsite, the team was able to verify that this dialogue occurs on an ongoing and systematic basis and leads to improvement. This dialogue demonstrates an understanding of the role of data and research in decision-making even as the College makes efforts to further develop the culture of evidence and its reliance on data for decision-making. That said, though the team found evidence of changes resulting in dialogue on student learning, it found limited examples of the efficacy of resulting changes being assessed and the loop being closed. (I.B.1)

The College has defined learning outcomes for all active courses and degree programs, and its Institutional Learning Outcomes serve as outcomes for the General Education program. However, the catalog contains 28 certificates that do not currently have program level outcomes. Additionally, PCC has defined outcomes for all service areas; however, those most recently developed have not been assessed which, in turn, has delayed the completion of the associated non-instructional program reviews. Faculty are involved in the development and assessment of all applicable instructional and non-instructional outcomes.

Course-level learning outcomes are assessed in the semester in which they are offered using the institution wide process, FAMED (Formulate, Assess, Measure, Evaluate, Develop) and through TracDat. Through a review of FAMED assessments for courses taught in the fall and spring 2015 semesters, the team was able to confirm that course level assessment is occurring on a systematic and ongoing basis. Further, there is ongoing, College-wide dialogue on course learning outcome data and these data are reviewed and used for improvement in the

instructional program review process. Additionally, data on student learning (often course outcome data, specifically) are used by the Colleges counselor's to monitor students who may be struggling. The team found much evidence of this in the College's Student Progress Reports.

Course-level learning outcomes have been mapped by faculty to program and institutional level outcomes. Based on this mapping, course outcome data have been aggregated to enable assessment at the program outcome level. Again, these assessments are reviewed and used to make improvements through the program review process. However, the team could not verify that course or program outcome data have been aggregated to directly assess student achievement of the College's published Institutional Learning Outcomes in an attempt to determine whether these outcomes have been attained.

Though the College has analyzed and used learning assessment data specifically related to developmental courses, the team did not find evidence of the systematic analysis of disaggregated data on student learning at the course, program, or institutional level. (I.B.2, ER 11)

In 2015, the College implemented its institution-set standards for student achievement (ISSA) which were developed by the Institutional-Set Standards for Student Achievement Committee through a year-long process of broad-based dialogue involving all constituents of the College. The ISSAs are based on longitudinal data and through review of relevant documents and dialogue with the committee, the team was able to verify the reasonableness of these standards. The College has assessed some of the ISSAs based on data from the fall 2015 semester. The remainder will not be assessed until July 2016 once academic-yearly data have been collected. As such, the College is not yet able to make a full determination on the extent to which it has achieved its institution-set standards. (I.B.3, ER 11)

The College's instructional and non-instructional assessment activities culminate in program reviews and this process is facilitated by the Institutional Assessment Committee. Through review of program review documents and interviews with relevant personnel, the team was able to verify that program review recommendations are used in planning, with those that require resources being prioritized and funded based on available finances. (I.B.4)

The College provided documentation that was verified through interviews with administrators, faculty, and staff that PCC has a program review process in place which has become integrated into the culture of the campus and is aligned with its mission. It is broad-based and cyclical, beginning and ending with the Executive Committee and aligned with the mission. Through it, there is ongoing, collegial, and self-reflective dialogue about continuous improvement in student learning and achievement, and institutional processes. It implements systematic, regular evaluation and re-evaluation of programs and services, and uses data to improve student learning and student achievement, planning, and budgeting. After review of the non-instructional program review cycle, however, the team found nine program reviews have been delayed until data on the recently defined related service area outcomes can be collected and analyzed. (I.B.5)

The team found that the College conducts regular assessment and evaluation of instructional and student support programs at the course and program levels. There is documented evidence, confirmed through interviews, that it uses data to drive program improvement—despite limited access to technology resources that are readily available to campuses in the United States. However, the team found no evidence that the College systematically disaggregates and analyzes data by subpopulations of the student body. That said, the team confirmed through interviews that through the ongoing dialogue that occurs, faculty are able to identify performance gaps, specifically with its developmental students, and provided evidence that strategies are implemented to meet student need and address these gaps. (I.B.6)

Interviews with staff and verification of documentation confirmed that the College has implemented a plan for regular assessment of policies and practices across all segments of the institution: instructional programs, student services, learning resources, resource management, and governance procedures. It is embedded in the program review process of the College and part of the College’s dialogue. Interviews confirmed and meeting minutes reflected that the College mission is part of the discussion when creating, implementing, and evaluating the plan. (I.B.7)

The team verified the College’s documentation of its communication with its internal and external stakeholders. There is institution-wide dialogue about SLOs and about the evaluation of course, programs, and services provided by units of the College. Information is provided to students, staff, and the community online, in College publications, over local radio and television stations, and through visits to outlying villages. (I.B.8)

Documentation provided by the College and interviews with staff and faculty confirmed that the College engages in continuous, broad-based, systematic evaluation and planning. This is evidenced in particular by the institutional planning process which results in regular updates and improvements to the Colleges Master Plan. These are communicated through the College’s 15-Year Institutional Master Plan Report Card document. The planning process is comprehensive, integrated, aligned to its mission, and has as its focus student learning and achievement. There is dialogue across all campus units: students, classified staff, faculty, and administration. Interviews confirmed that the constituents feel included and valued and that they are committed to the mission and goals of the campus.

The team identified that the College planning addresses both short- and long-term needs for their instructional, human resources, facilities, technology, and financial resources. The dialogue has led to improvements in courses, programs, services, data-collection and analysis, and resource allocations. (I.B.9, ER 19)

III. Conclusions

The College engages in broad-based dialogue that is ongoing and systematic. This dialogue is based on the assessment of course and program level data. However, the College does not systematically disaggregate and analyze data. Additionally, though the College has defined outcomes for its courses, degree programs and service areas, it has not defined outcomes for the certificates that are currently the College catalog.

The team was impressed with the level of thought and reflection evidenced by the ISSA development process. That said, the College does need to complete its planned schedule of evaluation. Additionally, it will benefit from increased clarity regarding the data sources on which ISSAs 10 and 11 were developed and on which their achievement will be assessed.

The College engages in ongoing and systematic assessment activities aimed at improving student learning. These activities culminate in program review, and the resulting recommendations for improvement and for needed resources contribute to the planning and resource allocation processes of the College. Additionally however, though the College demonstrates efforts to further develop a culture of evidence and data based decision-making, the College would benefit from the documentation of its current policies and processes on the assessment of its courses, programs, certificates, degrees, and services and how the resulting data can and should be used for continuous improvement.

Though the College has demonstrated a commitment to academic quality and institutional effectiveness and has provided evidence of its efforts in this regard, based on the deficiencies described above the College does not meet all the requirements for this standard.

IV. Recommendations:

Recommendation 1

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the College define and publish all program level outcomes, including certificates, and integrate their assessment into the ongoing assessment activities of the college. (I.B.2, II.A.1, II.A.3, ER11)

Recommendation 2

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the College complete its planned schedule of assessment for the institution-set standards and publish the results. (I.B.3, ER11)

Recommendation 3

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the College disaggregate and analyze learning outcomes and student achievement data for subpopulations of its students and implement strategies to mitigate any performance gaps that may be identified. (I.B.2, I.B.4, I.B.6, ER11)

Recommendation 6

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the College complete its scheduled assessment of recently developed and implemented service area outcomes. (I.B.2, I.B.5, ER11)

Recommendation 8

In order to increase its effectiveness, the team recommends the College develop and publish a Guide to Assessment that defines and communicates its assessment schedule, policies, and processes; details with whom data should be shared; and explains the role of data in planning and decision-making. (I.B.2)

Standard I.C – Institutional Integrity

I. General Observations

The College maintains processes and procedures that ensure that clear and accurate information is given to campus community members and the general public. The College provided information on the total cost of education, including tuition, fees, textbooks, and other instructional materials information in the general catalog, other College publications, and on the College website. The total cost information includes the resident tuition, non-resident tuition, room & board for student housing, and other required fees, such as application, admission, instructional support, and graduation fees. The College has a board-approved policy on academic freedom, which is published in its Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual (PRRM), general catalog, and student handbook. The principle of academic freedom is guaranteed to all faculty members acting within the scope and terms of their employment.

Policies on academic freedom regarding faculty teaching and student learning also apply to instructors of online courses. The College has established and published for all its constituents' policies and procedures that promote honesty, responsibility, and academic integrity. The policies include discipline and grievance procedures for non-compliance and are communicated to students through numerous publications.

The College requires, through a published policy, that faculty must always distinguish between their personal conviction and professionally accepted views in a discipline. Compliance to specific codes of staff, faculty, administrators, and students are also communicated to College constituents through the College website, campus bulletin boards, committee meetings, and through constituent group meetings, including the Faculty Senate Association (FSA) and Classified Staff Organization (CSO).

The College advocates and demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationship with external agencies. It complies with Commission policies and discloses all reasonable information to the public in order to carry out its accrediting responsibilities.

II. Findings and Evidence

The College utilizes processes which ensure that accurate and clear information is given to campus community members and the general public regarding College offerings, services, mission, and learning outcomes. The College has publications including its General Catalog, Administrative Procedures Manual, Fact Books, and Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual. These items evidence that the College presents accurate and current information to all parties. Evidence provided by the College and interviews with the College president and the Director of Development also evidence that it uses media, including a television and radio talk show, its website, and its annual fundraising event. These media communicate information to the community. Likewise, the College provides accurate information to all stakeholders regarding its accreditation status with the ACCJC. The College does not have any programs which are accredited by outside accreditors.

When changes are made to College policies, the College uses its website, attachments to payroll checks, and campus meetings to inform constituent groups of changes. Furthermore, evidence provided by the College and verified in person by the team showed that the campus has bulletin boards in which it also posts updates to the catalog, policies, and procedures. Interviews conducted by the team with the Director of Human Resources, the SLO Coordinator, the Committee on Programs and Curricula (CPC) and members of the Faculty Senate Association (FSA) indicated that policies, publications, and procedures are regularly reviewed. One example of this is the Curriculum Handbook which evidences the requirement that a course outline of record be reviewed once every five years. Previously, the courses were required to be reviewed every three years. The handbook was recently updated and reflects this change. Another example indicating the regular review of policies would be the minutes of the Policy Review Committee (PRC) and the culmination of their work. Since 2010 the PRC has revised board policies connected to personnel policies. Subsequently, they have created a revised version of the Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual (PRRM) which is currently being reviewed by the College president. As the PRRM had not been updated since 2005, the timeframe in which the PRC has updated the PRRM—including a line-by-line review of the handbook, seems reasonable. Interviews conducted by the team and comments during College forums suggested that campus community members were aware of where to find policies, procedures, and manuals associated with their jobs.

Additionally, constituent groups indicated that if an individual or group had a concern regarding a current policy or noticed that something may be in need of updating, they would be able to bring forward this concern to their constituent group leadership, who in turn would be able to address it via committee participation.

The College publishes a four-year catalog and an addendum of catalog changes is maintained by the College's Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Furthermore, all catalog changes approved by the College are posted on a bulletin board on campus from the time of the change until the publication of the updated catalog. The team did find two instances in which degree programs included in the catalog had not completed their internal approval nor received approval by the ACCJC. However, the College was aware of this mistake and will remove them from the subsequent catalog. In this case, the fact that they print a four-year catalog rather than a yearly or two-year catalog explains this discrepancy. It is recommended that information regarding this mistake be included on the College's bulletin showing addenda to the catalog.

Participating in ACCJC training informed the policy making/review process starting with the Board's four year review cycle of its governance policies. For example, the Board began by reviewing its governance process policies first in 2015. "Ends Policies" are in review during 2016, "Limitations or Boundary Policies" will be reviewed in 2017, and "Board-Staff Relations Policies" will be reviewed in 2018. (I.C.1, I.C.5, ER 20)

The College's print and online catalog evidence that the catalog requirements are mostly met. The team did find evidence that the College has not adopted Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for its certificates or its STEM Associate of Arts degree program. (I.C.2, I.C.4, ER 20)

The College uses documented assessments of student learning and student achievement data to communicate matters of academic quality to campus groups, including faculty and administrators. The College maintains a culture in which student learning assessment data and student achievement data are shared with and by College community members. Evidence provided by the College included FAMED documents, evidence in TracDat, Program Review Reports, and committee meeting minutes from committees including the Committee on Programs and Curricula (CPC), the Executive Committee, and documents from campus training sessions regarding ISSAs and other events confirms this finding. Student learning and student achievement data are also shared with the public although this sharing could include additional points of evidence from both student learning and student achievement data. (I.C.3, ER 19)

Based on evidence provided by the College and validated by the team including the catalog and the financial aid handbook, the College accurately informs current and prospective students the total cost of education, including tuition, required fees, textbooks, and other instructional materials through the College publications such as the general catalog, and financial aid handbook. Interviews conducted by the team evidenced that students and faculty feel that textbook costs are high and books frequently arrive late. In some cases, this may delay students' awareness of the cost of a required course textbook. Faculty discussed this issue at the faculty forum, and some discussions are occurring to brainstorm solutions to this problem. The administration, including the College president and academic deans, are also aware of this issue although it was not clear from interviews with them that administrators have developed a plan to address this issue.

The team found evidence in the general catalog, student handbook, and Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual of a Board-approved policy on academic freedom. As such, PCC demonstrates its commitment to an educational environment that supports the professional exercise of academic freedom. Further, these policies make clear the institution's commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, and its support for an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom exists for all constituencies, including faculty and students. (I.C.6)

PCC has established and published for all its constituents policies and procedures that promote honesty, responsibility, and academic integrity. Faculty are informed of these policies through an employee orientation upon hiring and through the Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual (sections 1.34 and 1.35 in the revised, forthcoming version of the PRRM). Additionally, the policies are communicated to students through new student orientation, the student handbook, the general catalog, the student planner, the SS 100 course, and course syllabi, as well as during the first two days of instruction at the beginning of new semester/session. (I.C.7, I.C.8, ER 13)

The College's policy on faculty distinguishing between personal convictions and professionally accepted views in a discipline is found in the Personnel Rules and Regulation Manual in section 1.36. When a policy that seeks to instill specific beliefs, such as a unifying set of ethical principles (the College's Unifying Principles) they are approved via the campus

committee structure and published in the catalog. (I.C.9)

PCC's codes of conduct for faculty and staff are communicated through the Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual. The code of conduct was approved in 2010. This policy is described in BP (10-04) and is included in the revised forthcoming version of the PRRM. The College's discipline policy is included in the forthcoming, revised version of the PRRM. Based on this policy, personnel may be disciplined due to a lack of honesty (PRRM 14.3.6). Code of conduct policies for students are also included in the student handbook, student planner, and general catalog. The team did not find that these policies are on the College website. (I.C.10)

The College offers courses to students in one foreign location (Yap). Interviews with faculty and administration confirmed that the College is operating its nursing program in Yap in conformity to the Standards and applicable Commission policies, including the Commission's *Policy on Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Educational Programs for Non- U.S. Nationals*. Interviews with the College administration indicate that there is a very small enrollment for this program. The College is working closely with the Department of Health in Yap, Federated States of Micronesia to assure that these students can complete their program. The College is currently considering best steps for the future of this program and has not recruited any new students at this time. The College does not operate any additional programs in foreign locations, and therefore does not need to maintain authorization to operate in any additional foreign locations. (I.C.11)

The history of the College's relations with the Commission verifies that the College is committed to complying with the Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, Commission policies, and guidelines. The College communicates matters of institutional quality and effectiveness through the website, catalog, Fact Book, and through radio and television presentations. When directed to act by the Commission, the College has responded and met requirements within the Commission's established deadlines. All evidence reviewed by the team—including electronic and paper records of communication with, and reports to, the Commission and the College website including reports to the Commission—indicate that the College complies with Commission reporting requirements and procedures for team visits with one exception: The team did not find evidence that it complies with the Commission's *Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions* as to third party comments. However, the College published an announcement of the opportunity to provide third party comments in the March 4th issue of the College weekly newsletter, which was published and presented to the team on March 3rd.

The College has not posted on its website its substantive change reports and the Commission's approval of three substantive change reports for new degree programs in STEM, Palauan Studies, and Community and Public Health. However, in keeping with the College's effective practices for notifying the public and campus community members, the Commission's action to approve these substantive change reports was announced on the radio at the College's annual fundraiser and on campus bulletin boards at the time of the approval. (I.C.12, ER 21)

The College represents itself honestly to federal, state, and private agencies and complies with regulations and statutes. Documentation of the institution's communications with its internal and external agencies, and interviews with staff, faculty, and administration, confirm that the College acts with integrity and in compliance with external agency regulations. The team found the College is consistent in how it represents itself accurately to internal and external stakeholders, through online and printed publications, and through radio and television presentations. In general, the College excels at communicating information regarding its accreditation to the Commission, campus community members, and the public. Evidence provided by the College showed that the College responsively communicated to the public when it went on warning in 2010. The president also discussed its warning status with the community via its television program. Swift actions were taken to address the recommendations noted by the 2010 visiting team. In turn, when the College regained its accreditation status, it communicated its return to reaffirmation of accredited status post haste to the campus community and to the public. This evidences that the College describes itself in accurate terms and communicates its accreditation status to the public. (I.C.13)

The College is a public institution with no investors and no shareholders. It is an independent educational institution with no shareholders. The College does not generate financial returns for investors, contribute to a related or parent organization, or support any external interests. (I.C.14)

III. Conclusions

The College regularly reviews policies and procedures related to instruction, student services, human resources, and other aspects of campus administration. It maintains clear and accurate information, including a catalog and other policies and procedures. It presents itself with integrity to campus community members and to the public. The College should be commended for its efforts to inform the campus community and the public regarding its academic offerings and accreditation status. While the College may better communicate to the public matters of academic quality vis-à-vis student learning and student data, it represents itself with accuracy and integrity.

The College meets all the Standards and related Eligibility Requirements except for Standard I.C.12 and ER 21.

IV. Recommendations

Recommendation 4

In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends the College provide opportunity for third party comments prior to site visits in accordance with the Commission's policy on Rights and Responsibility of Commission and Member Institutions. (I.C.12, ER 21)

STANDARD II

STUDENT LEARNING PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Standard II.A. – Instructional Programs

I. General Observations

The College offers 21 degree programs, 28 certificate programs, and 318 credit and noncredit courses, which support the College's mission to meet the technical, academic, cultural, social, and economic needs of its students. The team confirmed through documentation and interviews with faculty and administrators that the College schedules courses over a two-year period to allow students to plan their course-taking and their time to degree completion consistent with ACCJC standards. There is a Semester Course Planning Process that includes instructional faculty, student life staff, and the registrar that ensures that the various perspectives are discussed and included in the schedule. The College aligns the schedule with student needs and program sequencing. The College uses standard, generally-accepted teaching methodologies, while adapting instruction to accommodate to cultural differences of their student population and the limitations of their technology resources.

The College's Committee on Program and Curricula (CPC) courses and programs are regularly and generally systematically updated. Pre-collegiate curriculum in English and mathematics are distinguished from College-level curriculum. As appropriate, these pre-collegiate courses serve as prerequisites for collegiate courses. Review of the College's programs and degrees indicates appropriate breadth, rigor, depth, and courses sequencing. The College follows the requirements of the US Department of Education's clock-to-credit hours formula.

Courses and all academic programs have defined learning outcomes. Students' success in courses is measured through the student learning assessment process. These outcomes map to program and institutional learning outcomes. Students' attainment of program learning outcomes are measured.

Results from student learning assessments lead to evaluations and improvements in teaching and learning. The College ensures that its faculty meet commonly accepted standards in higher education via the evaluation process as well as through requirements that course outlines and syllabi include the institution's defined learning outcomes.

Based on a review of the 2012-2016 General Catalog, the 15-Year Institutional Master Plan, the College's website and publications, the College awards credits and degrees consistent with its own policies and federal regulations. Credits and degrees are awarded based on students successfully completing course, program, and institutional learning outcomes. The College follows generally accepted norms for awarding credit and federal standards for clock-hour-to-credit-hour conversions.

Using the same source documents and verified through interviews, it was confirmed that the College has policies to address transfer-of-credit both internally and externally that ensure students are able to move among institutions of higher education without penalty.

The College provides a full array of student support services—instructional and recreational. The effectiveness of these services are assessed as part of the College’s integrated program review process.

Further, the College has developed articulation agreements with Colleges in the Pacific and on the US mainland and Hawaii that are appropriate to its needs, aligned to its mission, and in compliance with federal and accreditation standards. These agreements are regularly reviewed and evaluated according to the College’s established policies.

II. Findings and Evidence

The College offers 318 courses and 49 degree and certificate programs. Programs and courses support the College’s mission. All courses and degree programs include defined learning outcomes. However, the team did not find evidence that certificate programs (including certificates of completion, academic subject certificates, and certificates of competency) as well as the College’s STEM Disciplines Associate of Arts Program include defined learning outcomes. Evidence from the College, including committee meeting minutes, assessment reports, and program review indicate the College creates and revises curriculum to support the needs of its students, including those within the Republic of Palau and within the geographic region of Micronesia. Students’ completion of a program with defined learning outcomes result in the attainment of learning outcomes and the achievement of a degree. (II.A.1, ER 9, ER 11)

The College ensures that curriculum meets generally accepted standards and expectations. New courses are approved through the CPC and the vice president of education and training; new degree programs require approval by the CPC, the president, and the board of trustees. New certificates require approval by the CPC and the president. The College requires that course outlines be reviewed on a five-year cycle and that programs are reviewed via the Committee on Programs and Curricula. As discussed in meetings of members with the CPC, the timeline for course revision was recently modified from three to five years. Evidence of the timeline for curriculum review for courses and programs is included in the curriculum handbook. Furthermore, the FAMED processes requires the review of course learning outcomes (CLOs) on a yearly cycle. Review of FAMED documents indicates that courses assessed from recent semesters follows a yearly assessment process and that reasonable accommodations are made if a course is not able to be assessed. For example, if a course is canceled due to low enrollment, it will be assessed in the subsequent term it is offered. In situations in which multiple sections of a course are taught in one semester, or in which a course offered every semester, faculty may choose to assess multiple sections of a course to obtain additional CLO data.

In addition to the College’s internal processes supporting the systematic review of curriculum and instruction, faculty and staff may update their skills based on trainings and conference attendance. For example, faculty in career technical education (Small Engine and Outboard Marine Technology) have recently completed trainings in order to update their teaching methods and instructional content. Courses in other areas, including electronics (solar

energy), have recently been revised. Evidence from interviews with faculty as well as CPC minutes substantiate that these revisions are driven by faculty members' understanding of student needs and changes in industry standards. Likewise, the College's status as a public institution serving the needs of its government and its close working relationship with key public- and private-sector partners provides opportunities for public stakeholders to provide input into curriculum development and revision.

The team evidenced that instruction offered by the College is of a high quality and meets generally accepted academic and professional expectations. The team participated in seven in-person classroom visits and also observed all of the College's courses which are offered on line. Face to face classes included traditional lecture courses, lecture and discussion courses, and interactive, problem-based lab work in a career and technical education course. Students and instructors were engaged. Classes were generally full despite the fact that it was midterm's week and many students mentioned they were trying to find as much time to study as possible. Students were generally well prepared for courses and brought appropriate materials, including writing utensils, notebooks, and books.

Online courses observed evidenced regular effective contact between instructors and students with a variety of regular opportunities for students to learn via direct contact with their instructors and through group assignments. (II.A.2)

The team did not find evidence that the College has developed learning outcomes for certificates of completion, academic subject certificates, and certificates of competency. Interviews with the College's SLO coordinator, department chairs/coordinators, and members of the Faculty Senate Association (FSA) substantiate that faculty have primary authority for the development of, and revision to, curriculum including CLOs.

Syllabi provided by the College as evidenced in the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report include the learning outcomes on the correlative course outlines of record (CORs). The team also reviewed a random sample of approved CORs to correlate the CLOs included on current syllabi from the fall 2015 and spring 2015 semesters. The majority of CLOs included on CORs matched those on the syllabi. In a few cases there were some minor differences. In a minority of syllabi, there were substantial differences between CLOs on the syllabus and on the COR. There were some instances where syllabi the team reviewed included CLOs which were different from the approved course outlines of record. As evidenced by program learning outcome assessments included in academic program review documents, PLOs for degrees are generally assessed within a three-year cycle based on CLO results. Ultimately, the team did find that two academic programs had not been completed as indicated on the College's program review cycle. However, as evidenced in interviews with the College's ALO and Associate Dean, it appears that unexpected staffing changes resulted in these lapses. The team also found that two programs included in the catalog (Architectural Drafting and Auto Body Repair) have not completed program assessments or program review. Interviews with the ALO and the Associate Dean indicated that these programs should not be included in the catalog as they had not yet been approved by the ACCJC. (II.A.3)

Pre-collegiate curriculum offered by the College prepares students for success in College-

level courses. Pre-collegiate English and mathematics courses are linked to College-level courses in these and other disciplines. Based on course content, the College distinguishes between collegiate and pre-collegiate coursework. The College supports students in their learning process and advancement to College-level curriculum through learning center resource support, and a robust academic advising system. Degree program admission requirements indicate that pre-collegiate and collegiate-level curriculum are identified in the catalog. (II.A.4)

Course sequencing and scheduling allow students to complete a degree program within approximately two years assuming that students take at least 30 credit units each year. The College catalog explains the policy on cancelled classes including those which meet general education requirements and for occupational courses (page 37). The College's administration, counselors, and faculty work together to ensure that students strive to complete necessary coursework within a timely manner.

Moreover, the College has clearly identified the scope of curriculum that should be included in its different program categories including Associate of Applied Science, Associate of Science, and Certificate programs. Review of degree and certificate programs along with course sequencing provide evidence that the College has appropriate breadth, depth, and rigor of course offerings. Programs are developed based on faculty expertise and partnerships with public stakeholders and the Palauan government. Evidence from the College suggests that these partnerships serve as methods for program content to be evaluated, revised, and when needed, improved. (II.A.5, ER 12)

The College should be commended for its responsiveness to community needs in terms of course and program offerings, such as its development of a Palauan Studies Program.

The team confirmed through review of the College schedules and interviews with faculty and administrators that the College schedules and offers courses that allow students to complete a program of study in a two-year period provided students complete a minimum of 30 credit units each year. (II.A.6, ER 9)

The College uses standard, generally-accepted teaching methodologies, including regular input from counselors, while adapting instruction to accommodate to cultural differences of their student population and the limitations of their technology resources. (II.A.7)

The team confirmed through documentation and interviews that the College validates the effectiveness of English and math placement tests to ensure they are unbiased and a valid measure of student learning. The reading and writing placement tests are reviewed and revised every three years. Formal changes are introduced by the departments, approved by the Committee on Programs and Curricula and the Dean of Academic Affairs. The College has a process in place for students to challenge developmental English and math courses to account for prior learning. Students can receive credit through the challenge test. These challenges tests are also reviewed regularly to ensure they are aligned with the course SLOs and to ensure validity and reduce bias. As the College has created more alignment through the program review process, there are more department-wide course and program

examinations being used. The College is using the same review and approval process: department, CPC, and Dean for these tests. (II.A.8)

All courses and degree programs have defined learning outcomes. Students' success in courses is measured through the student learning assessment process. These outcomes map to program and institutional learning outcomes. Credit for courses is based upon a College-wide standard of 70 percent achievement of course-level learning outcomes. Course credits are awarded following the generally accepted Carnegie credit hour units. The College follows generally accepted norms for awarding credit and federal standards for clock-hour-to-credit-hour conversions. (II.A.9, ER 10)

Transfer policies at the College can be found in the College catalog, student handbook, and in the counselors' offices. The College accepts credit courses from accredited Colleges toward the requirements of degrees offered at the College. Articulation agreements are in place with San Diego State University, California and Eastern Oregon University and Western Oregon University. (II.A.10, ER 10)

The Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) provides evidence (course outlines, FAMED documents, and the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) course matrix) to show that the College has integrated learning outcomes and information competencies into courses and programs which are linked to the ILOs. The College provided documentation showing that the College assesses and modifies learning outcomes, and that students are achieving those desired outcomes. The ISER mentioned that the curriculum does provide for diverse opinions within the course. The catalog lists the College's statement of academic freedom indicating that diverse opinions within the course are permissible.

The FAMED document and the ILO course matrix provide the impression that there is a culture of evidence within the organization.

The ISER did not provide sufficient narrative or evidence regarding the criteria used to determine the "breadth, depth, rigor, sequencing, or time to completion" for each program it offers. (II.A.11)

General education courses are a component of the College's Associate of Science, Associate of Applied Science, Associate of Arts, and Associate of Technical Studies degrees. The catalog clearly lists the degree-specific and general education course requirements for each degree. The courses are created and modified by discipline faculty. The faculty creates the structure of the degrees and the SLOs for courses and programs. Industry partners do provide input which is used to modify courses and SLOs as needed. (II.A.12, ER 12)

All degree programs in the College catalog list courses that are focused on an area of inquiry specific to the degree. Learning outcomes for the courses and programs are listed in the course outline with assessment information shown on FAMED documents. Mastery of many degree programs are assessed through passing grades and by a degree-specific internship course. Nursing majors are required to complete field work, complete all coursework with passing grades, and apply for Republic of Palau licensure. (II.A.13)

CTE programs work closely with local industry to tailor the programs to the needs of the industries. Internships are required of all CTE students. The College reports that many of its students are hired upon completion of their programs. The College verifies the currency of the former student's employment when faculty visits the worksites for new student internships. CTE faculty develops SLOs that are specific to the subject matter, but are also informed by input from their advisory committee members. (II.A.14)

Students are allowed one semester to choose a new program of study if the College decides to discontinue or significantly alter a program of study. The College provides career counseling to the students if desired. Students that have completed 50% or more of a program of study will be allowed to continue the discontinued or significantly altered program of study. (II.A.15)

The College requires all programs to undergo a program review every three years to assess the currency of the program, update or change course and program SLOs, request resources including professional development, list the program's strengths and weaknesses, and create an action plan to address identified changes for improvement.

The instructional program review requires faculty to use data to assess the following: Student enrollment; pass/credit rates; fail/no credit rates; percentage of students auditing a course; percentage of students withdrawing from a course; the number of students graduating from the program; class size; percentages of students in lecture and laboratory settings; full-time to part-time faculty ratio; faculty to student ratio; and the number of sections offered in the program.

The Maintenance Assistance Program (MAP) is on a one-year program review cycle as required by law to produce annual reports of their services.

Results from instructional program reviews and FAMED have resulted in changes to the curriculum, facilities upgrades and room changes, the addition of personnel, and new equipment. (II.A.16)

The College offers a limited number of online courses. Online course proposal and development follow the Distance Education Committee (DEC) procedure. Web Enhanced, Hybrid and fully online courses follow an approved course online proposal process. The course needs to be ready for review at least six weeks prior to the semester being offered and fully developed at least four weeks prior to the semester in which the course is offered. This proposal must receive the signature of the dean of academic affairs prior to the start of course design and implementation. A course-building checklist is presented to each instructor interested in designing an online course. It is recommended that the Distance Education Committee expand the existing checklist to incorporate more specific best practices related to current pedagogy in online course design. There is an accurate and consistent compliance with regular and substantive interaction between the instructor and students as well as students to students. Forums require students to interact in an asynchronous format in the discussion boards within Moodle.

Assessments are infused in PCC's online courses within each module. Students are given a self-assessment prior to the orientation of the course to ensure that they are prepared for their online experience. Students also meet with the instructor in the Online Lab for orientation and midterm and final assessments that are administered in a traditional format. Faculty training is in place for the use of the course management system. The College is meeting current policy on distance education, and has a comprehensive assessment process in place. (II.A.1, II.A.2 II.A.3, II.A5, II.A7, II.A.9)

III. Conclusion

Palau Community College offers courses and programs that are consistent with its mission, in demand by the community it serves, and of sufficient length, breadth, depth, rigor, course sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning. The College ensures that all curriculum meet a rigorous standard from course creation to the Committee on Program and Curricula approval and on to review and approval by the president of the College. Learning outcomes are assessed at the course, program, and institutional levels. Curriculum is clearly noted at the pre-collegiate and collegiate level. Courses are offered in a manner that enables students to complete in a timely manner. Courses are exclusively offered in person with the exception of two or three online courses per semester. The online courses require testing on campus which makes the courses seem more like hybrid courses than true online courses. The awarding of course credits is based upon student completion of at least 70 percent of course learning outcomes. All course learning outcomes are linked to program learning outcomes and institutional learning outcomes. Credits are accepted from accredited transfer institutions and are applied to degree and certificate completion. There is institution-wide dialogue about SLOs and about the evaluation of course, programs, and services provided by units of the College. General education requirements are a core component of degree programs at the College. Degree programs are built upon an established core set of discipline specific courses. Students completing technical programs complete an internship which helps to verify their competency of the discipline subject master. Eliminated programs are taught out if students have completed at least 50 percent of the degree requirements. Lastly, the College strives to update all courses and programs to maintain relevance.

The College meets all the Standards and related Eligibility Requirements except for Standard II.A.1, II.A.3 and ER11.

IV. Recommendations

See Recommendation 1.

See Recommendation 2.

Recommendation 12

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the Distance Education Committee publish a comprehensive Best Practices Manual for online faculty training and campuswide reference. (III.A.14 and Commission Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education)

Standard II.B – Library and Learning Support Services

I. General Observations

The College provides library and learning support services to students and staff through a variety of programs and services, including the Tan Siu Lin PCC Library, Learning Resource Center (LRC), the Western Curriculum Coordinating Center (WCCC), Education USA Advising Center, and the PCC Computer Labs. An array of print and digital resources are available to students, including remote access to electronic periodical databases and research guides. Facilities are staffed to ensure students receive services and access to resources. The largest library in the Republic of Palau, the college library serves as a community resource, open to everyone in Palau, with 10,030 active patrons, which represents approximately half of the total population. The Palau Community College Library hosts the Palau Union Catalog (PUC). The Palau Union Catalog, hosted by the College library, makes available the information of other libraries in Palau. The other libraries in Palau include the Palau Public Library, the Olbiil era Kelulau (Palau National Congress) library, the Palau National Museum library and the libraries from the public elementary schools. (II.B1, ER17)

The learning services is comprised of tutoring services, career exposure and career/transfer counseling provided by the Learning Resource Center (LRC); academic tutoring provided by the Academic Tutoring Center (ATC); and computer technology services by computer lab. The College assesses the effectiveness of learning support services through service users' satisfaction surveys and assessment of service area outcomes. (II.B1)

PCC relies on appropriate expertise of faculty, library staff, and other learning support services professionals to select and maintain educational equipment and materials to support student learning and enhance the achievement of its mission. (II.B.2, ER 17)

Student learning outcomes at the course, program, and service area levels at PCC are mapped to the institutional level learning outcomes. PCC systematically evaluates the library and other support services through the overall institutional process entitled FAMED (Formulate, Assess, Measure, Evaluate, and Develop). FAMED is threaded throughout campus programs and service areas. It forms, defines, and evaluates individual defined learning outcomes within the campus library and learning support services. The student learning outcomes are assessed every six months or once a year (depending upon the need) through various activities. The library uses a customer satisfaction survey as well as a computer lab evaluation to measure the accessibility and quality of the services provided. (II.B.3)

PCC uses program review, service area and course level assessments, and evaluations to make needed changes to the library and learning support services areas. Discussions that generate changes and enhancements to the evaluation process are held at the Library Staff meetings at PCC. Once the evaluations have been collected, the results are shared and discussed at the Library Staff meetings. The collected evidence provides a basis for discussion and a decision-making process on how best to improve the particular program or service. (II.B.3)

The library's collection directly supports the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). In order to meet student learning needs, the library focuses on accessibility of materials and services for students and community members. Priorities and selection criteria have been assessed and are listed in the Library Policy Manual. The quality of the collection is defined, determined, and maintained by how well it supports the academic programs as well as usefulness to the students. (II.B.3)

II. Finding and Evidence

Palau Community College provides library and learning support services to students and staff through a variety of programs and services, including the Tan Siu Lin PCC Library, Learning Resource Center (LRC), the Western Curriculum Coordinating Center (WCCC), Education USA Advising Center, and the PCC Computer Labs. The PCC Library serves students, faculty, staff, and the general community. The Learning Resource Center and the PCC Computer Labs exist to serve students and support the College curriculum. The Western Curriculum Coordinating Center houses a special library collection that provides information resources to the community, instructors, and PCC technical programs. (II.B.1, ER 17)

The mission of the Tan Siu Lin PCC Library is to support the academic programs at the College and to promote lifelong learning in the wider community with high-quality, accessible resources, information literacy training, and public outreach activities. It is the largest library in the Republic of Palau, with collections totaling 43,000 plus. While most of the materials are in English, the collection does include materials in Palauan, Japanese, Mandarin, and other languages. (II.B.1, ER 17)

The PCC library is the Republic of Palau's official depository library for all publications issued by the United Nations, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Environmental Resource Center, and the South Pacific Regional Environment Program. The library also maintains an extensive Micronesia-Pacific Collection, a unique collection of materials on the Pacific region and Micronesia, with particular emphasis on Palau. (II.B.1, ER 17)

The Western Curriculum Coordinating Center (WCCC) collection, 15,000 plus volumes of printed material and A/V resources on vocational and technical programs, is housed in a separate building in close proximity to the PCC Library. The collection was relocated from the University of Hawaii at Manoa in 2008 as a way to assist in the research and development of vocational and technical curricula and activities. (II.B.1, ER 17)

The Teen Space and the Kids' Korner were updated in 2015 with new furniture designed for children and young adults. In addition, the library also houses a conference room that is utilized by faculty, staff, student groups, and community users. In 2015, the second floor was turned into a commons area for group study. Quiet conversation is allowed, and long tables help facilitate group work. (II.B.1, ER 17)

The PCC Library has established outreach programs to include underserved community

members and to provide the best service possible. Library staff conduct read-aloud sessions to students from the pre-school located on PCC campus. Library staff travel to elementary classrooms on a weekly basis through the book mobile program that is a program established between Palau Community College and the Palau Ministry of Education. (II.B.1, ER 17)

Student surveys indicate positive levels of satisfaction with library services. Patron satisfaction surveys are also conducted on a regular basis to assess services. The library has a customer satisfaction survey and also a library computer lab evaluation that measure the accessibility and quality of services. Patron satisfaction with the library computer lab reached 82 percent in fall 2014. In a spring 2015 survey on New Services and Patron Satisfaction, results showed 91 percent of patrons were satisfied with the library services and resources. (II.B.1, ER 17)

The library provides services to students to develop skills in information competency through instructional sessions and one-on-one reference interactions. The primary tool for assessing the attainment of information competency skills in instructional sessions is the use of student satisfaction surveys. During 2011-2012, the goals and learning outcomes were developed. In spring 2012, the Library User Satisfaction Survey and Library Computer Lab Survey were first administered in fall 2012. When the Library User Satisfaction Survey was again assessed in fall 2014, results showed that 80 percent of the students were at the proficiency level for the student learning outcomes aligned with this assessment tool. (II.B.1, ER 17)

Every semester, new students at PCC are required to enroll in SS100, Introduction to College course; in which a section is devoted to a library bibliographic instruction session. In SS100, a Library Scavenger Hunt was used to assess student information competency skills. The survey activities are distributed after each SS100 course orientation to measure student learning. The assessment of student learning relating to informational competency could be strengthened through evaluation tools beyond satisfaction surveys. (II.B.1, ER 17)

The library's collection supports the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) by access to resources from a diversity of viewpoints and perspectives, cultures, and behaviors of the greater world, role models of moral and civic duty, and a wide breadth of disciplines and schools of thought. The assessment of the effectiveness of the library's collection impact on the institutional learning outcomes is not explicitly measured. (II.B.1, ER 17)

There are three computer labs available for student use on campus. What is referred to as the Online Lab, is used for online courses and the students enrolled in online courses. It contains 20 student computers, running Windows Vista. There are always at least two lab assistants in this room whenever it is open. Free printing is available for students in this lab. The lab has its own DSL line and server to ensure that students learning in an online format have access to their course materials and can participate in class activities. The courses offered to PCC students are taught in an asynchronous online format, where the student can work on their own time when available.

The second computer lab is an open lab containing 19 Windows XP computers with MS Office 2010 and offers free printing for students. The third student computer lab is located in the library, and contains 20 PCs, 5 iMacs, and a separate scanning station. In addition, the

library has five laptops available to patrons for in-library use. The computers are equipped with the Microsoft Office Suite and Internet connections for online database research, email, and general Internet searches.

The Online Lab is evaluated by a survey designed by the Institutional Research Office. The results from all computer lab surveys are reviewed by the Technology Resources Committee to determine the priority areas for allocating College resources to improve computer lab services in conjunction with the Technology Resources Plan that has been developed. At the end of summer 2011, the lab underwent its first assessment using an assessment tool similar to the Online Lab's tool. All areas of assessment reached a satisfaction rate of 90 percent or better with the exception of the hours of operation, which received an 87 percent satisfaction rating. The College assesses the effectiveness of learning support services through service users' satisfaction surveys and assessment of learning outcomes. (II.B.1)

Palau Community College offers a nursing degree program in the state of Yap, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Library and learning support services provided to students in the nursing degree program at Yap State Department of Health are provided by the department's medical library. Tutoring services, technology services, and other support services for students in the nursing degree program at Yap State are available through contracted facilitators by Palau Community College and Yap State Department of Health support staff which includes the department's chief nurse, who is currently the nursing program coordinator and staff from the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) in Yap State, FSM. (II.B.1)

The learning support services of the College include three primary components: Learning Resource Center (LRC); academic tutoring provided by the Academic Tutoring Center (ATC); and computer technology services. The Learning Resource Center (LRC) administers the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions Program (AANAPISI); Placement Testing and the institutional Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). (II.B.2)

The library's collection development policy defines the scope of material and equipment selection. There is a mechanism for faculty to request purchases for the library. The library utilizes reports generated through the integrated library system to access the collection for usage, depth, currency, and variety. Priorities and selection criteria have been assessed and are listed in the Library Policy Manual. Evaluation of the library collection and library services is a priority for Palau Community College Library staff. Collection maintenance is an integral role in the library's overall collection development strategy. (II.B.2)

Collection maintenance is accomplished through weeding, replacement, and duplication of titles and is guided by general criteria outlined in the Library Policy Manual. Weeding is done on a regular basis to keep the collection in good repair and up-to-date. The Library Director has the overall responsibility for the development of the library collection, but the building of a strong, well-balanced collection relies on the specialized knowledge of all members of the College's academic faculty and staff. The library assesses this through customer satisfaction surveys. Another means of assessing this is through the electronic statistical data provided through the Follett Software system. This library software system

provides user information for books lent by the library. (II.B.2)

The Learning Resource Center provides tutoring services, academic advising and counseling, career exposure, and career/transfer counseling. Academic tutoring is provided by the Academic Tutoring Center (ATC); and computer technology services are provided by computer lab. All offer an array of quality services to improve student learning. These services include comprehensive tutorial services, computer lab, large study room, and many partnerships with academic departments. (II.B.2)

The Learning Resource Center provides instructional software supporting programs such as English, nursing, and chemistry, textbooks, lab manuals and solution manuals from a variety of disciplines. Peer- and instructor-led tutoring is available to students in English and mathematics. Students requiring tutorials in other disciplines receive ad hoc peer tutoring. The learning support services faculty and staff meet regularly to review software, instructional materials, and equipment to support student learning. Instructional and resource materials are in accordance with classroom materials designated in faculty course outlines and based on student needs. (II.B.2)

The library and Learning Resource Center have completed multiple cycles as part of the College's FAMED resource allocation and planning processes. The library and learning services have developed program-level outcomes for services and assesses outcomes through annual surveys and questionnaires. Dialogue of outcomes, objectives, and resource requests occurs at several levels from department, division, to College. Results from annual student surveys are used in planning, assessment, and decision-making processes. There is evidence through documentation and interviews that outcomes are assessed and improvements made based on the assessment of survey results. The library and learning center are adaptive and continuously improve to provide quality programs and services. (II.B.2)

The collection clearly supports the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) of the campus. Besides encouraging and supporting the various academic programs on campus, the library presents to the College and community an open doorway to participation in cultures and behaviors of the greater world, role models of moral and civic duty, and representations of the arts in all forms and from all eras and locales. (II.B.3, II.B.4, ER 17)

The Tan Siu Lin PCC Library clearly supports the academic programs at the College and promotes lifelong learning in the wider community evidenced by high-quality, accessible resources, information literacy training, and public outreach activities. PCC ensures that the library is maintained as a community resource, open to everyone in Palau, and serves approximately half of the total population. Students and community members have access to 19 computers that allow for use of email, word processing, and research. There are traditional student support library resources available that include access to printers, special collections, and books on reserve that offer reserved titles for College courses. It is the largest library in Palau and offers collections totaling approximately 50,000 titles. Books are available in various languages that represent the linguistic diversity of Palau's population. The PCC library is the Republic of Palau's official depository for all publications issued by the United Nations, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The library collections carry important

resources that archive valuable publications of the home culture. (II.B.4)

The library and learning center rely upon campus maintenance services and technology services for general maintenance, cleaning, security, and repair of the building and equipment. Service contracts are kept for most office equipment and for the integrated library system. Suitable security measures are taken to ensure the integrity of data, systems, and equipment. (IIB.4)

The Library and Learning Resource Center provides adequate information and learning support services for its mission and instructional programs. Resources are delivered through ownership or contractual agreements providing long-term access to support student learning and instructional programs. (ER 17)

III. Conclusion

Review of library and learning support services indicates a high level of student satisfaction and success supporting student learning throughout the College's service area. Both the library and learning center are hubs of student activity and innovative programming. The library offers several special collections (United Nations; Micronesia) and program areas (Teen Space; Kids Korner) to support the diverse needs of the community. Staff are positive and dedicated to providing services to supporting student achievement and creating a welcoming environment. The library continues to focus on improving consistent ongoing assessment tools and outcomes to gauge student development of information competency skills.

The renovated and expanded facilities provide modern, open, and supportive spaces enriching teaching, learning, and discovery. Student surveys have indicated that library and learning support services have a high level of student satisfaction over multiple years.

To effectively support library services, staffing level objectives identified in College action improvement plan should be implemented.

The College meets all the Standards and related Eligibility Requirements.

IV. Recommendations

None

Standard II.C – Student Support Services

I. General Observations

Palau Community College provides a comprehensive array of student support services to support its mission and help students learn, develop, and succeed. Services are provided by many departments and programs in many locations across the campus and at remote sites including in Yap State, FSM, where the Nursing program is co-located. Several resource centers for student learning support exist, transportation to extension campuses is provided, travel grants from other islands is available, on-campus housing accommodates up to 137 students, and plans for expansion of services are described in the Institutional Self Evaluation Report. The College communicates critical safety and security tips and guidelines for reporting crimes through its website, in student publications such as the Student Planner, and during New Student Orientation. (II.C.3, II.C.5, ER15).

Academic advising/counseling duties are the primary responsibility of the Student Life Unit and the Learning Resource Center. Program-specific academic advising is also provided by program coordinators/department heads.

Students are supported by academic faculty who communicate student progress to counselors by completing student progress reports three times a semester. Students receive academic advising throughout their time at the College through New Student Orientation, an Introduction to College course (SS100), Individual Educational Plans (IEP), and Student Progress Reports (SPR). Information is also shared through workshops, bulletin boards, student publications, and the College website (II.C.5, ER 16).

The Student Services Division uses student outcomes and service outcomes to inform operations and continuous improvement of services (II.C.1, ER 15, II.C. 2). Student feedback about various services is solicited through a variety of means and at different points in time. The College has aligned learning outcomes at the course, program, service area, and institutional levels with 100 percent of courses incorporating SLOs. There is institution-wide dialogue about SLOs and evaluation of services provided by various units in the College. Staff in those units review the data to plan improvements to services; some do so on a monthly basis. A cycle of assessment and improvement exists and involves constituents from many levels. Performance evaluations of employees directly responsible for student learning include a requirement of using assessment results of student learning to improve performance (II.C.2).

Opportunities for professional development of student services staff are provided by the institution and travel support exists for the purposes of professional development. Institutional professional development days are established and published in the Student Planner which is distributed to students and faculty. Student development is supported with a diverse program of co-curricular and other activities including governance (Associated Students of Palau Community College), recreation, intramural and national sports, College transfer, career readiness, and internships. Co-curricular and athletic activities are appropriate to the mission of the College, and student feedback is gathered and used to inform improvements in delivery of these activities. (II.C. 4)

The College adopts, articulates, and adheres to admission policies consistent with its mission. Application information is organized into six categories: first-time, transfer, international, dual enrollment, non-degree, and enrichment—which is reflected in the College’s mission. Placement tests for math, writing, and reading are reviewed periodically (II.C.6, II.C. 7).

The Admissions and Financial Aid Office, Registration and Records Office, Business Office, Academic Affairs, along with other units within the Student Service Division, are responsible for student records. Records are stored securely and confidentially and are maintained in accordance with FERPA regulations. Secure handling of the information in digital format is the responsibility of the College Computer & Data Processing office. (II.C.8) FERPA policies are made available in the General Catalog, a FERPA brochure, and on the College’s website.

II. Findings and Evidence

Based on a review of the 2012-2016 General Catalog, 15-Year Institutional Master Plan 2009-2024, College website, publications, Accreditation Institutional Self Evaluation Report and attendant evidence, Palau Community College achieves its educational goals for students through comprehensive support services for students offered throughout the campus and off-site locations and by different units.

Student services are provided in spaces and by units such as the PCC Library; the Learning Resource Center (AANAPISI program services, placement and TOEFL testing, instruction, tutoring, study lab, technology resources for students, and career/transfer counseling; the Open Lab; the Online Lab); the Office of Admissions & Financial Aid; the Student Housing unit; and the Student Recreation unit. Student health services are provided through a contract between the College and the National Hospital. Academic advising/counseling duties are the primary responsibility of four counselors in the Student Life Unit and one career/transfer counselor in the Learning Resource Center. One vacancy exists in the Student Life Unit and at the time of the team visit; the position was under recruitment. The Transfer counseling position is vacant and not being recruited; students interested in transfer to other institutions may contact any of the counselors from the Student Life Unit for information on transfer institutions.

Students are well-informed of requirements for success in, and completion of, academic courses, certificates, and degree programs. Information is disseminated through multiple channels including numerous publications like the general catalog, program brochures, and the College website. Course schedules for each semester are provided on the College’s website and in hardcopy. The College defines and advises students on clear pathways to complete degrees, certificates, and transfer goals in a variety of ways, including the general catalog, new student orientation workshops, the mandatory Introduction to College course (SS100), Individual Educational Plans (IEP), and the Student Progress Reports (SPR) that academic faculty complete three times a semester. Students are active participants in shaping their academic journey, guided by academic advisors and instructors who help them map their academic plans and support and monitor those plans throughout their enrollment at the College. A Student’s Bill of Rights is published in the general catalog, student handbook, and student planner. Students are informed of complaint/grievance procedures. No complaints

have been filed by students in the period covered by the current Self Evaluation Report.

There is evidence of alignment between student learning outcomes, institutional planning, resource allocations, and institutional improvement. A General Education Philosophy is clearly articulated and connected to Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) which are assessed and discussed regularly. The College has institutionalized the FAMED process of comprehensive institutional assessment that includes aspects of data collection and analysis, as well as continuous evaluation for the purposes of institutional improvement. Departmental and division goals are aligned to Institutional Learning Outcomes. There is a schedule for reviewing outcomes at all levels and there is stated awareness that changes to an outcome at one level may have implications for outcomes at other levels. Institution-Set Standards for Student Achievement are made public via the College's website (<http://pcc.palau.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ISS-document.pdf>).

The College uses tools such as evaluation forms, surveys, and ILO matrices to regularly assess services. Student feedback is solicited for courses, workshops, events such as New Student Orientation, and co-curricular activities. The College purchased the TracDat system in 2013 and plans to use it to support assessment and improvement efforts in the area of student services. As noted elsewhere in this report, the College uses TracDat to support regular assessment and improvement of instructional services. Student usage of services is tracked through sign-in sheets. Palau Community College is committed to evidence-based continuous improvement to support achievement of its mission and vision of educational excellence. Student Support Services delivery exemplify the institution's values/unifying principles.

Student diversity is valued and supported at PCC. Diversity is an ILO and is achieved in numerous ways, including offering a diverse range of educational options and courses; using course teaching methods and delivery modes that reflect the diverse learning styles of students; encouraging expression of diverse perspectives; providing programs to support a diverse student population; and recruiting, hiring, promoting, and retaining a diverse workforce.

Though the College does not have any distance education programs, distance delivery is used by the College to meet the needs of its students and to expand educational opportunities to those it serves. Campus-based, face-to-face and hybrid courses are supplemented by online sections, and an Online Lab is dedicated to students enrolled in online courses. It is equipped with a dedicated Internet Digital Subscriber Line (DSL). During the site visit, the team learned that one method of accommodating the needs of students was by the College traveling to remote villages of the country, surveying their needs, developing training to address those needs, and then returning to the village to deliver the training.

Admission requirements support the College's commitment to an open-door policy. Placement tests for reading, writing, and mathematics are regularly reviewed by the institution.

Student records are maintained digitally in a secure and confidential manner in the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid with secure backup occurring regularly by the Computer Systems Department. Backup files are housed in multiple locations by the Computer Systems Department and the Director of Admissions and Financial Aid also maintains a separate

backup of all admission and financial aids student records. Policies for release of student records are published in the general catalog, student handbook, student planner, and campus website.

The quality of student support service programs is evident in the ongoing collaboration with instruction, learning outcomes, and in the program review process which occurs every three years. The collaboration with faculty begins during the schedule development process where the Office of Academic Affairs builds a schedule and then provides it to counselors to assess if it will meet the needs of students for the upcoming semester. The collaboration continues as faculty provide Student Progress Reports during the fourth, ninth, and 13th weeks of the semester to counselors for follow-up with students who are not succeeding. The quality of student support service programs is also evident in the results from the learning outcomes assessments, program reviews, and through FAMED documentation. The program review document explores goals, objectives, SLO assessments, the status of previous program review action plans, and the need for personnel, facilities, equipment which inform the current action plans. (II.C.1)

Student support services identify and assess student outcomes through surveys given to students during the course of using the services, and through learning outcome assessments. Survey results have led to changes and improvements of services such as the New Student Orientation and the student housing Tuesday Night program. (II.C.2)

Services to students on campus appear to be appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable. Listings of services and contact information are listed in the catalog, student handbook, and student planner. Students utilizing services at the fish hatchery must utilize the services while on campus as services are not available in the field nor online. The College currently does not offer any online student support services due to limited internet access and bandwidth. College personnel have indicated that they expect to offer online services after fiber optics internet cabling is brought to the island and the infrastructure to support reliable connectivity to it established. (II.C.3)

The Recreation Unit of Student Life conducts surveys to determine the types of co-curricular activities to offer. The College reports that the activities are tied to the College's mission and that the activities are culturally- and socially-based. The College evaluates the quality and effectiveness of their co-curricular activities through SLOs, surveys, and the program review process. (II.C.4)

The College provides counseling to all students early in the student's educational journey through the development of an Individual Educational Plan that is created in SS100— Introduction to College. The Individual Educational Plan is a roadmap for students to follow when choosing the courses that are required for their program of study (degree or certificate). Counselor outreach to students continues throughout any given semester if student behavior or substandard grades become an issue in a class. Instructional faculty complete Student Progress Reports for each student after the fourth, ninth, and 13th weeks of the semester indicating issues that are impeding the student's success within the class. The counselors reach out to the students in an attempt to address the issues and make referrals to other services, such as tutoring when appropriate; these follow-up efforts are documented by

counselors. SPRs submitted by instructors and Counselor follow up records are summarized into reports that are sent to the Dean of Student Services who then transmits them to the College President. The President may meet with faculty and students to discuss issues arising from the SPR summary and counselor follow-up reports.

Counseling services are assessed throughout the year using learning outcomes with assessments of the outcomes analyzed and built into action plans which are listed in FAMED and program review documents. The most recent program review for counseling explains how they identified and changed the New Student Orientation and the group counseling process to help students to more fully understand the College process. (II.C.5)

The admission policy of the College is a component of the College's mission statement which begins with "Palau Community College is an accessible public educational institution." The College accepts all high school graduates and transfer students providing that the prospective student has a minimum TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score of at least 500 if they are English language learners. Counselors assist students to create and, when needed, modify the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Counseling staff and students rely upon the College catalog to determine course requirements for a degree or certificate from the College. Transfer advising was previously provided by a dedicated counselor in the Learning Resource Center; that position was vacated, and transfer advising responsibilities were assumed by the Student Life Unit. The Student Life Unit currently has one of four positions vacant and under recruitment. These circumstances may have led to a gap in services for transfer students. (II.C.6, ER16)

The College is open to all students who have graduated from high school or are at least 18 years old. There is a requirement for students to have a minimum TOEFL score of 500. Placement tests for math and English were assessed for validity by College personnel in 2013. In addition to placement results, the College counselors will also use high school transcripts and other College transcripts to determine the math and English class placement levels. (II.C.7)

College personnel report that all student records are updated and locked in a secure place within the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid. Student records are backed up regularly and stored by Computer Systems staff and the Director of Admissions and Financial Aid. (II.C.8)

III. Conclusion

Assessment and improvement of services are based on learning and service outcomes identified by various units and programs within the Student Services Division. Evaluations are incorporated into the praxis of these units and a culture of continuous improvement based on student feedback and other measures is sustained by the College. The institution expresses a commitment to equitable access to services regardless of delivery method. A comprehensive suite of activities that complement instruction are provided with opportunities for holistic development of students. Student life activities include opportunities for leadership development, recreation, competitive sports at the College and national levels,

cultural and other activities based on the needs of students. Counseling and academic advising services are provided that adequately meet the needs of the student body. The team encourages the College to fill its current counseling vacancy. Admissions policies are consistent with the open door mission of the College. Students are oriented and regularly advised of program requirements and monitored closely by advisors and instructional faculty through the use of progress reports. Services such as tutoring by peers and professionals, personal counseling, skills development, and career preparation are also provided. Student records are maintained digitally in the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid with secure backup occurring regularly and in a secure and confidential manner. Policies for release of student records are published in the General Catalog, Student Handbook, Student Planner, and campus website.

The College meets all the Standards and related Eligibility Requirements. A recommendation to improve institutional effectiveness is provided to ensure continued compliance with Standard II.C.6 and ER 16.

IV. Recommendations

Recommendation 9

In order to improve effectiveness, the team recommends the College assure its infrastructure provides sufficient transfer counseling and support services to students. (II.C.6, ER 16)

STANDARD III RESOURCES

Standard III.A – Human Resources

I. General Observations

The College assures the success of the institution by employing qualified faculty, administrators, and staff. College employees support the College's mission, programs, and services. Employees possess appropriate training, experiences, and education to serve the needs of the College. In particular, job descriptions for faculty make explicit the role that instructors play in the development and review of curriculum and assessment of learning. Full-time faculty and administrator evaluations also include a consideration of the employee's role with respect to assessment of student learning. The managerial evaluation considers how managers understand the mission and ILOs and display competency as these relate to specific aspects of their job functions. The College uses World Education Service to verify equivalencies for those employees who have received their degrees from non-U.S. institutions. Personnel are evaluated at stated intervals and are geared towards improving the quality of the institution. When needed, actions taken following evaluations are formal, documenting requirements for performance improvement as needed. Based on the evidence presented, the College appears to maintain a sufficient number of faculty, staff, and administrators who are evaluated on a regular basis. The institution makes provisions for all records' confidentiality including evaluations and other personnel actions. Employees are able to access their records although it's not clear exactly what the law is in Palau regarding public records.

College employees have access to published policies governing personnel practices to which the College adheres. This appears to include a written code of ethics as well as the College's Unifying Principles which are widely published in the catalog and on the website. The College also supports its personnel through programs, services, and professional development opportunities. Because the Republic of Palau does not mandate employment with regards to diversity, the College supports and encourages, but does not mandate specific criteria in terms of diversity.

II. Findings and Evidence

The College assures the success and high quality of its institution through the hiring of the appropriate administrators, faculty, and staff who have received the necessary training and qualifications in their respective fields. Job descriptions for faculty show a direct connection to the institution's goals and include the required and expected duties.

Minimum qualifications are reviewed at the time a position comes open, and the information is communicated to HR for inclusion in the recruiting process. Vacancy announcements publicly state what the minimum qualifications are; however, these are not stated in a standing list of job descriptions.

Service from previous employment on faculty are given one step for each year of work up to 30 steps. There is a significant amount of interest in positions, but there is often a lack of enough qualified personnel.

The hiring process is controlled by the HR Department so that consistency is assured. The hiring process includes reaching out to the international community given that there are not always qualified personnel who live in the area. A recent example is a recent hire from India of a husband and wife to teach Tourism and Hospitality program and Math, respectively.

All full-time employees are hired on two-year contracts and renewed for four years. (III.A.1)

Faculty possess the appropriate degrees and qualification to perform their job duties and contribute to the institution's mission. Faculty job descriptions for all faculty positions consulted by the team make it clear that faculty are required to review curriculum and to participate in the assessment of student learning. There are adequate faculty to support the Mission, Vision and the educational programs offered by the College (ER 14). In an interview conducted with the Director of Human Resources as well as extensive evidence of transcripts and other qualifications included in the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, and records consulted during the site visit it was substantiated that evidence of employees' minimum qualifications are required in order for an employee to begin his/her employment at the College. (III.A.2, ER 14)

Likewise, administrators and other employees possess appropriate qualifications necessary to perform job duties. (III.A.3)

College employees are either from institutions accredited by recognized U.S. accrediting agencies or non-U.S. institutions. When equivalencies must be established for those who have received degrees from non-U.S. institutions the College uses World Education Service to validate equivalencies. (III.A.4)

Furthermore, personnel are generally evaluated on a regular basis and at stated intervals. The team reviewed a sampling of personnel evaluations and found that the College has clear and organized processes to track those personnel who require an evaluation. The work of the staff in human resources and instruction to track this is exemplary given the lack of an integrated, relational database to track hire dates and other information.

As applicable, full-time faculty, staff, and administrators are evaluated based on their work related to the results of learning outcomes and the improvement of student learning outcomes. The team substantiated via personnel files and records maintained by the Dean of Academic Affairs that full-time faculty members are generally regularly evaluated via three processes: 1) student evaluations, 2) Faculty Annual Merit Performance Evaluation and 3) the Faculty Performance Evaluation (also known at the College as the "Contract Renewal Evaluation Form.") It is on the contract renewal form which generally accords with a faculty member's contract renewal date that full-time faculty are evaluated on their work with student learning outcomes.

The expectations in the College's job description for adjunct instructors, interviews with department chairs, the Faculty Senate Association (FSA), and College administrators in instruction and human resources evidence that there is a strong expectation that all faculty *including adjunct faculty* will participate in the assessment of student learning. However, the team was not able to find evidence that adjunct faculty are being evaluated in any systematic, cyclical way based on their contributions to the assessment of student learning. However, an addendum to the employee contract for adjunct employees, the Limited Term Appointment Contract form, indicates that an employee's final paycheck will only be issued upon submission of course assessment data.

More significantly for Standard III.A.5, adjunct instructors do not receive a regular evaluation of their work via a form such as Faculty Annual Merit Performance Evaluation and the Faculty Performance Evaluation mentioned above and required for full-time faculty. Instead, as described by the College's Director of Human Resources, the Associate Dean, and in the Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual (PRRM), and Board Policy 10-08, adjunct faculty are evaluated via the student evaluation process. As mentioned in interviews with the Dean and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, the expectation is that adjunct instructors are evaluated via classroom observations although it was not clear that there is a cyclical process in place. It was clear from interviews conducted that much training, collaborative work, and communication between College administrators, department chairs, and adjunct faculty occurs. However, formal evaluations of teaching beyond regular student evaluations do not occur regularly for adjunct faculty members. To that end, the team observed that the evaluation process in place for full-time and adjunct faculty including—for both groups—student evaluations *and* for full-time faculty annual teaching observations *as well as a* separate Faculty Performance Evaluation may go beyond what is needed to adequately and reasonably assess instructional quality. As the College considers how it may enhance and make cyclical the evaluation of adjunct faculty, it may also wish to assess whether semester student evaluations *and* a separate observation by a department chair *and* a tertiary contract review may be necessary and sustainable for full-time faculty members.

If evaluations are good, then a step raise occurs unless funding is not available, which was the case since 2001. Merit review is done for everyone except faculty. (III.A.5, III.A.6)

Because of its unique, remote location maintaining appropriate levels of staffing has at times been a problem for the institution. Nevertheless, it's clear that the College leadership is responsive to the need to maintain and recruit the highest caliber of employees available. The College recently implemented a four percent raise for faculty and has procedures in place to allow for positions to be fast tracked based on its changing personnel as well as the occasional opportunity to hire out of cycle when the appropriate candidate emerges locally. There is sufficient staff to provide administrative services necessary to support the Mission and Vision of the College (ER 8). Additionally, there are sufficient qualified faculty to support the Mission and Vision of the College (ER 14). Full-time faculty represent 72% of the faculty and adjunct faculty represent 28%. The programs offered by the College are supported by adequate faculty. (III.A.7, III.A.9, III.A.10, ER 9, ER 14)

Interviews conducted by the team evidenced that orientation and professional development

opportunities exist for adjunct instructors. Orientation is primarily provided by department chairs. Sample syllabi and expectations for participation in the assessment of student learning are shared. All evidence and interviews presented to the team suggested that full- and part-time faculty work hand and hand and that adjunct faculty are integrated into the life of the College. For example, adjunct instructors are recruited for participation in the FSA. Oversight of adjunct employees occurs via the student evaluation process as discussed above in this report. (III.A.8)

More broadly, the College supports faculty, staff, and administrators in their professional development. While there does not appear to be a general plan for professional development at the College or a human resources plan per se, the types of professional development activities and opportunities seem appropriate and balanced given the mission of the College. Personnel, especially faculty and administrators, attend trainings off island and host guest speakers and trainers in topics relevant to their needs and to help support the College's students. For example, the College's lead professor of technology/online course training lead attended a national training conference in Louisiana.

Furthermore, personnel are eligible to participate in the College's employee education assistance program. This program commendably supports personnel's achievement of bachelor's and master's degrees. Through this program faculty not only upgrade their skills but may better serve the needs of the College and community. Furthermore, interviews with College employees indicated that they take courses at the College to upgrade their skills as educators. For example, an interview with an instructor in the Small Engine and Outboard Marine Technology Program recently completed a course in the Education Department to enhance his skills as an educator. He plans to continue his education this summer by completing an additional course in the Education Department. The College also demonstrates a very strong commitment to training personnel in matters related to the accreditation process. Nearly all personnel completed the Commission's "Accreditation Basics" training. The College has also devoted a significant amount of financial resources to sending personnel to conferences and trainings related to accreditation and improving student learning such as the Strengthening Student Success Conference. (III.A.14)

The College has made good progress on updating written personnel policies since its last site visit in 2010. When policies are updated and the updates have been approved, they are posted publicly. All campus community members interviewed seemed to know that definitive statements of personnel policies may be found in the Human Resources office. The Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual (PRRM) and relevant board policies evidence that appropriate changes to policies have been made and, in some cases, policy's scopes and necessities have been affirmed. All substantial changes to the PRRM, including the board policies relevant to human resources, are included in the revised version of the PRRM which is currently awaiting approval by the College's President. During the teams visit, generally and specifically, interviews with faculty and in classified employee and faculty forums there was no indication that personnel felt policies were unfairly or inequitably administered. (III.A.11)

The Republic of Palau does not require a mandate regarding employment diversity. Nevertheless the College does make an effort to employ those of diverse nationalities to

serve its population as outlined in its mission. (III.A.12)

The College has a code of conduct which was approved in 2010. This policy is described in BP (10-04) and is included in the revised version of the PRRM. The College's discipline policy included in the forthcoming, revised version of the PRRM includes a discipline policy. Based on this policy, personnel may be disciplined due to a lack of honesty (PRRM 14.3.6). The College also maintains a grievance policy. (III.A.13)

Personnel files are kept locked up and secure from any unauthorized personnel in order to keep the confidentiality of the records. (III.A.15)

III. Conclusions

Overall the College shows a strong commitment to finding, retaining and supporting qualified faculty, staff, and administrators. The College provides opportunities for professional development and guides employees towards continuous quality improvement via the evaluation process. In a challenging climate in which to staff a College, it is clear that the institution works hard to maintain its excellence in personnel.

The College meets all the Standards and related Eligibility Requirements. A recommendation to improve institutional effectiveness is provided to ensure continued compliance with Standard III.A.5, III.A.6, III.A.8.

IV. Recommendations

Recommendation 10

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the College formally define and implement a Part-Time faculty performance evaluation process and cycle. (III.A.5, III.A.6, III.A.8)

Standard III.B – Physical Resources

I. General Observations

All the facilities located on the main campus are fully owned by the College. There is a staff of 16 who provide services of maintenance, custodial, electricians, clerical, landscaping, and carpenters all for the purpose of providing a healthy and safe learning environment.

There is sufficient square footage to accommodate all the demands of the facilities. Facilities also include dormitories and summer huts.

Facilities located outside the main campus include a research department for a multi-purpose hatchery and research. The nursing career ladder degree program facility is located on Yap, Federated State of Micronesia.

Public law requires that all facilities must be assessable to those who have special needs and by the use of ramps and doors that automatically open and parking available close to the front of buildings for those who have wheelchair requirements. There is also 24-hour security provided for the facility to provide a safe environment for students as well as staff and the public.

Training is provided under the guidelines of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, (FEMA), and the College has held disaster planning drills for compliance of those guidelines.

The College has made space available to a research company from Germany to study the phenomena of why Palau has the cleanest air on the planet. There is a structure about 10 x 10, which shoots lasers into the sky as well as releases a balloon into the atmosphere to help determine this phenomena.

II. Findings and Evidence

There is a walk-around done routinely to identify areas that may create a safety concern for students and staff. As areas of concern are identified, they are addressed immediately. Also satisfaction surveys are done three times a year to ensure that any areas for safety can be addressed.

The 15-Year Institutional Master Plan defined in the strategic direction goal 3.2 and 3.2.1 provides for a safe and assessable learning environment. There are ongoing plans to expand and add new programs to the current physical plant to accommodate all the new programs and to ensure that the facilities are safe and assessable. The program review process identifies the needs of the facilities and the cost to incorporate new buildings into the overall master plan.

Evidence of new equipment identified in the 2012 program review for the cafeteria demonstrated the need to replace existing equipment as well as the purchase of new air conditioning equipment. Equipment required for providing the necessary technology required

the relocation of the IT program classroom to the lower campus. (III.B.1)

Ongoing maintenance for all buildings is done on a six-year cycle in order to keep buildings from deteriorating. There is a revenue stream to fund this with the \$110 per credit charge to the students. There is also a line item in the General Fund budget of \$2,000 which has a current balance of \$300,000.

To support the programs of the College there has been a Multi-Purpose Hatchery added as well as the purchase of vehicles, boats, saw-mill, servers, and satellite dishes to support all programs.

Through program review and satisfaction surveys, the College action plans help identify the necessary equipment, support services, and general evaluation of all facilities that are necessary to fulfill the access and safety issues that are required to provide a robust learning environment.

Painting of all buildings and roofs are done on a six-year cycle to protect the integrity of the buildings and structures. (III.B.2, III.B.3)

The total cost of ownership has been addressed by setting up the six-year cycle plan that is funded by the \$2,000 monthly budget, as well as the \$110 per credit fee charged to the student body. (III.B.4)

III. Conclusions

The College regularly plans and evaluates its facilities and equipment. Results from their evaluation assure that all the physical resources are not only effective in meeting their stated objectives but are also supported by the satisfaction surveys that are conducted.

This information is then used to make the necessary changes to improve access and safety as well as the overall delivery of services throughout the College.

The College meets Standard III.B.

IV. Recommendations

None

Standard III.C – Technology Resources

I. General Observations

The necessary services for technology are in place to support the professional, facilities, and hardware and management operational needs for the College.

The computer services division provides all the necessary maintenance and troubleshooting of the computer technology. Areas for troubleshooting are outsourced with local vendors to provide maintenance. There is a five-year technology plan that is integrated into the 15-year master plan. The Technology Resources Committee has the responsibility to oversee the plan and is represented by members from all areas of the College.

The Distance Education Committee (DEC) serves as a subcommittee of the Technology Resource Committee (TRC) and supports and ensures that all online courses offered by the College meet compliance. The chairperson of the committee oversees the current online courses and assists with the training and revision of the current online courses as necessary. Technical support for the Distance Education Committee is provided by the Information Technology Faculty member who serves on both DEC and TRC.

There have been a number of improvements made to technology at the College which include relocation of the information technology program lab classroom and a policy change for Facebook. Assessment policies have been established to review the needs of technology.

The technology plan is review and revised as necessary during the monthly meetings to ensure that the plan is kept up to date and addresses all the changing needs of the College and the service to students and staff.

Anti-virus software is kept up-to-date to avoid any intrusion from unwanted sources within the network.

The budget has an allocation that is collected from the students each semester in the amount of \$75, which supports the necessary upgrades to software as well as new equipment.

There are appropriate and adequate technology resources to support programs for all areas of operations.

II. Findings and Evidence

There is a technology fee of \$75 per semester per student that is charged so that the needs for technology can be met to replace or upgrade equipment. Technology still remains a challenge for the College given the Internet concerns; however, by 2017 the fiber optics will arrive. The fiber optics and its distribution will be a government-owned organization. It is not clear yet how the fiber will make its way onto the campus or what additional infrastructure demands will be required, but the College is looking at its role in the whole process. Regardless, this is an exciting opportunity to enhance the College's educational opportunities to the community (IIIC.1)

The College continues to plan for updates and upgrades in the infrastructure to ensure that the capacity is going to meet and support the mission of the College through its five-year plan. Technology resources include student Wi-Fi DSL line, faculty laptops, student computers for classroom and online laboratories, servers, network firewalls, network switches, and surge protectors.

A new dedicated computer was set-up in the library where students could access information from all Colleges in the United States. The site is called Education USA: The US Department of State Network official source for higher education.edu. Unfortunately, the computer was not working during the time of the visit. (III.C.1)

With the five-year technology plan requiring a dedicated technology budget, the College is able to plan, update and replace technology resources for teaching and learning support. The five-year plan is reviewed and updated as necessary. Technology is an area that is changing, and the most recent upgrades are necessary in order to provide the support for the most effective learning environment. The student technology fee and online course fee provide a dedicated source of funding for technology to support student technology needs. (III.C.2)

The technology requirements for all faculty and staff are available and upgraded as necessary and accessible while on the campus. The concern for the island is that, while the College provides access to the students, faculty and staff, there may not be an opportunity for many students to use internet from home simply due to the socio-economic issues. Therefore, the ability to access the internet from the College is a huge benefit for students. There is no real back up system in place currently. This could prove to be problematic in the future. (II.C.3)

Professional development opportunities are available for technology training for faculty and staff. This responsibility rests with the Human Resources Department and is a part of the professional development plan. (III.C.4)

All the needs of the College with regards to technology is vetted in the technology committee then dispatched accordingly to the responsible parties to execute. There is a replacement plan for all software and equipment that is funded by the technology fee from the students as well as the General Fund. (III.C.5)

The policies and procedures in the College support the appropriate use of all electronic resources. Technology resources may be limited, but the internal process for identifying areas of need is followed to ensure that the maximum benefit to all stakeholders is met. (III.C.5)

III. Conclusions

The College uses electronic rights and responsibilities (identified in its five-year plan) to ensure that the safety and security of all computer equipment is protected. The electronic resources use agreement between the College personnel and students defines the rights and responsibilities while using the College equipment.

The College meets Standard III.C. A recommendation to improve institutional effectiveness is provided to ensure continued compliance with Standard III.C.5.

IV. Recommendations

Recommendation 11

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the College ensure responsible use of technology by publishing the electronic resources use agreement in the student planner as well as other campus publications. (III.C.5)

Standard III. D – Financial Resources

I. General Observations

Financial planning is integrated with institutional planning and supports the College's mission and goals. Planning begins with annual calls to each department for budget requests. When building the budget for the College, the resources which are distributed are based on the needs of each department in the institution. The budgets requested at the department level must line up with the needs identified in the program reviews and once submitted must go to the finance office, the VP of Finance and the president, for review and approval. The College then provides this information to the Palau National Government for approval and appropriation. Requests to expend funds must include justification related to addressing desired service and/or learning outcomes. The College's Administrative Procedures Manual (APM) includes procedures for budget planning, formulation, and expenditures. Guidelines regarding allowable expenditures and internal control measures are also included in the APM. The APM is reviewed on a regular basis (five-year cycle).

There are sufficient resources to provide for the overall operations of the College and also provide for a 5% reserve. Reports are provided monthly to the trustees that provides for a financial status of the College.

The institution created two separate fund accounts to support the growth of the College. In 2004, the College established a separate fund for infrastructure projects. In November 2012, the College began allotting \$2,000 on a monthly basis to this infrastructure account which has a balance of approximately \$321,170.53 to date.

The College has an endowment that was established in 1997 with \$100,000 and in 10 years grew to \$1 million. Currently this account has \$ 3.5 million. From fundraisers, there is about \$50,000 generated. There is also a Thanksgiving fundraiser that generates an additional \$30,000 annually.

PCC has provided evidence to support the statements and assertions made to meet the standards. In particular, the submission of evidence, which includes reports, policies, and plans provide some support of the College's assertions in relation to the standards. (III.D.4-III.D.15)

In some cases, the presentation of comprehensive reports (for example, the audit reports) without reference to specific pages, does not immediately show the relationship between the College's statements and the evidence. In yet other cases, the evidence presented under one standard is much more relevant to another. (See the comments for III.D.12).

II. Findings and Evidence

The College's financial resources are used appropriately and responsibly and are sufficient for the educational programs and services of the College. Institutional policies, practices, and

controls related to financial planning and management are inclusive of, and communicated to, campus and community constituents. (III.D.1, ER 18)

Financial activities are aligned with, and supportive of, the College's mission and institutional plans. "Palau Community College's ending balance of unrestricted funds for the past three years has been sufficient for the institution's daily operation. The College has set aside \$500,000 in its reserve funds, which is an estimated 5% of the annual budget. Section 5 of RPPL 4-2 (Higher Education Act of 1993) states that supplemental appropriations can be requested from the National Government if the institution deems it necessary. This allows the College to request for additional funding from the National Government in the event of an emergency. In addition, the institution's Endowment Fund Investment Policy Statement states that in the event of an emergency, the College is able to withdraw from its endowment fund to support its operations."

Both short- and long-range plans are necessary in order to allocate resources necessary to ensure that future obligations are met and at the same time keep the fiscal stability and solvency integrity in place.

The 2013 actuarial plan that is required by the National Government of Palau is in compliance for payments towards their OPEB liability. (III.D.2)

The College provided ample supporting evidence of addressing this Standard, including budget call memos and follow up memos listing compliant departments and a reminder to non-compliant units; department and division budget requests; overall budgets; the Administrative Procedures Manual; financial status reports; audit reports; and Office of Management and Budget webpages. (III.D.3)

The primary revenue sources are as follows: 37% from U.S. Federal Grants; 30% from the Republic of Palau; 18% from other grants and 5% each from student tuition and other operating revenue.

The expenses run about \$7.6 million of which the two main areas are \$1.7 million for instructional and \$1.6 million for administrative. These two areas consume 43% of the total budget. The balance is split between student services, student aid, operations and maintenance, academic support, and depreciation.

The financial resources are sufficient to support and sustain the student learning programs. Resources are there to support improvement without placing in jeopardy the financial integrity of the College. There are adequate reserves to maintain solvency and provide for allocation to the support services when required. (III.D.1)

Additionally, financial resources provide funding that is adequate to support student learning programs and services that will increase the effectiveness of the College. (ER 18)

Financial procedures and policies support the mission and goals of the College that also support sound fiscal practices.

When looking at the audit reports, it is clear that there is support for educational resources by an allocation of 23% for direct instructional wages and benefits. There are adequate reserves in the ending fund balances that support the mission of the College with ending fund balances in excess of 5%. (III.D.2)

The budget process requires input from all departments for consideration. (III.D.3)

Evidence pieces 3.101, 3.102 & 3.103 provide some evidence of integrated institutional planning: for example, ROP appropriation checks, Title IV Grants Awards Notifications, PCC Endowment Investment Policy Statement, Financial Status Reports, Prior & Current Year Expenditure Reports & College Newsletters. The PCC 15-Year Institutional Master Plan appears to drive institutional planning with regard to the financial assessment, development, and expenditure requirements of the College. Major sources of funding are:

- The ROP's annual appropriation;
- Title IV funds; and
- The College's auxiliary services.

The College also continues to build its Endowment Fund so that in time, it too, will provide operational funding.

Evidence piece 3.115

The 5% contingency fund is covered in Evidence piece 3.115. Bank of Guam statements show that \$500,000.00 was deposited on 08/31/15 and cited in III. D. 9 as the College's 5% reserve of the total budget.

The total cash and restricted cash for fiscal years 2014 and 2013 continue to show surpluses. Furthermore, the corresponding bank balances, while showing a reduction of \$58,523 in the same time frame, continue to show a considerably healthy balance. (III.D.4)

P 24: Cash: Summary of PCC's total cash and restricted cash for the years ending September 30, 2014 and 2013:

- Total cash: 2014 - \$330,618; 2013 - \$944,333;
- Restricted cash: 2014: \$1,055,089; 2013 - \$806,986.
- Corresponding bank balances: 2014 - \$1,634,037; 2013: \$1,692,560

The *Administrative Procedures Manual* provides the framework and processes through which internal controls are maintained. The dissemination of timely information, however, which result in sound financial decision-making will need to be exemplified more clearly. The evidence pieces provided in this section do not clearly show a regular evaluation system which ties improvement directly to reflective practice.

More evidence is required to produce reports for evaluating budget performance at given times during the fiscal year cycle. For example, what electronic system is in place to produce these reports? Moreover, program reviews can be highlighted as a means for evaluating whether or not the institution is using the results to improve internal control systems. (III.D.5)

The budgets provided, for example FY2012 – FY2014, clearly link financial resources to the strategic goals. The process for showing the appropriate allocation and use of financial resources appears in the justification for each request/proposal. Each program and support service is clearly identified in the documentation. The credibility and accuracy of the budget process as articulated in the documents provided are affirmed by the audit reports that show no questioned costs, deficiencies or material issues with regard to compliance. (III.D.6)

Evidence is required to show how information is being communicated to the relevant stakeholders about external audit findings. The list of stakeholders in the Report includes faculty, staff, the PCC Board of Trustees and the Palau National Government, but the evidence provided does not support the assertion. Email notices to selected listserv communities, for example, would attest directly to the claims of timely and widely distributed communication of the College’s responses to the external audit findings. (III.D.7)

The evidence provided for this Standard shows a system of administrative procedures and a review of the procedure’s manual. The assertion that the College’s financial and internal control systems are evaluated and assessed is not supported by the relevant pieces of evidence. In the absence of other documents that show internal evaluation systems, it is assumed that the external audit reports are provided as the sole evaluative mechanism. (III.D.8)

The following documents attest to PCC having sufficient cash flow and reserves to maintain stability and mitigate potential risks:

- External audit reports;
- PCC Endowment Investment Policy Statement;
- The Bank of Guam reserve fund of \$500,000; and
- The Republic of Palau legislation that establishes the College. (III.D.9)

The PCC audits 2010-2014 show that there were no deficiencies in internal controls over compliance, and PCC complied in all material respects with the types of compliance requirements in relation to the major federal programs for the years ended September 30, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011 and 2010. (III.D.10)

Liabilities

The liabilities for the College have been identified and are recorded in the annual audit reports. The resources are appropriate to fund these liabilities going forward as raises are not given in order to protect the fiscal integrity of the College. (III.D.11)

The following evidence was not provided as a part of the self-review report under Standard III.D.12, but under III.D.10 and III.D.1.

The evidence provided in 3.119, (under Standard III.D.10), reflects the Board of Trustees’ decision to limit accrued annual leave that is allowed to be carried over as no more than 360 hours. Starting in January 2016, each College employee will retain 360 hours. A policy is currently being developed to address the balance of the accrued leave.

Examples of PCC's accumulated and accrued liabilities are provided below in relation to sick leave and accrued leave. In particular, the accumulated sick leave in fiscal years 2014 and 2013 show significantly large amounts.

Evidence piece 3.92 (provided under Standard III.D.1):

Sick leave: The accumulated sick leave at September 30, 2014 and 2013 was \$1,368,189 and \$1,571,863 respectively.

Compensated absences: The accrued leave at September 30, 2014 and 2013 was \$165,916 and \$161,341 respectively.

P. 38: Benefits: PCC contributes to the Palau Civil Service Pension Trust Fund (The Fund); governed by the Republic of Palau Public Law.

- Retirement, security and other benefits which are paid monthly and are 2% of each member's average monthly salary. Member contribution rates are 6% of the total payroll and matched dollar for dollar by the employer.
- For fiscal years 2014, 2013 and 2012, PCC contributed \$155,232, \$159,169 and \$160,599 respectively. (III.D.12)

The evidence provided to support this standard affirms the PCC statement that the College does assess and allocate resources for the payment of locally incurred expenses to protect against adverse financial conditions.

The submission of the TPAC checks and vouchers clearly linked the date of the bill from the vendor and PCC's preparation of the check for payment of the bills. The same format could have been used for the submission of the Palau Public Utilities Corporation evidence so that it could also show clear links between the vendors' bills and the PCC payment checks. (III.D.13)

The reports and wire transfers provided as evidence for meeting this standard support the PCC statement that all financial resources are used with integrity and in a manner consistent with the intended purpose of the funding source. (III.D.14)

The contracts and Memoranda of Understanding provided as evidence for meeting this standard support the PCC statements made in relation to revenue streams (on pp. 195 & 196 of the PCC Institutional Self Evaluation Report). Evidence of monitoring and managing student loan default rates and compliance when federal deficiencies have been identified. There are no student defaults on loans as the College only works on a reimbursement basis for the Title IV funding. (III.D.15)

The College provides and supports their mission and goals with contracts and MOUs with outside agencies such as is found with the MOU with the Department of Health, (3.129) and the MOU with the Maui Consulting and Training Firm for training for the state tour guide program, (3.130). Additionally, the MOU with Fish n Fins serve to support the educational needs and programs of the College in the area of open water dive, first aid, and teaching materials and transportation for students to the lab sites, (3.130). (III.D.16)

III. Conclusions

The unfunded liability for the retirement obligation is \$140 million and a fund balance of \$36 million with the unfunded amount of \$104 million. The College has a plan and is funding this liability and is well positioned to continue to provide the necessary resources towards this liability.

The level of financial resources provides for both the long- and short-term fiscal solvency that provides for the necessary stability going forward. The 2014 audit included a cautionary statement noting “The College’s student and adult continuing education enrollments have been fluctuating, more in a decreasing trend (2014 PCC Audit Report, p. VIII).”

Priorities will always need to be considered for the execution of the 15 year master plan in order to ensure that the resources are available to execute those plans.

The College meets the Standard III.D and the related Eligibility Requirements.

IV. Recommendations

None

STANDARD IV LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Standard IV.A – Decision-Making Roles and Processes

I. General Observations

The Republic of Palau Public Law 4-2 RPPL4-2, commonly referred to as the Higher Education Act of 1993, established the College as a public, non-profit corporation which shall assume the role of a postsecondary educational agency for the purpose of making high quality postsecondary education available to citizens of Palau and the neighboring island nations.

The roles and responsibilities of the Governing Board and the administrator clearly delineated in the statute are designed to promote student success, sustain academic quality, and ensure integrity, fiscal stability, and continuous improvement of the College. The President of the College is the chief executive officer of the College and has the full charge and control of the administration and business affairs of the College. The President is charged with the implementation of board policies. Based on the Board-approved organizational structure, the College has established governance structures, processes, policies, and practices that allow faculty, students, administrators, and staff to work together for the good of the institution.

The College involves College staff and students in various decision-making bodies and working committees and groups in order to initiate dialogue and discussions that may result in improvement of practices, programs, and services. The College's mission and vision statements were reviewed through a participatory process culminating in Board approval in September, 2015. The College mission "Palau Community College is an accessible public educational institution helping to meet the technical, academic, cultural, social and economic needs of the students and communities by promoting learning opportunities and developing personal excellence." (IV.A.1)

All constituencies have a clearly defined role in the College governance structure, and the processes for bringing forward recommendations for review, discussion, and action through the governance structure are clearly defined. (IV.A.1)

The College President, through appointment letters, selects individuals to serve on committees and other College decision-making bodies. Selections are made to include representatives of appropriate areas of the College and those who have direct and reasonable interest in the topic. Exceptions to this process are the Committee on Programs and Curricula (CPC), the Retention Committee, the Committee on Student Financial Aid (COSFA), and Associated Students of PCC. These entities select their representatives according to their bylaws regulations or handbooks. (IV.A.2)

Administrators and faculty are represented in the governance structures, including the standing committees of the Board, the Executive Committee, Committee on Programs & Curricula (CPC) and other College committees. Administrators and faculty have a substantial

voice in institutional policies, planning, and budget that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise. (IV.A.3)

Faculty members and academic administrators, through established decision-making structures, are involved in the development and improvements of curriculum and student learning programs and services. The College has a curriculum handbook that defines the structure, responsibilities, and process for curriculum development and student learning, and educational programs. (IV.A.4)

The College's system of board and institutional governance ensures a participative decision-making process that is timely and utilizes expertise and responsibilities of appropriate College personnel. (IV.A.5)

The College maintains processes and procedures that ensure policies, curricula, and other key components of the campus are evaluated regularly. When changes are made, results are communicated to the campus community and the public through a variety of means including the College website, payroll checks, and bulletin boards to ensure that stakeholders are appropriately informed. Less clear is how leadership's role and the role of governance are evaluated, assessed, and, subsequently, how the results of these assessments are communicated to the general public. (IV.A.6, IV.A.7)

II. Findings and Evidence

The College relies on administrative, faculty, staff, and student leadership in its decision-making processes in making recommendations to the College President. The organization structural chart was revised and approved at the September 2015 Palau Community College Broad of Trustees meeting. (IV.A.1)

The College's vision, mission, goals and values are displayed through posters, wallet size cards, publications, and the College website at www.palau.edu. (IV.A.1)

Information is discussed and disseminated from the governing board to the College. This is primarily done through the Executive Committee, which is comprised of administrators, faculty, staff and students. Administrators thus share information with department and division personnel. (IV.A.1)

The College employs representative and participative forms of decision-making. The College President, through appointment letters, assigns committee members and states the purpose and charge of the committee. Committee recommendations are forwarded to the College President for review and approval. Upon approval, the College President brings recommendations to the Board of Trustees for adoption. The *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* (pages 20-22) establishes a policy and procedure authorizing administrator, faculty, and staff participation in the decision-making process. Administrators, faculty, and staff are appointed to Board standing committees. (IV.A.2)

The Curriculum Handbook, revised in 2015, includes procedures for program and course development and revisions, responsibilities, duties, and roles faculty and academic

administrators have in curricular and educational matters. The Palau Community College Administrative Procedures Manual defines procedures and guidelines or College functions, such as, financial resources, internal control, property management, and messages to students. Policies and procedures that are specific to a unit are documented with department-specific plans or operating manuals. An example is the Student Financial Aid Handbook. (IV.A.2)

The Executive Committee, which includes vice presidents, deans, directors, the Faculty Senate Association (FSA) President, Classified Staff Organization (CSO) President, and the Associated Students of Palau Community College (ASPCC) President serves as the advisory body to the College President. The Executive Committee is the top governance committee at the College. Institutional planning, budget development, and governance items are the main focus areas of this committee. (IV.A.3)

The College has other standing committees related to specific College functions or requirements. The Committee on Programs and Curricula ensures relevant and quality curricula that are consistent with the mission and goals of the College. Its membership, stipulated in the curriculum handbook, includes administrators, faculty, and academic staff. (IV.A.3)

The Retention Committee's main role is to support programs and services to improve student achievement. Its membership includes the deans of Student Services and Academic Affairs, directors of student support services program, Admissions and Financial Aid and Student Life, the Registrar, and representatives of the Faculty Senate Association (FSA), Classified Staff Organization (CSO), and Associated Students of Palau Community College (ASPCC). (IV.A.3)

The Committee on Student Financial Aid ensures compliance with United States Federal Student Aid regulations. Its membership includes administrators from Academic Affairs and Student Services as well as representatives of faculty and students. (IV.A.3)

Institutional planning and budget development involves administrators and faculty. Budget development begins at the program/unit level where it is integrated into the division level/department level. Division level/department level budget plans are submitted to the Director of Finance. All College budget plans are integrated by the Finance Department. The College President submits the final College budget to the Republic of Palau Ministry of Finance. (IV.A.3)

Faculty and academic administrators, through policy and procedures, and through a well-defined structure, have responsibility for recommendations about curriculum and student learning programs and services. At the Governing Board level, Academic Programs Committee includes the Dean of Academic Affairs, Committee on Programs and Curricula (CPC) chair, President of Faculty Senate Association (FSA), Dean of Continuing Education and President of Associated Student of Palau Community College. (IV.A.4)

At the College level, faculty and academic administrators serve on the governance structures that oversee the development and improvement of curriculum and student learning programs

and services, such as Committee on Programs and Curricula (CPC), the Retention Committee and the Committee on Student Financial Aid. Recommendations from these committees are forwarded to the College President for approval. After approval, the College President submits proposals to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees refers curricular items to the Academic Programs Committee for consultation. (IV.A.4)

The Board of Trustees have established standing committees, such as the Academic Program Committee, that ensures the appropriate consideration of relevant perspectives on institutional plans, policies, curricular change, and other key considerations. Committee membership includes administrators, faculty, and student representatives. Descriptions and charges of the standing committees are outlined in the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* in Article V (pages 20- 22) (IV.A.5)

At the College level, the Executive Committee functions as a consultation body with representatives from administration, faculty, staff, and students on College budget and planning items. The College as established standing committee on specific areas of focus for key areas, such as, curriculum, financial aid, facilities, and support services. A notice of meeting is posted bilingually in English and Palauan five days prior to a Board of Trustees meeting and notification is announced via the radio station. Board meetings are open to the public. (IV.A.5)

The College regularly evaluates and makes changes to policy and curricula. Evidence from the Institutional Evaluation Report including committee minutes and policy documents, handbooks, and revisions to course outlines and programs suggest that the campus maintains a culture of evaluation and quality improvement. When decisions are made, they are communicated through the appropriate bodies, including committees, emails, payroll checks, and on the campus website. The College also maintains a newsletter for the campus and reports on current issues, such as accreditation and course and program offerings, to the general public via Palau's newspaper, *The Island Times* and via television and radio. (IV.A.6)

The evidence provided by the College indicates that it revises policies and procedures to better serve its mission. For example, meeting minutes from the Policy Review Committee, the Executive Committee, and the Administrative Procedures Task Force Manual indicate that the College regularly reviews crucial procedural documents to improve the quality of its service to students. Likewise, the Committee on Program and Curricula's minutes indicates that curriculum is being revised regularly and with the goals of improving student success and access. (IV.A.7)

III. Conclusions

The leadership team works as a tight-knit, collaborative unit to promote student success, sustain academic quality, integrity, fiscal stability and continuous improvement of the institution. The stability of having a long-serving CEO has allowed for thoughtful, systemic initiatives to be implemented across all areas of the College.

The College has a system of governance that ensures appropriate consideration of relevant

perspectives; decision-making aligned with expertise and responsibility; and timely action on institutional plans, policies, curricular change, and other key considerations. Representatives from administration, faculty, staff, and students form committee membership. From the department or service level to faculty and administration, all employees have been empowered to influence policies and day-to-day operations to improve the student learning environment. Decision-making is aligned through a process of making recommendations first to the College President then to the Board of Trustees. (IV.A.5)

Information is shared through formal College structures, College wide assemblies, the College newsletter, and bulletins. The community is apprised of College information through radio programming, the College newsletter, and the College website. (IV.A.5)

The College regularly reviews policies and procedures related to instruction, student services, human resources and other aspects of campus administration. (IV.A.6, IV.A.7)

The College meets Standard IV.A and related Eligibility Requirements.

IV. Recommendations

None

Standard IV.B – Chief Executive Officer

I. General Observations

The President of the College is the chief executive officer of the College and has the full charge and control of the administration and business affairs of the College (ISER, p. 204). The President is charged with the implementation of board policies of the Board of Trustees which is appointed by the President of the Republic with consent of the Senate. Board membership includes members from industrial and business sectors, the student body and the general public. The Board has the authority to appoint, support, evaluate the performance of, and terminate the services of the President of the College. The Board has authority to establish national priorities for fields of study and postsecondary training. (IV.B.1, IV.B.2, IV.B.5, ER 4)

The President provides leadership for planning, organizing, budgeting, human resources, and assessing institutional effectiveness. According to the ISER, the President led the development of the Master Plan and Unifying Principles. The President seeks input from a management team and committees, such as the Executive Committee, Associated Students of Palau Community College (ASPCC), Committee on Programs and Curricula (CPC), Retention Committee (RC) and Institutional Assessment Committee (IAC). The President appoints members to these committees, and committees are organized around specific tasks related to institutional quality. (IV.B.2, IV.B.3.)

The President oversees an administrative structure with primary oversight for three areas (Palau National Training Council, Institutional Research, and Development Office) and with primary management delegated to administrators (Vice Presidents and Deans) in three large areas: Administration & Finance, Education & Training (Academic Affairs, Student Services, and Continuing Education), and Cooperative Research & Extension. The administrative structure was reviewed and revised with approval from the Board of Trustees in 2015 to include the Institutional Research and Evaluation Office to support strategic directions related to a culture of evidence and institutional improvement. (IV.B.1, IV.B.3, IV.B.4)

The President guides institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment through established policies and procedures detailed in campus publications such as the 15-Year Institutional Master Plan 2009-2024, Program Reviews, Annual Reports, and the College website. Institution-set standards are posted on the College website: <http://pcc.palau.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Institutional-Set-Standards.pdf>. Allocation of resources and planning of programs, services, and financial activities occurs in alignment with student success and the institution's commitment to quality and educational excellence. The CEO regularly receives summaries of the mandatory Student Progress Reports and follow up counseling reports. Any issues arising from these reports are discussed with appropriate bodies. This alignment and use of data-driven decision making for continual improvement are also evidenced by the adoption of the FAMED process for institutional assessment, planning and implementation. All governance structures and programs use this process to regularly evaluate their effectiveness. The process is communicated throughout the institution and with the general public; it is published in the General Catalog and on the College website <http://pcc.palau.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Institutional-Assessment->

[Process.pdf](#). The importance of a culture of evidence and a focus on student learning is also evident in the institution's publication and use of status reports and report cards assessing progress made on the Institutional Master Plan; these are posted on the College website: <http://pcc.palau.edu/about/accreditation/>. These reports are tools the CEO has implemented to link research on student learning with institutional planning and resource allocation processes. The process of budgeting, from request for budget allocations to requests for procurement/expenditures as noted in College documents such as the Administrative Procedures Manual, is also aligned with student learning goals. (IV.B.1, IV.B.2, IV.B.3, IV.B.4)

II. Findings and Evidence

Based on the ISER and attendant documents including the Republic of Palau Public Law 4-2 RPPL4-2, commonly referred to as the Higher Education Act of 1993; Executive Committee Appointment Letter; Memoranda appointing members to various committees; excerpts from the Board of Trustees Protocol Manual; 15-Year Institutional Master Plan 2009-2024; Institutional Master Plan Report Card Updates; General Catalog; Student Handbook; Student Planner; the College website; other documents provided with the ISER; meeting minutes from campus committees, the Board of Trustees, and Board of Trustees sub-committees; and interviews conducted during the site visit, it is evident that the President provides leadership for institutional quality. The President tasks committees with various aspects of institutional quality, e.g., the Institutional Assessment Committee (IAC), Retention Committee, and the Accreditation Committee though he is actively involved in the accreditation process and communicates accreditation processes and goals to all constituents. The CEO uses data in decision making, identifying priorities, and measuring progress in building a culture of evidence and inquiry. (IV.B.1)

The President assures the implementation of statutes, regulations, and governing board policies and assures that institutional practices are consistent with institutional mission and policies, including effective control of budget and expenditures. The President reviews and approves the College's overall budget request and works with the Board and National Congress on the College's annual budget. The President ensures compliance with financial policies and control measures set forth by the Board of Trustees and in the Administrative Procedures Manual. (IV.B.5, ER 4)

The President works and communicates effectively with the communities served by the College and encourages campus-wide dialogue around various issues of institutional importance. There is regular communication between the President and various groups, e.g., department heads, faculty members, students, governing bodies, the Board of Trustees, and the public. The Executive Committee is an effective representative body through which regular communication occurs and information is shared and disseminated throughout the College. The Executive Committee also monitors institutional progress towards implementation of the Strategic Plan. The President uses multiple methods of communication with campus, government, and community members such as oral and written reports, radio segments, memos, meeting minutes, messages in campus publications like newsletters and student handbook, and the College website. The President serves on local and regional boards and Commissions including Chuuk Education Reform Council, Pacific Post-

Secondary Education Council, Micronesian Voyaging Society, Asia Pacific Association of Fiduciary Studies, the Palau Chamber of Commerce, Palau International Coral Reef Center, Belau Family School Community Alliance, Civic Action Coordinating Committee, and National Emergency Council. Palau Community College is thus well-connected and has a presence in regional discussions. (IV.B.3. IV.B.4, IV.B.6)

III. Conclusions

The CEO is committed to institutional quality and provides effective leadership in this regard with an active role in the planning, implementation and review processes. The College's structure is appropriately managed by the CEO to reflect the institution's culture, purposes, size, and complexity, as well as needs of the community and requirements of the government in which it operates. Policies and procedures are in place and guided by the CEO to promote continuous improvement, achievement of accreditation requirements, and effective stewardship of human, material, and financial resources. The CEO employs numerous modes and channels to support effective communication with communities served by the institution.

The College meets Standard IV.B.

IV. Recommendations

None

Standard IV.C – Governing Board

I. General Observations

The College and its Board of Trustees were established in 1993 by the Palau Higher Education Act. Through subsequent amendments to the Palau Higher Education Act in 1996 and 2002, the Board was able to add student representation and fill a long-standing vacancy. The *Board Protocol Manual* contains the Code of Ethics, bylaws, statutory, and fiduciary responsibilities and meeting and evaluation procedures. Policies consistent with the College mission are established, managed and reviewed by the Board. Reporting the results of ISSA evaluations to the Board should facilitate clear and relevant communication for the continued support and assistance of student learning and achievement. (IV.C.1, IV.C.2, IV.C.3, IV.C.4, IV.C.5, IV.C.6 & IV.C.7) (ER 7)

The Board of Trustees adopted a revised *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* in December, 2015 at a Board of Trustees meeting. The manual established the board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures. Review of meeting minutes indicates the Board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and by-laws. (IV.C.6, IV.C.7)

The Board of Trustees regularly reviews key indicators of student learning and achievement and institutional plans for improving academic quality. In September, 2015 the Board of Trustees reviewed and adopted both the vision and mission statements of the College, which adhere to the mandates of the College's enabling legislation. The Board also reviewed and adopted the 15-Year Institutional Master Plan that is the institutional plan for improving academic quality. (IV.C.8) (ER 7)

The Governing Board has an ongoing training program for Board development, including new member orientation. Additionally, new members evaluate the orientation process with feedback used to improve the next orientation. The enabling legislation stipulates four-year appointments. The initial appointments were staggered to ensure continuity of board membership. (IV.C.9)

The Board has policies that clearly establish a process for board evaluation. The evaluation assesses the Board's effectiveness in promoting and sustaining academic quality and institutional effectiveness. The Governing Board regularly evaluates its practices and performance, including full participation in Board training. The results are used to improve Board performance, academic quality, and institutional effectiveness. (IV.C.10)

The Code of Ethics is contained in the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* and defines policies for Governing Board members' conduct in the performance of their duties. Sanctions for violators are also described in the manual. In addition, as appointed officials of the national government, members are required to comply with the requirements of the National Ethics Commission. (IV.C.11)

The Governing Board delegates full responsibility and authority to the CEO to implement and administer Board policies and hold the CEO accountable for the operation of the College. The Board hires, supports, evaluates the performance, and terminates the services of

the President of the College. The President of the College's employment contract and the College's enabling legislation, as well as the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual*, clearly delegate administrative authority to the President of the College. (IV.C.12)

The Board of Trustees is informed about the Eligibility Requirements, the Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, accreditation processes, and the College's accredited status. The College President and the Accreditation Liaison Officer primarily achieve this through reports to the Board. (IV.C.13)

II. Findings and Evidence

The College is fully cognizant of the role and responsibilities of the Board in relation to academic quality, integrity, effectiveness of learning programs and services, and financial stability. Participating in ACCJC training informed the policy making/review process starting with the Board's four year-review cycle of its governance policies. The Policy Making/Review Process is available in the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* (adopted: December 1993; revised: July 2003; January 2016; pp. 29-31). (IV.C.1, IV.C.2, IV.C.5, IV.C.6 & IV.C.7)

In interviews, information was also provided on the review cycle which has been summarized below:

- Policy review cycle:
 - four years;
 - Started last year (2015) with the governance process policies;
 - Each year, the College will review the policies according to the cycle provided in the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* (p. 31) until all have been reviewed and then the cycle will start again;
 - Amendments and changes are also integrated in this process.

Academic quality and the effectiveness of student learning programs and services are supported by the Board's role in approving the College mission, vision, unifying principles, strategic directions, ILOs and ISSA. The vision and mission statements were reviewed and affirmed at the September, 2015 Board of Trustees meeting. Prior to approval a Vision and Mission Taskforce Report was submitted and reviewed. In the onsite interviews with the Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Board, it remained unclear when the last change in the PCC Mission was made. Reflections by the Chairman affirmed that there had been discussions on the Mission and Vision at three points in time from 2000 – 2015; the Mission remained the same and the Vision had been changed. The two Trustees affirmed that the Board reviews policies from the College but had sought clarification rather than making any substantial changes. (IV.C.1, IV.C.2, IV.C.5, IV.C.6 & IV.C.7) (ER 7)

Board minutes provide evidence of regular updates by the President or presentations from programs and services to the Board of Trustees on program and services offered by the College. The Board is also responsible for policies to ensure the College's financial stability.

The *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* (pages 32-34) references criterion that decisions made by the Board represent a collective decision and members uphold decisions. Article I, Section 7 of the PCC Board of Trustees By-Laws states "...acts of a majority of the voting trustees...shall constitute the acts of the Board." (Page 15) Additionally, the Code of Ethics, Standards of Conduct for Trustees, Standard 17 states "Each trustee shall recognize that the strength and effectiveness of the Board, is as a Board, not as a group of individuals." (Page 10) (IV.C.1, 2, 5, 6 & 7, ER 7) Finally, the Annual Board Evaluation asks members to assess "Once a decision is made, members cease debate and uphold decision." (Page 32) which provides evidence that the board has a regular self-assessment of themselves as a collective entity.

The Board is also responsible for policies to ensure the College's financial stability. In the onsite interview with the Executive Assistant to the President and Assistant to the Board of Trustees, the Board's role in fiscal management focused predominantly on reviewing PCC's financial status through monthly financial status reports. The areas covered also included the endowment. The student trustee also affirmed that since his election to the Board in September, 2015, the Vice President of Administration and Finance had presented three financial reports. The student trustee also confirmed that discussions by the Board on the financial reports were predominantly based on matters of clarification. Evidence of the monthly financial reports being presented at the Board of Trustees' meetings was provided in the sample Minutes made available during the onsite visit. (IV.C.1, IV.C.2, IV.C.5, IV.C.6 & IV.C.7) (ER 7)

Procedures for the evaluation of the President, the Board, and each Trustee's performance are clearly defined in the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual*. Evidence shows that the President provides reports to the Board that covers institutional performance and financial status. These reports should also provide evidence-based information for the evaluation of the President's performance. (IV.C.3)

The College adheres to the same hiring process for all employees including the President. The College revised the process for hiring the President and the revised 'Presidential Search & Selection' process is provided in the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* (pp. 26-29). (IV.C.2, IV.C.3)

The appointment of Board members is designed to protect the Board's independence through the exemption from resignation when there is a change of government.

Adopted in 1993 and revised most recently in 2016, the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* contains the Board Services Commitment Pledge that specifically requires Board members "to defend and protect the College from undue influence and political interference." (IV.C.3)

The orientation process for each Board member that is conducted for new Trustees also provides an orientation packet which includes policies, procedures and Board operations (pp. 24 & 25). (IV.C.4) (ER 7)

The College affirms the Board's involvement in the development of new academic programs.

The Board has a standing committee, Academic Programs, which is responsible to ensure that the educational program is consistent with the mission and institutional learning outcomes. The recent review and adoption of the proposal to establish the Palauan Studies degree program provides the opportunity to exemplify Board involvement. This new program was approved through the substantive change process in May, 2015 (Evidence 1.5: ‘ACCJC approval for STEM, CPH, PW’). In one onsite interview, it was explained that a community advisory board worked with two key faculty members to develop the Palauan Studies program. The program was subsequently taken through the institutional processes for approval to the Executive Committee and then the Board. Minutes of the Board provided during the onsite visit verified that the Academic Programs Committee approved the report for the Palauan Studies program on January 20, 2015. The Board approved the program on January 26, 2015. (IV.C.5)

Procedures for the evaluation of the President, the Board and each Trustee’s performance are clearly defined in the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual*. Evidence shows that the President provides reports to the Board that covers institutional performance and financial status. These reports provide evidence-based information for the evaluation of the President’s performance. The President is evaluated annually with the evaluation tool provided in the Manual (Appendix C, page 35). The evaluation is conducted in executive (closed) session and is considered confidential. (IV.C.1, IV.C.2, IV.C.5, IV.C.6, IV.C.7, IV.C.12) (ER 7)

The Board of Trustees publishes the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual*, which articulates policies and procedures. The manual consists of seven articles, which include Board of Trustee meetings, officers of the Board and the President, annual evaluations, records and report, committees of the board, statement of the ethical conduct, and amendments to by-laws. (IV.C.6)

The Board of Trustees has established a four-year cycle of review for the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual*. In December, 2015, the governance process policies were revised and adopted. The policy review process is documented in the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* (pages 29-31). Review of Board of Trustees agendas and minutes indicates the procedures are consistently followed. (IV.C.7)

The Board approves the College mission, vision, and values statement. Monthly financial reports are provided at Board meetings and the College President covers student achievement, enrollments, and other items related to student learning programs and services as part of the President’s report to the Board. Through its four standing committees, the Board establishes policies consistent with the mission of the College and contributes to the quality and effectiveness of student learning programs and services. (IV.C.8)

The Board reviews the annual Fact Book. The current 2014-15 Fact Book includes information on student learning, performance and achievement data, academic programs and support services. The College produces an Annual Report reviewed by the Board. The 2014 Annual Report provided extensive information about the College, institutional learning outcomes, strategic directions, and program/department information. (IV.C.8)

There is a new Trustee orientation that includes the College’s enabling legislation and related

amendments, institutional self-study reports and other Accreditation requirements, the 15-Year Institutional Master Plan, policy manuals, the General Catalog, the Fact Book, audit reports and other financial reports, Board policies, the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual*, and the annual evaluation. There is an evaluation given to new Trustees to improve future trainings. The last training was conducted in 2014. (IV.C.9)

In 2014, Trustees attended an investment conference, which included fiduciary essentials. Furthermore, Trustees have attended programs delivered by the Association of Community College Trustees, workshops sponsored by the Pacific Postsecondary Educational Council and other professional development activities. (IV.C.9)

Annually, the Board conducts its performance evaluations that examine individual contributions to the Board as well as its overall effectiveness. The first part of the evaluation assesses the individual member's contribution to the effectiveness of the Board. The second part assesses the overall performance of the entire Board. The evaluation process and procedure is described in the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* Article III (pages 13-15). The manual was reviewed and re-approved in December 2015. There is no evidence that the Board makes public its evaluation and performance (IV.C.10)

The College's enabling legislation mandates that the College maintain its accreditation status, specifically "Maintain accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges." Members of the Board serve on institutional self-evaluation processes through their membership in the accreditation standards' committees. The final report is reviewed and adopted by the Governing Board. In addition, all Board members have successfully completed the Accreditation Basics online course. (IV.C.10)

The Standards of Conduct for the trustees contained in the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* clearly defines a code of ethics and roles and responsibilities for Board officers. The manual outlines processes for the sanction or removal of Board members for violations. Additionally, members are required to sign a Board Service Commitment that states:

"I, recognizing the important responsibility I am undertaking in serving as a member of the PCC Board of Trustees, hereby pledge to carry out in a trustworthy and diligent manner the duties, responsibilities and obligations role as a member of the Governing Board...

I will exercise the duties and responsibilities of this office with integrity, collegiality, and care." (IV.C.11) (ER 7)

The Board delegates full responsibility and authority to the College President to implement and administer Board policies. This is codified in the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* Article II (page 13), which confers the College President as the Chief Executive Officer and administrative head of the College. The College President is a solitary employee of the Board and is responsible for the College's administration and business affairs on behalf of the Board. The President is fully accountable to the Board only and the Board has the power to hire and terminate the President of the College. Members of the Board conduct an annual formal evaluation of the President in executive sessions of the Board meetings. Furthermore,

the commitment pledge signed by Trustees states “My role as a Board member will focus on the development of policies that govern the implementation of institutional plans and purposes.” This role is separate and distinct from the role of the CEO, who determines the means of implementation. (IV.C.12)

All the plans of the College, including the institutional self-evaluation action plans, undergo Board review and approval. (IV.C.13)

III. Conclusions

The role and responsibilities of the Board in relation to ensuring academic quality, integrity and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and financial stability of the College are emphatically stated throughout the submissions on Standard IV.C. The Higher Education Act (1993) and the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* provide the legislative framework and procedures for the establishment and operations of the Board.

The College has a governing body that has authority over, and responsibility for, policies to assure the academic quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution. Published material by the College (the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual*) and the onsite visit support the process and activities of the Board in relation to policy review and program approval. Furthermore, minutes made available during the onsite visit provided evidence of discussions that included integrity and effectiveness issues, student learning programs and financial reporting. Meeting notices were also provided, which were written in both English and Palauan that were broadcast over local radio and posted on campus bulletin boards. (IV.C.1, IV.C.2, IV.C.5, IV.C.6 & IV.C.7)

The governing board acts as a collective entity. Once the board reaches a decision, all board members act in support of the decision. The following provisions that provide evidence can be found in the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* Section 11 (p. 16). During their onsite interview, the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Board stated that the Board worked hard to secure unanimous decisions, or one voice. In the event that this was not possible, the Trustees upheld a majority vote as the decision of the Board. (IV.C.2)

The relevant procedures for the presidential search and selection process are provided in the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual*. (IV.C.3)

The Governing Board is an independent, policy-making body that reflects the public interest in the institution’s educational quality. It advocates for and defends the institution and protects it from undue influence or political pressure. (ER 7)

The Governing Board establishes policies consistent with the College/District/system mission to ensure the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them. The Governing Board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity and stability. At the onsite interview with the Executive Assistant to the President and the Assistant to the Board, it was affirmed that the Board, working with the President, had overall responsibility for governance, policy and fiscal management of PCC. These responsibilities included the

approval for policies and programs. The institution, or the Governing Board, publishes the Board bylaws and policies specifying the board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures. (IV.C.6)

The Governing Board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. The Board regularly assesses its policies and bylaws for their effectiveness in fulfilling the College/District/system mission and revises them as necessary. The policy review process is available in the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* (pp. 29-31). (IV.C.7)

The Governing Board of the College ensures the institution is accomplishing its goals for student success, the Governing Board regularly reviews key indicators of student learning and achievement and institutional plans for improving academic quality. (IV.C.8)

The Board has ongoing training programs for Board development, including new member orientation. It has a mechanism for providing for continuity of Board membership and staggered terms of office as stipulated in the College's enabling statute. (IV.C.9)

The *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* articulates the process and procedures for the annual evaluation of the College President and members of the Board. As part of the four-year review cycle, the governance process policies section of the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual* was updated in December, 2015. This included the evaluation of the President and Board of Trustees. (IV.C.10)

The Board has a clearly defined code of ethics and policy for dealing with behavior that violates its code and implements it when necessary. Article III (page 9) of the *Board of Trustee Protocol Manual* formulates these codes, policy, and procedures. The manual was re-affirmed after review in December, 2015. Board members also sign a commitment letter which commits them to "pledge to carry out in a trustworthy and diligent manner the duties, responsibilities and obligations role as a member of the Governing Board." Board member interests are disclosed and do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution. (IV.C.11)

As outlined in the *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual*, Article II, the Board of Trustees delegates full responsibility and authority to the College President, as Chief Executive Officer, to implement and administer board policies without board interference. Through an annual evaluation process described in *Board of Trustees Protocol Manual*, Article III (pages 18-19) holds the College President accountable for the operation of the College. (IV.C.12)

The Governing Board of the College is informed about the Eligibility Requirements, the Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, accreditation processes, and the College's accredited status, and supports through policy the College's efforts to improve and excel. Review of Board meeting minutes demonstrates ongoing communication from the College to the Board of Trustees through President's reports, Board standing committee reports, and presentations. It participates in evaluation of governing board roles and functions in the accreditation process. (IV.C.13)

The College meets Standard IV.C and related Eligibility Requirement 7 except for IV.C.10.

IV. Recommendations

Recommendation 5

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends Governing Board implement a mechanism to make public the results of its performance evaluation. (IV.C.10)

IV.D Multi-College District or Systems

Not applicable. Palau Community College is a single College System.

The Quality Focus Essay

The College provided a three-part quality focus essay. Given that this is the first time such essays are required components of ISERs, the assessment of this component is acknowledged by the team to be as much as a first attempt as that by the College is composing the essay.

Overall, the three items identified for quality focus, namely, institutional-set standards for student achievement (ISSA), Academic Building and Student Center, and a four-year degree program, all are projects that are vital to the long-term improvement of student learning and are therefore appropriate focus areas for the College.

The team spent considerable time during the visit verifying the ISSAs and the process to develop these. The team was impressed with the level of thought and reflection evidenced by the ISSA development process. The College does need to complete its planned schedule of evaluation. Additionally, it will benefit from increased clarity regarding the data sources on which ISSAs 10 and 11 were developed and on which their achievement will be assessed.

The team was allowed to tour all of the campus facilities and plans for renovation and expansion were explained. As stated in the essay, the College has been saving \$2,000 per month since 2005 and has over \$300,000 in its infrastructure fund to use towards the new academic building and student center. The College has clearly stated the process and timeline for moving forward with these projects. The only item that was not addressed in this component of the essay is the assessment of the projects.

Finally, the last component of the essay is the plan to establish a four-year degree. The College made it clear to the team that this is in the developmental stages. A recommendation has been submitted to the President to establish a Bachelor of Science in Liberal Studies, but the research continues with other majors being considered. This plan is the least developed of the three in the essay, but it is a project that is vital to the local area and its students, the outcome—a four-year degree—is clearly defined as is the process for the initial steps. A tentative timeline has been established, but responsible parties, resources, and assessment steps have yet to be determined.

The team found that the three components of the essay were appropriate. The ISSAs are the most developed part of the essay projects and were thoroughly reviewed by the team. The team would recommend that the College continue to implement its plan for measuring and assessing the ISSAs. The team also applauds the College for forward thinking and effective use of resources to build an infrastructure fund and to move forward with new facilities that will better support student learning. Finally, the team understands the need for a four-year degree as many students are place-bound and would otherwise not have access to continued education. The team recommends the College continue its careful review of appropriate majors and that the College further review the resources necessary for four-year degrees and consider the establishment of effective assessment of the new degrees once implemented.

In conclusion, the College selected three appropriate areas for its Quality Focus Essay and wrote a relatively concise explanation of the three action plans. Assessment for the new

buildings and four-year degree plan could be improved in the essay. The College has adequately complied with this new component of the ISER.