



DESERT COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
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Date: September 6, 2024

To: Dr. Timothy Karas, Team Chair
Dr. Marilyn Flores, Vice Chair
Melynie Schiel, ACCJC Staff Liaison

From: Laura Hope, Interim Superintendent/President, College of the Desert

CC: Misty Burrue, Accreditation Liaison Officer

Re: College Update on Core Inquiries

College of the Desert is looking forward to the upcoming Focused Site Visit. In order to facilitate the team's review process, please see below pertinent college developments pertaining to the core inquiries, in addition to evidence the team may find helpful in advance of the visit.

Core Inquiry 1: The team seek to better understand Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) analysis linked to long- range capital planning.

Standards or Policies: III.B.4

Briefly describe any institutional improvements, strengthening of processes, documented outcomes, discussions or reflections that have occurred pertaining to Core Inquiry 1.

(300 words max.)

The District prioritizes ongoing evaluation, continuously assessing the relationship between staffing levels, operational costs, and the overall cost of ownership to optimize resource allocation and ensure financial stability. Additionally, specific enrollment management strategies and FTES projections are developed in response to facility expansions, such as the Palm Springs Development Project ([III.B.4-01](#)), to align with the District's broader goals and ensure sustainable growth.

The District also has an Enrollment Management Plan that was developed before the pandemic ([III.B.4-02](#)). While some of the principles are still relevant and supportive of new realities, the District will also be developing an updated enrollment plan that reflects several

new considerations: the rise of online instruction and support services; more clearly defined identities for each campus in order to enable more granular FTES projections and cost/revenue analysis; and site and programmatic specific budgeting for equipment and support. These identity maps are currently under production for each campus location: Mecca/Thermal; Indio; Palm Springs (opening in 2027); Desert Hot Springs; Roadrunner Motors (opening in Cathedral City in 2026); and Palm Desert.

In response to the Feasibility Report ([III.B.4-01](#)) the District has recently developed an FTES projection tool ([III.B.4-03](#)) that informs the District's offerings across multiple campuses and in various modalities. The District can now anticipate districtwide FTES growth and shortfalls yearly, including FTEF costs and revenue by location. Until recently, the District was scheduling without such information, making it difficult to plan and analyze costs.

In response to the need for more structural planning regarding technology, the District has developed a Technology Replacement Plan ([III.B.4-04](#)) based on a pricing matrix used by the IT Department ([III.B.4-05](#)). These plans are aligned to the District's Technology Master Plan which will be updated this year ([III.B.4-06](#)).

Evidence: Provide the list of evidentiary documents that will assist the team to better understand college processes, outcomes, and activities pertaining to Core Inquiry 1. (documents should be separate pdf files, accessible via hyperlinks and uploaded to ACCJC's cloud service)

1. [III.B.4-01 Study Session 16.04 Palm Springs Development Project-Phase 1 Feasibility ReportBOT 09.15.22](#)
2. [III.B.4-02 IVA5-02 Enrollment-Management-Plan 2020-2025](#)
3. [III.B.4-03 FTES Projection Tool](#)
4. [III.B.4-04 Technology Replacement Plan 2022-23](#)
5. [III.B.4-05 District Standard Technology and pricing](#)
6. [III.B.4-06 Technology Master Plan Goals, Objectives & Initiatives 2023-24](#)

Context/additional information (if applicable): Please feel free to provide any additional relevant information that provides context for the college's work. (300 words max.)

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Core Inquiry 2: The team seeks to better understand the process, timeline, and results used to regularly evaluate decision-making policies, procedures, and processes to ensure their integrity and effectiveness. What practices are used to widely communicate results of these evaluations?

Standards or Policies: IV.A.7

Briefly describe any institutional improvements, strengthening of processes, documented outcomes, discussions or reflections that have occurred pertaining to Core Inquiry 2.
(300 words max.)

The District uses an Annual Planning Calendar ([IV.A.7-01](#)) and Long-Term Integrated Planning Calendar ([IV.A.7-02](#)) that structures the timing of key evaluations and decision-making processes. Mid-year budget reviews, program review updates (PRUs), and program enhancement plans (PEPs) are scheduled throughout the academic year. These activities ensure there is a regular review of fiscal allocations, programmatic needs, and resource prioritization.

This Assessment of Planning and Outcomes (APO) Subcommittee is specifically tasked with evaluating planning processes. The committee reviews various plans, including the Strategic Educational Master Plan (SEMP), and updates the CPC Handbook to reflect changes in procedures. These updates are aimed at improving the decision-making framework and ensuring that processes are current and effective ([IV.A.7-03](#)).

CPC conducts self-assessment surveys to gather feedback on the effectiveness of governance across campus. For instance, the 2023 CPC Self-Assessment Survey ([IV.A.7-04](#)) is part of the council's efforts to assess its performance and identify areas for improvement. The results from the self-assessment survey ([IV.A.7-05](#)) will be provided to the College Planning Council at the September 13, 2024, meeting ([IV.A.7-06](#)).

Results from faculty ([IV.A.7-07](#)), staff ([IV.A.7-08](#)), and equipment ([IV.A.7-09](#); [IV.A.7-10](#)) prioritization processes are shared widely within the college community ([IV.A.7-03](#)). These results are emailed to all employees, posted on the portal, and discussed in relevant committee meetings.

Updates and changes to decision-making procedures are communicated through revisions to the CPC Handbook. The updated handbook is shared with the CPC for adoption, and the

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changes are communicated to the broader college community to ensure everyone is informed of the new policies and procedures ([IV.A.7-03](#)).

The Budget Subcommittee reviews and communicates decisions related to budgetary allocations. These meetings include discussions on budget reviews and ensure that decisions are aligned with the District's priorities. Meeting minutes are recorded and shared, which helps in maintaining transparency in decision-making ([IV.A.7-11](#)).

Evidence: Provide the list of evidentiary documents that will assist the team to better understand college processes, outcomes, and activities pertaining to Core Inquiry 2. (documents should be separate pdf files, accessible via hyperlinks and uploaded to ACCJC's cloud service)

1. [IV.A.7-01 Annual Planning Calendar SP23 v.1 04.05.2023](#)
2. [IV.A.7-02 Long-term Integrated Planning Calendar SP23 v.2 05.11.2023](#)
3. [IV.A.7-03 APO Mtg Min-05.11.23](#)
4. [IV.A.7-04 CPC Self Survey 2023](#)
5. [IV.A.7-05 CPC Orientation Results 2021](#)
6. [IV.A.7-06 DRAFT CPC Agenda 091324](#)
7. [IV.A.7-07 Faculty Prioritization RESULTS 04.26.2023](#)
8. [IV.A.7-08 Staff Prioritization RESULTS 05.01.2023](#)
9. [IV.A.7-09 Instructional Equipment Technology Prioritization RESULTS 05.09.2023](#)
10. [IV.A.7-10 Non-instructional Equipment Technology Prioritization RESULTS 05.09.2023](#)
11. [IV.A.7-11 Budgt SubComm Mtg Min-06.12.23](#)

Context/additional information (if applicable): Please feel free to provide any additional relevant information that provides context for the college's work. (300 words max.)

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Core Inquiry 3: The team seeks to better understand how the board acts in a collective entity, including once a decision is reached all members act in support of the decision.

Standards or Policies: Standard IV.C.2; IV.C.10

Briefly describe any institutional improvements, strengthening of processes, documented outcomes, discussions or reflections that have occurred pertaining to Core Inquiry 3.

(300 words max.)

As noted in the ISER, changes in the college presidency and changes on the board have affected the dynamics as it relates to board behavior. To that end, the District has provided training and support to assist all Board members in fulfilling their roles in ways that align to Standard 4 and to College of the Desert's own policies.

On September 15, 2023, the Board conducted a special meeting in which the District's legal counsel provided training for the Trustees on ethics, responsibilities, and the Brown Act ([IV.C.2-01](#); [IV.C.2-02](#)). At the same meeting, an ACCJC Vice-President provided a Board training on the responsibilities of the Board and the expectations for Accreditation ([IV.C.2-03](#)). The minutes reflect these sessions, reinforcing adherence to both the Brown Act and to the District's commitment to helping the Board integrate standards and behavior into their leadership consistent with State and Accreditation expectations.

On April 19, 2024, the Board conducted another special meeting in which the District's legal counsel conducted a session on goal-setting and board governance ([IV.C.10-04](#); [IV.C.10-05](#)). That presentation set the stage for a larger conversation regarding the results of the Board's self-evaluation and the introduction of Board goals. The Interim Superintendent/President provided an overview of the results of the surveys completed by the Board including areas of agreement and disagreement ([IV.C.10-06](#); [IV.C.10-07](#)). The self-evaluation results provided an opportunity for the Superintendent/President to introduce a draft to foster unifying areas for the Board.

On June 20, 2024, after a two-month review period, the College of the Desert Board of Trustees unanimously approved the Board Goals, as reflected in the minutes ([IV.C.2-08](#); [IV.C.2-09](#)). Since adopting the Board Goals, which align to the College's recently approved Strategic Educational Master Plan, the Interim Superintendent/President emphasizes the alignment between the Trustee's interests and the approved goals.

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Evidence: Provide the list of evidentiary documents that will assist the team to better understand college processes, outcomes, and activities pertaining to Core Inquiry 3. (documents should be separate pdf files, accessible via hyperlinks and uploaded to ACCJC's cloud service)

1. [IV.C.2-01 091523 Special Meeting Minutes](#)
2. [IV.C.2-02 091523 The Board-Role, Ethics, and Brown Act Regs](#)
3. [IV.C.2-03 091523 Accreditation and Governing Boards](#)
4. [IV.C.10-04 041924 Special Meeting Minutes](#)
5. [IV.C.10-05 Board Governance and Goal Setting Training](#)
6. [IV.C.10-06 Overview of Board Evaluation Findings](#)
7. [IV.C.10-07 041924 Board Self-Evaluation Results-2023](#)
8. [IV.C.2-08 062024 Regular Meeting Minutes Approved Goals](#)
9. [IV.C.2-09 Approved Board Goals](#)

Context/additional information (if applicable): Please feel free to provide any additional relevant information that provides context for the college's work. (300 words max.)

Core Inquiry 4: The team seeks to better understand the effectiveness and implementation of the College's adopted seven-year review cycle for board policies and administrative procedures.

Standards or Policies: Standard IV.C.7

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Briefly describe any institutional improvements, strengthening of processes, documented outcomes, discussions or reflections that have occurred pertaining to Core Inquiry 1.

(300 words max.)

The Desert Community College District has a responsibility to review, update, and maintain Board Policies (BPs) and Administrative Procedures (APs) on a regular basis. In an effort to improve and sustain the currency of BPs and APs, the District has recently implemented several changes to its BP/AP review and approval process. First, the District recently created and filled its first ever in-house General Counsel position. The General Counsel was hired in February of 2024 and will play a central role in updating and maintaining District BPs and APs moving forward. Second, the District is in the process of amending BP/AP 2410, "Board Policies and Administrative Procedures" to provide clarity to the District community on the process, timing, and cycle for BP/AP review, amendment, and update. Finally, the District Administration will be presenting the revisions to the BP/AP review process for approval at its College Planning Council in September of 2024. The proposal includes a flow chart ([IV.C.7-01](#)) identifying the steps in the process, including expedited review for non-substantive revisions, and a clear seven-year review cycle ensuring that the District will review a chapter of BPs/APs each year in addition to any legally required amendments as identified by the CCLC subscription service and/or the General Counsel. The BP/AP review flow chart, proposed BP/AP review timeline, and other supporting materials are included ([IV.C.7-02](#)).

Evidence: Provide the list of evidentiary documents that will assist the team to better understand college processes, outcomes, and activities pertaining to Core Inquiry 1. (documents should be separate pdf files, accessible via hyperlinks and uploaded to ACCJC's cloud service)

1. [IV.C.7-01 Annual AP BP Review](#)
2. [IV.C.7-02 AP Update Process Chart](#)

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