PEER REVIEW TEAM REPORT

Taft College
29 Cougar Ct
Taft, CA 93268

This report represents the findings of the Peer Review Team that conducted a virtual visit to Taft College from September 27-September 30, 2021. The Commission acted on the accredited status of the institution during its January 2022 meeting and this team report must be reviewed in conjunction with the Commission's Action letter.

Dr. John C. Hernandez
Team Chair

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Comprehensive Peer Review Visit - Peer Review Team Roster

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Summary of Peer Review Process

INSTITUTION: Taft College

DATES OF VISIT: September 27 – September 30, 2021

TEAM CHAIR: Dr. John C. Hernandez

A ten-member accreditation team conducted a virtual visit to Taft College from September 27 to September 30, 2021 for the purpose of determining whether the College continues to meet Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and USDE regulations.

ACCJC's decision to conduct virtual visits for the Spring 2021 comprehensive reviews was based upon state mandated health guidelines, and the Commission's authority to implement flexibilities to accreditation processes and practices afforded by the federal government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the U.S. Department of Education's March 17, 2020 guidance, as well as all updates, permitted accreditors to perform virtual site visits for institutions as long as the accreditor follows up with an onsite visit in a reasonable amount of time to meet the statutory and regulatory requirements (though not necessarily a full peer-review site visit).

Consistent with on-site visits, and in accordance with the Guide for Conducting Virtual Visits: An Addendum for Peer Review Team Chairs, Team Members, and Colleges that ACCJC provided to team chairs, peer reviewers, and colleges being reviewed, the virtual peer review team visit to Taft College relied on an engaged and interactive format, conducting multiple interviews with college representatives, participating in team meetings to discuss findings, and conducting the required campus forums. The team evaluated how well the College is achieving its stated purposes and validated that all standards were met.

In preparation for the visit, the team chair attended via Zoom a team chair training workshop on August 3, 2021 and held a pre-visit meeting with the College CEO on September 9, 2021. The entire peer review team received team training provided by staff from ACCJC via Zoom on September 1, 2021.

The peer review team received the College's self-evaluation document (ISER) and related evidence several weeks prior to the team's virtual college visit. Team members found the ISER to be a comprehensive, well written document detailing the processes used by the College to address Eligibility Requirements, Commission Standards, and Commission Policies. The team confirmed that the ISER was developed through broad participation by the entire college community of faculty, staff, students, and administration. The College also prepared a Quality Focus Essay (QFE).

Prior to the virtual visit, team members completed their team assignments, identified areas for further inquiry, and provided a list of interview requests. Due to the COVID pandemic, the entire site visit was planned and completed utilizing online platforms (primarily via Zoom).

The College kicked off the virtual visit with a Zoom meeting, which was attended by over 60 members of the College community. The kick-off meeting offered the opportunity for the visiting team to introduce themselves and discuss the next steps and plan for the visit.

During the visit, team members held nine interviews with faculty, administrators, classified staff and students. The team held two open forums, which were well-attended (approximately 70 attendees across both meetings) to provide the College community an opportunity to share their thoughts with members of the evaluation team. The two forums were very positive, and the comments and experiences shared illustrated the pride many of the faculty, staff and students have in their college.

The team reviewed numerous materials supporting the self-evaluation report, which included documents and evidence relating to the Standards, Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and USDE regulations. Evidence reviewed by the team included, but was not limited to, documents such as institutional plans, strategic planning documents, program review procedures and reports, student learning outcomes evidence, course syllabi, distance education classes, board policies and procedures, and governance structures.

The team greatly appreciated the organization and warm reception the College showed during the visit. The team appreciated the assistance of key staff members, especially the accreditation liaison officer, who assisted the team with timely follow-up requests for individual meetings and additional evidence throughout the evaluation process. The team thanks the College staff for coordinating and hosting the virtual visit meetings and interviews and ensuring a smooth process which held high standards for the integrity of the peer review process.

Major Findings and Recommendations of the
Peer Review Team Report

Team Commendations:

None

Team Recommendations

Recommendations to Meet Standards:

None

Recommendations to Improve Quality:

None

Introduction

Situated in a major petroleum and natural gas production region in central California, the City of Taft is home to Taft College, a single college district known as West Kern Community College District (WKCCD). Taft College has been providing higher education opportunities for nearly 100 years to western Kern County residents. WKCCD is a single-college district under the leadership of a five-member Board of Trustees who are elected at-large. The chief executive officer of the District serves as the Superintendent/President.

One of the oldest of 72 Districts in California, WKCCD enrolled 8,422 unduplicated students with 59% identifying as Latinx in the 2019-20 academic year, maintaining the College's designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution since 2003-04.

Taft College offers 41 Associate Degree programs (27 AA/AS Degrees and 15 Associate Degrees for Transfer), 16 Certificates of Achievement, and 16 Local Certificates, students enrolled in 422 class sections taught by 59 full-time faculty and 76 part-time faculty during the Fall 2020 semester. The College also employs 120 classified professionals and 10 confidential staff, as well as 27 administrators.

Taft College enrolled 8,422 unique students during the 2019-2020 academic year. Both enrollment and Full Time Equivalent Students (FTES) have been stable since the last accreditation cycle, in 2015-2016. However, due to the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic, Taft College, like other community colleges across the nation, experienced a decline in enrollment. By Spring 2021, nearly a year into the pandemic, the decline in FTES reached 14% below that of Spring 2020, which began just before the start of the pandemic. In academic year 2020-2021, both FTES and credit enrollment numbers are at their lowest point of the past five years. Despite this decline in enrollment, the finances of the College have remained stable due to funding protections provided for in the apportionment process and the prudent reserves maintained in the general fund.

The College has put into place several measures to serve students and offer instructional programs during the pandemic. These included facility adjustments, such as upgrading HVAC systems for air purification, distribution of PPE and partitions for in-person classroom instruction and ramped up instructional technology. Online counseling, tutoring and other support services were provided in an online modality. The institution distributed laptops, tablets and hot spots to students and provided emergency assistance grants, including tuition reimbursements, and HEERF funding for students. The transition from in-person to all online instruction, particularly during the early days of the pandemic, was seamless given the College's distance education infrastructure and level of training and technology support. It should be noted that by summer of 2020 the College resumed in-person instruction for both their dental hygiene and lab sciences courses.

Based on the ISER, provided evidence, and interviews the team recognized noteworthy practices and processes that reflect the institution's commitment to the continuous improvement of the student learning experience. These notable achievements include (1) the comprehensive polices and processes which guide and structure faculty investment in program improvement; (2) a long-

standing and faculty-led commitment to the assessment of student learning; (3) an integrated and detailed technology plan that aligns with clear and effective policy and procedures; and (4) the clarity and transparency of decision-making roles and processes, as reflected in board policy, administrative procedure, committee structure, and the Governance Guide.

Eligibility Requirements

1. Authority

Taft College is authorized to operate as a degree-granting institution. The team confirmed the evidence of authority provided by the College that included recognition by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education. The College is authorized by the State of California and operates under the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Taft College is currently accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and operates under a Board of Trustees.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

2. Operational Status

The Peer Review team confirmed the College is operational serving 8,422 unduplicated students in the Academic Year 2019-2020. Students are supported in actively pursuing upskilling opportunities, certificates, or degrees. The College offers both on-site and online programs.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

3. Degrees

The College offers 15 Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT) with a minimum of 60 transferable units and a concentration of degree-applicable units, Associates of Arts, and Associate of Science degrees are offered as well as many locally approved and chancellor approved certificates. Most courses offered by Taft lead to a degree or certificate and are organized in a manner to support students in obtaining their educational goals.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

4. Chief Executive Officer

The team confirmed that the Board of Trustees employs a Superintendent/President of Taft College as the chief executive officer of the West Kern Community College District (WKCCD). The Superintendent/President of Taft College serves as the chief executive officer of the College. The team found that the Board of Trustees delegates authority to the Superintendent/President of Taft College to administer board policies and implement administrative procedures.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

5. Financial Accountability

The team confirmed that the College contracts with a qualified audit firm to conduct an independent audit of all accounts on an annual basis. The audits are certified and presented to the Board of Trustees for acceptance and are available to the public. Any findings are addressed appropriately by the College. Annual audits for 2018, 2019, and 2020 indicate compliance with federal programs.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

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; other evaluation items under ACCJC standards may address the same or similar subject matter. The peer review team evaluated the institution's compliance with Standards as well as the specific Checklist elements from federal regulations and related Commission policies noted here.

Public Notification of a Peer Review 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, Responsibilities, and Good Practice in Relations with 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:
Taft College provided opportunities for third-party comment in advance of the site team visit. Interested parties were notified through accreditation newsletters, the accreditation website and Board of Trustee public meeting agendas. Efforts were also made during participatory governance meetings to collect feedback. A series of meetings were held that addressed accreditation process and solicited community members for third party comments. The ACCJC did not receive third party comments.

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. (Standard I.B.3 and Section B. Presentation of Student Achievement Data and Institution-set Standards)
☒	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. (Standard I.B.3 and Section B. Presentation of Student Achievement Data and Institution-set Standards)
☒	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. (Standard I.B.3, Standard I.B.9)
☒	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. (Standard I.B.4)

[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:
The College has defined institution-set standards and stretch goals that are relevant to the institution for course completion, degree and certificate completion, and transfer. Job placement rates and licensure exam pass rates are established for relevant CTE programs. These standards and goals are developed through a participatory governance process and ultimately approved by

the Board of Trustees. The goals are relevant to the College's mission statement (IB). Student achievement data is collected by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning and are documented in the ACCJC Annual Report. Student performance is evaluated by programs through the Annual Program Review process. Ultimately, the Board of Trustees is presented with the institution's student performance.

Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

Evaluation Items:

☒	Credit hour assignments and degree program lengths are within the range of good practice in higher education (in policy and procedure). (Standard II.A.9)
☒	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). (Standard II.A.9)
☒	Tuition is consistent across degree programs (or there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition). (Standard I.C.2)
☒	Any clock hour conversions to credit hours adhere to the Department of Education's conversion formula, both in policy and procedure, and in practice. (Standard II.A.9)
☒	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.]

☒	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:
After reviewing the College catalog, website, and established curriculum policies and Administrative Procedure, Taft college applies good practice in higher education when assigning credit hours and determining program lengths. Classroom, lab, distance education classes, and clinical practice courses all adhere to established best practices. As evidenced in the course catalog and college website, tuition is consistent across degree programs and clock hour conversions to credit hours align with the Department of Education's conversion formula. Finally, College practices align with the Commission Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits.

Transfer Policies

Evaluation Items:

☒	Transfer policies are appropriately disclosed to students and to the public. (Standard II.A.10)
☒	Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to accept credits for transfer. (Standard II.A.10)
☒	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).] 668.9.]

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:

Taft College policies and information regarding transfer are available to students on the college website in the catalog and were reviewed by the team. Information is also provided to students through individual appointments with counselors. Through the established curriculum and general education committees' faculty members ensure transfer requirements are met. The articulation officer ensures agreements are met in accordance with the Common Course Numbering System.

Distance Education and Correspondence Education

Evaluation Items:

For Distance Education:	
☒	The institution demonstrates regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor.
☒	The institution demonstrates comparable learning support services and student support services for distance education students. (Standards II.B.1, II.C.1)
☒	The institution verifies that the student who registers in a distance education program is the same person who participates every time and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit.
For Correspondence Education:	
☐	The institution demonstrates comparable learning support services and student support services for correspondence education students. (Standards II.B.1, II.C.1)
☐	The institution verifies that the student who registers in a correspondence education program is the same person who participates every time and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit.
Overall:	
☒	The technology infrastructure is sufficient to maintain and sustain the distance education and correspondence education offerings. (Standard III.C.1)
☒	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.
☐	The college does not offer Distance Education or Correspondence Education.

Narrative:
The policies in place, specifically AP 4105, guide the College in creating infrastructure and compliance with the Commission's Policy on Distance Education. The College authenticates students through a Single Sign On portal, Cougar Tracts. Regular and substantive interaction is

evaluated through the timeline set out by the collective bargaining agreement utilizing a separate distance learning course evaluation form completed by the Distance Education Director. The team reviewed a random sample of DE courses and confirmed regular and substantive interaction within those courses. The College currently does not offer Correspondence Education courses.

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 seven 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. (Standard I.C.1)
☒	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:
The institution has clear policies in place for student complaints (BP/AP 5530). Students can access these policies in the online college catalog and Student Handbook. Student complaint files are housed in the Office of the Vice President of Student Services. Complaint files reflect the policy and forms made available to students online. The college website provides information and the process for filing complaints.

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. (Standard I.C.2)
☒	The institution complies with the Commission *Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment*, and *Policy on Representation of Accredited Status*.
☒	The institution provides required information concerning its accredited status.(Standard I.C.12)

[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:
The team finds that Taft College demonstrates compliance with regulation and commission policy by exhibiting integrity and responsibility in advertising, student recruitment, and representation of accredited status. The catalog and website provide information related to required policy elements and are made readily available to current and prospective students.

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. (Standard III.D.15)
☒	If applicable, 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. (Standard III.D.15)
☒	If applicable, 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. (Standard III.D.15)
☒	If applicable, 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. (Standard III.D.16)
☒	The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-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:
The College is in compliance with all Title IV requirements. The team reviewed audits for 2020, 2019, and 2018 and confirmed there were no findings of non-compliance with Title IV regulations. The College began participating in the Federal Student Financial Aid Direct Loan program in 2019/20, therefore they do not yet have a 3-year cohort default rate.

Standard I

Mission, Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness

I.A. Mission

General Observations:

Taft College shows intentional consideration of the mission in its processes and practices. The College uses qualitative and quantitative data to ensure that the College is meeting students' needs for broad educational goals, career and technical education and goals, transfer programs, and foundational courses. Taft College's mission emphasizes the college's dedication to career and technical education and supporting the employment needs of the community.

Findings and Evidence:

Taft College's mission describes the College's commitment to students seeking career technical education, transfer programs, and foundational programs. Statements of vision and values support the Mission Statement and amplify the College's commitment to an equitable learning environment. The mission explains the College's desire to serve the diverse students that live in the service area and describes the College's commitment to student learning, identifying that instilling a passion for learning can lead to success for all. (I.A.1)

Taft College has a robust data-driven outcomes assessment perspective and program review process to actively validate its own performance and accomplishments, including alignment with its stated mission. Taft College uses a variety of student success data to measure its effectiveness. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning publishes student demographics data, as well as course and program level student achievement data annually to be used in the development of program review. The Strategic Action Plan – developed from the Education Master Plan – provides a framework to align Annual Program Review Goals developed by academic programs and business units to the broader college mission. (I.A.2)

The team reviewed Taft College's website, mission documents, including values and vision, and found the College demonstrates an array of programs and services that are well-aligned with its mission. The Taft College mission statement provides the foundation for the Educational Master Plan, which, in turn, justifies academic programs, student services, and supports unit objectives and resource allocations. College programs and services develop mission statements to align programs with the overall college mission. The institutional goals developed in the Educational Master Plan are referenced by the program review process. Learning outcomes assessments which include plans for improvement are integrated into the College's planning structure. Program reviews are the mechanism by which programs and business units communicate their goals, objectives, performance, and resource requirements to the College leadership, participatory governance, and College stakeholders. The Annual Program Review process ensures that resources are directed to the College's mission priorities. (I.A.3)

The College publishes its mission with its vision and values statement in multiple places, including the president's page, college catalog, and Community News. The mission is reviewed each accreditation cycle. (I.A.4)

Conclusion:

The College meets the Standard.

I.B. Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness

General Observations:

Taft College shows documented evidence of assuring academic quality and institutional effectiveness through committee dialogues in all three constituencies across the college. There is additional analysis of student outcomes and planning in guided pathways and the development of institutional plans, such as the Student Equity Plan. The Office of Institutional Planning continuously provides student achievement data for review and programs are reviewed annually in the Annual Program Review (APR) process.

Findings and Evidence:

Taft College engages in ongoing, reflective, substantive dialog about student learning outcomes as evidenced by committee minutes, agendas, professional development strategies, the Strategic Action Plan (SAP), curriculum agendas, data measurement by established institution-set standards, and program reviews. The dialog demonstrates sustained attention to institutional effectiveness, student equity, and the continuous improvement of student learning and achievement. The team found that Taft College engages in broad evaluation and planning processes. (I.B.1)

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) are established for all courses and student support services, as evidenced by the sample course outlines of record, college catalog, program websites, and annual assessment reports. Taft College's outcomes assessment processes and data-driven outlook seem to facilitate a high degree of academic quality and institutional effectiveness. The college has a dedicated Office of Institutional Research and Planning (IR&P) to facilitate a timely data-driven continual assessment of its effectiveness, as well as an active continual review of SLOs using electronic data tools. Taft College holds fall and spring "SLO Day" workshops with training for faculty and staff to use SLOs, PSLOs, Institutional SLOs (ISLOs), and General Education SLOs (GESLOs). The College also shows good use of its participatory governance structure to facilitate annual review and assessment and adjudicate the equitable and effective allocation of resources. (I.B.2)

The team observed that Taft College establishes institution-set standards for student achievement to assess how well it is achieving them. The College, in pursuit of continuous improvement, engages in substantive dialog and evaluation in its college committees and publishes this information. The team reviewed Taft College's published institution-set standards (ISS) and found that they are appropriate to the content of the mission. The ISS are discussed in

Governance Council. The College measures and publishes achievement data annually on the website. (I.B.3)

The team confirmed that Taft College uses assessment data to support student learning and achievement. The College's integrated planning processes demonstrate that the systematic evaluation of all programs and services occurs to support improvements, implementation of modifications, and evaluation of changes for improvement. Participatory governance committees have access to data. Information is shared with internal and external stakeholders. The Board reviews the institution's quality measures. Program review allows internal stakeholders a chance for reflection on institutional quality. Program review is scheduled and occurs regularly. (I.B.4)

Taft College evaluates the goals stated in its mission through its program review, SLO and student achievement data, and the efficacy of its plans and goals. Quantitative and qualitative data are disaggregated for analysis by program type and mode of delivery. Taft College uses an online application, eLumen, to organize and track SLOs. All course SLOs are mapped to PSLOs and ISLOs according to a matrix implemented in eLumen. The Annual Program Review (APR) goals and objectives align with the SAP indicators, and the mission statement guides the SAP. (I.B.5)

The College uses eLumen and professionally accepted processes developed by the IR&P Office to disaggregate data by subpopulations of students. The IR&P Office provides disaggregated success rate data by section and by mode of instruction, as well as success rates based on an 80% rule, a standard metric to identify adverse impacts. Student support programs, including CalWORKs, DSPS, EOPS/CARE, and veterans services, offer specialized resources and support to certain subpopulations of students in need. These programs provide annual evaluations to show that their services help mitigate the gaps in outcomes and achievement for specific student groups. The Guided Pathways Oversight Taskforce developed a dashboard to identify where it could provide further support to increase the throughput of students, particularly among disproportionately impacted groups. The team found evidence that when gaps are identified, the College uses its APR process to allocate needed recourses. (I.B.6)

The team confirmed that Taft 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 their effectiveness in supporting academic quality and accomplishment of mission. The APR process results in an integrated planning model that is informed by the institution's policies and procedures and reviewed by the Governance Council. (I.B.7)

The team verified that the institution fully and thoroughly shares all of its assessments and evaluations and then plans accordingly for improvement. Taft College's website publishes the Student Learning Outcomes, the Program and Institutional SLOs, all of the Taft course SLOs, and a student's guide to SLOs. These items, communicated broadly, assure all the constituencies, students, and the community of the College's commitment to achieving the mission and providing quality academic programs (I.B.8)

The institution engages in a range of planning processes, included short-term goals through the SAP and in specific areas (such as the Student Equity Plan or Technology Master Plan), and long-term goals as described in the Educational Master Plan. The team confirmed the systematic evaluation and planning involved in these processes. The institution integrates program review, planning, and resource allocation into a comprehensive process and a separate evaluation by the Governance Council of that process. The comprehensive process is mission-driven and intwined with institutional effectiveness and academic quality. (I.B.9)

Conclusion:

The College meets the Standard.

I.C. Institutional Integrity

General Observations:

Taft College provides informative publications, such as the catalogue and the website, that are disseminated to the students, employees, and community as products of processes that ensure honesty, responsibility, and clarity. The catalog is updated annually as well as the college mission to ensure it accurately reflects the focus of the college and the services it provides to the students. The webpage accurately presents information about the college's accreditation, student support services, and all of its programs. The policies, procedures, and publications are regularly reviewed to ensure accuracy and integrity.

Findings and Evidence:

Taft College demonstrated to the team that the clarity, accuracy, and integrity of information is embedded in its processes. Information is primarily provided to students, personnel, and the public via two modes: the catalog and the website. Divisions, departments, and committees review information before it is disseminated College-wide and published on the website. Accreditation information relevant to current and prospective students, personnel, and the public is easily found on the website. Mission language is consistent throughout the College's materials. The Office of Instruction has processes in place to ensure the accuracy of information within published documents such as course outlines of record, catalog, website, and syllabi that pertain to educational programs and learning outcomes. Information related to counseling and other student support services is provided on the Support Program Services webpage and is maintained by the departments. (I.C.1)

The team found that students have access to an online catalog to find information about facts, requirements, policies, and procedures as required by the "catalog requirements." Student Services leads a review (with the participation of various departments) of an annual catalog update, which is published in the late fall. (I.C.2)

Taft College has a number of processes and tools in place to ensure that student learning outcome assessments and student performance data are cataloged and readily available for

interested stakeholders to evaluate. Student learning is assessed at the conclusion of each semester and results are housed in a data management system. Student learning outcome assessments are available at the course, program, and institutional level. Data related to student achievement (i.e. disaggregated course success rates and retention rates) are made available as well. Staff, faculty, and administration have multiple opportunities to discuss student outcomes and achievement data, including committee meetings and in-service workshops. Data is also made available to the public through the Office of Institutional Research and Planning. Further, the college seeks out opportunities to share information on student achievement publicly through meetings with interested community members. (I.C.3)

The team found that Taft College accurately describes its program awards (degrees and certificates) to the public through its website and catalog. Learning outcomes, course requirements, content, and objectives are consistent between materials. (I.C.4)

The Board engages in a process of adopting and revising policies and procedures on a regular basis. The Superintendent/President provides an annual update to the Board regarding the process and includes a review of all policies from the previous year. Publications, including the website are reviewed by the departments and programs they correspond to ensure that documents accurately represent the College's programs and services. (I.C.5)

The College catalog and website contains accurate information for current and prospective students regarding the cost of tuition, fees, and other expenses. Students can easily see additional costs such as lab fees through the Banner enterprise management system. The College also lists zero-cost instructional material on in the schedule. Costs associated with the specific programs such as the Dental Hygiene program are detailed on their web page. (I.C.6)

The College's board policy makes clear the College's commitment to academic freedom. Taft College's website and college catalog communicate this commitment and policy. Expectations of employee behavior, ethics, and responsibility are communicated through board policy and employee (faculty) handbooks. The Student Handbook details expectations of appropriate student behavior and responsibilities. (I.C.7)

Taft College expects employees to abide by an Institutional Code of Ethics which is codified in board policy. The team found that the policy requires honesty and integrity, accountability, and respect with a dedication to helping students make progress toward their academic goals. The team confirmed these policies apply to all constituencies and includes specifics relative to each, including student behavior, academic honesty and the consequences for dishonesty. (I.C.8)

The team found that Taft College has clear expectations that faculty distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views in a discipline. BP 3050 Institutional Code of Ethics and Faculty Handbook describe these expectations. Faculty evaluations include consideration of faculty presentation of data and information related to professionally accepted views (I.C.9)

Taft College is a public two-year California Community College. The team has confirmed that the college does not require conformity to a specific code of conduct. (I.C.10)

Taft College does not operate in any foreign locations. (I.C.11)

Taft College seeks to comply with accreditation standards and eligibility requirements. The College dedicated webpages to accreditation for public consumption and seeks to meet requirements of program accreditors. The team found that Taft College demonstrated compliance with accreditor timelines. The College publishes correspondence to and from the ACCJC to the college's accreditation website. (I.C.12)

Taft College describes itself in consistent terms to all of its accrediting agencies and communicates any changes in its accredited status to the Commission, students, and the public. The College publishes an Accreditation Newsletter to communicate the status with the campus and any information related to the current review. Taft College complies with federal mandates and the ACCJC standards and requirements. The Dental Hygiene program is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) and has current good standing (I.C.13)

The team found that Taft College is a public institution and does not generate returns for any parent organizations, investors, or external interests. There are policies and procedures related to conflict of interest which reflect the college's commitment to its mission over external organizations. The college's mission and policy framework demonstrate the college's commitment to student learning. (I.C.14)

Conclusion:

The College meets the Standard.

Standard II

Student Learning Programs and Support Services

II.A. Instructional Programs

General Observations:

Taft College offers instructional programs in a variety of modalities (online, face-to-face, hybrid, correspondence) aligned with its mission and at levels of quality and rigor appropriate for higher education. The team found the College has policies, procedures, and structures in place to develop, deliver, review, and improve the quality and effectiveness of courses and programs based on assessments of student learning outcomes and program learning outcomes. These processes are led by faculty experts and apply to all instructional programs. The College's degree programs incorporate general education designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry in keeping with its general educational philosophy.

Findings and Evidence:

Taft College course and program offerings in traditional, distance education, and correspondence education formats align with the College mission and are appropriate for two-year post-secondary education. The College maintains a longitudinal record by academic year of the number of degrees and certificates earned by students. (II.A.1)

Taft College faculty are involved in curriculum development for courses, programs, certificates, and degrees and ensure that course contact and methods of instruction meet professional and academic standards of higher education. The College follows clearly defined processes for curriculum review, peer evaluation, and annual program review. Discipline faculty review student learning outcomes and achievement data as part of the annual program review process and recommend plans for improvement as appropriate. The team notes the College has a particularly robust and impressive student learning outcomes assessment process that includes ongoing and regular faculty professional development and dedicated time for faculty to evaluate and discuss teaching methodologies and student performance. The annual program review process involves all college programs and modes of delivery and includes criteria to assess relevancy, appropriateness, achievement of learning outcomes, currency, and plans for the future. The process also includes analysis of student achievement outcome data (enrollment, success rates, withdraw rates, major and award counts) and student learning outcomes, consideration of the prior year plans or goals and student outcomes, and culminates in the development by discipline faculty of a plan for improvement. (II.A.2)

The team was particularly impressed by the comprehensive policies and processes which guide and structure faculty investment in program improvement. Through interviews and review of the annual program review (APR) process and distance education structure and practices, it was obvious to the team that the intentional design of the APR template to probe programs towards analysis and innovation encourages faculty to complete this comprehensive process on an annual

basis. The program review process embodies all that a program review should be, encouragement to introspect on programs, dream big about the future, and discover and examine the barriers preventing achievement of those programmatic dreams. Moreover, the commitment to excellence is also evident in the inclusion of a course observation by the distance education administrator as part of the faculty evaluation process, allowing an in-depth review, analysis, and consequent improvement of faculty members online courses. (II.A.2)

Taft College has a well-established procedure for establishing and assessing student learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates, and degrees which are aligned with institutional learning outcomes. All discipline faculty regularly participate in SLO planning days and new faculty participate in an SLO orientation. Student learning outcomes are included in the approved course outline of record for all courses and are the same regardless of instructional modality. Student learning outcomes and course outlines of record are posted and available online. Syllabi are provided for all courses and include the approved student learning outcomes, and the College has a process in place to verify that all students receive a course syllabus with outcomes from the courser outline of record. (II.A.3)

Taft College offers pre-collegiate courses in English and math and adult education. College policies and curriculum development processes ensure these courses are aligned with and follow prerequisites for college level curriculum and serve to support the successful transition into college level courses and programs. The college catalog clearly delineates pre-collegiate and college level courses by way of course numbering protocols and course sequencing is clearly described. (II.A.4)

Taft College follows practices common to American higher education in the offering of the institution's degrees and programs. The college catalog and website include information on credit hours and program requirements, and all associate degrees require successful completion of a minimum of 60 semester units. (II.A.5)

Taft College schedules courses for program and degree requirements in a manner that allows students to complete within a time frame that meets higher education expectations. The College uses data to evaluate the degree to which scheduling facilitates completion for the diversity of student needs. The College has successfully utilized time-to-completion data for planning and has realized improvements aligned with the College's Guided Pathways plan. (II.A.6)

Taft College uses data disaggregated by subpopulations to understand and reflect on the diverse and changing needs and learning styles of its students. The College makes use of various delivery modes, teaching methodologies, and learning support services in accordance with the College's mission. Courses are available in a variety of modalities, including face-to-face, online, hybrid, and "offline" (mainly correspondence courses with some in-person and hybrid modalities for student inmates when those programs were operational). Professional learning opportunities ensure faculty and staff currency in meeting changing student needs. Student learners are supported in-person, online and by phone. Students with disabilities are supported through the Disabled Student Programs and Services program, which also offers professional development for faculty and staff regarding this student population. The College has in place

policies, procedures, and processes for approving courses and programs for distance education/correspondence education, and ensuring those courses comply with federal definitions of distance education, including regular and substantive interaction with the instructor. The College's Student Equity Plan and Guided Pathways framework, provide data identifying disproportionately impacted students and guide improvement planning and modification of delivery modes, teaching methodologies and learning support services. Learning support services are equitable for DE/CE and transitional on-campus students. (II.A.7)

Taft College does not use department-wide course or program exams for entry. Some programs, including Dental Hygiene and Emergency Medical Technician, do associate student course pass rates as qualification for licensure examinations administered by state and national boards after program completion. The College offers College Level Examination Programs (CLEP) assessments for credits in a variety of introductory-level college courses. The College has established policies and procedures for credit for prior learning and protocols to ensure the use of unbiased, valid measures of student learning. (II.A.8)

Taft College awards course credit, degrees and certificates based on student attainment of learning outcomes. The College awarded credits consistent with institutional policies and are based on a standard Carnegie unit. The College demonstrates via course outlines of record and course syllabi that course-level passing grades on assignments/examinations link directly to students' achievement of learning outcomes, and that course credit is awarded based on students' achievement of learning outcomes. The College also demonstrates that achievement of program learning outcomes is the basis for awarding degrees and certifications. The College does not offer courses based on clock hours. (II.A.9)

Taft College has approved policies and procedures to address the transfer of classes from and to other institutions and communicated those to students in the Taft college catalog. The College has structures and processes to regularly review transfer of coursework policies and procedures. The College has developed a variety of transfer majors and articulation agreements for transfer to baccalaureate institutions, including associate degrees for transfer to the California State University. These majors are offered in disciplines where student enrollment has shown a need. (II.A.10)

Taft College has adopted institutional student learning outcomes in the areas of quantitative reasoning, communication, community/global consciousness, and responsibility and critical thinking. Departments and programs utilize curriculum mapping to align course SLOs to PSLOs and ISLOs. Course SLO assessment data is aggregated up through PSLOs and ISLOs, which eliminates the need for direct assessment of PSLOs or ISLOs. Based on interviews, the team confirmed that learning outcomes are not only regularly assessed, but results are being used in creative ways to inspire professional dialogue within disciplines and across disciplines or areas to drive program improvement. (II.A.11)

The team lauds the College for their long-standing and faculty-led commitment to the assessment of student learning, the structures, faculty and research staff who guide and support these efforts, and the ways in which assessment of student learning has been woven into the fabric of the College's institutional effectiveness processes, all of which have created the conditions for a rich

and evolving culture of inquiry and continuous improvement of the student learning experience. (II.A.11)

Taft College has articulated a general education philosophy which reflects its degree requirements and align with those of California State University, and University of California. This philosophy is listed in the college catalog and serves as the basis for inclusion of courses in general education pathway that include student learning outcomes in natural science, communication and analytical thinking, English composition, humanities, social and behavioral science, and ethnic studies. Students are also required to meet competency requirements in reading, written expression, mathematics, and ethnic studies, and courses in lifelong learning, American history and institutions, and information competency. (II.A.12)

Taft College degree programs include focused study on an area of inquiry or established interdisciplinary core. Each program of study includes courses requiring mastery of student learning outcomes and competencies relevant to key theories in the discipline. Successful achievement of course-level outcomes result in achievement of program-level outcomes. (II.A.13)

Taft College uses state and regional employment data with a local outlook for specific occupations to maintain currency of employment opportunities in all of its career-technical disciplines. Faculty experts and industry advisory committees review curriculum and industry standards to ensure currency of professional competencies and student learning outcomes, and revise curriculum as needed. The College website maintains current information of external requirements and other factors related to career-technical degree and certificate programs, including current information about employment opportunities. (II.A.14)

Taft College has Board approved procedures regarding program elimination, informed by the annual program review process. The College has a process by which enrolled students are able to complete their education in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption. The procedure for program elimination is clearly communicated to students with options provided to ensure they are able to complete their program. (II.A.15)

Taft College has a process to annually evaluate the effectiveness of its courses and programs. The criteria used in the annual program review process considers relevancy, appropriateness and achievement of student learning outcomes, program learning outcomes and institutional learning outcomes. Enrollment and student achievement data are used to guide modifications and improvements to courses and programs. All College programs, instructional and non-instructional, participate in the annual program review process. (II.A.16)

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

II.B. Library and Learning Support Services

General Observations:

The team affirmed Taft College supports student learning and achievement by providing library and other learning support services to students, faculty, and staff in support of educational programs. The Taft College Library houses print and media collections, study areas, an open computer lab and other learning technologies, as well as the Learning Support Center which offers tutoring and supplemental instruction. Library and learning support services are available online, in-person and by phone, and accessible to students regardless of location or means of delivery, including to those enrolled in distance education and correspondence education programs. The College relies on appropriate expertise of faculty, librarians, and other learning support professionals to select and maintain educational equipment and materials in support of student learning and achievement of the College mission. The College has policies and processes in place to regularly gather input from faculty, staff, and students to evaluate library and other learning support services assuring adequacy, currency, and impact of those services on student learning. The College takes responsibility for the quality, accessibility, security, maintenance, reliability, and effectiveness of all resources and services it provides.

Findings and Evidence:

The Taft College Library houses both the Library and the Learning Center. The library provides print and electronic collections, media collections, and serves as a research resource center for students and faculty with databases available 24 hours a day from all devices. The library provides ongoing instruction for use of its services for students, faculty and staff, textbook reserve, and a wide variety of library loan services including laptops, hotspots, and calculators. The Learning Center offers tutoring and supplemental instruction online and in-person, embedded and individual tutoring. Students are informed of these services in a variety of ways and tutoring is available days, evenings, weekends by appointment and drop-in. Learning technology is available in a campus computer lab, in classrooms throughout the campus and on loan. The College has ensured that library and learning support resources are available to those learning in other offsite locations. College policies, evaluation and usage data, and annual program review processes are regularly used to assess effectiveness and ensure learning support services meet the needs of its students. (II.B.1)

Taft College Library faculty and staff regularly review, develop, and maintain library resources, educational equipment and materials, learning support services, equipment, technology and learning spaces in collaboration with instructional faculty and other professionals to ensure these support student learning and achievement of the College's mission. Policies and processes, including the annual program review, are in place to assure the efficacy of that review. (II.B.2)

Taft College evaluates library and other learning support services to assure adequacy in meeting student needs and contribution to the attainment of student learning outcomes. Feedback from faculty and staff inform the annual program review analyses, identify what works and what needs improvement, and resources needed to improve student learning outcomes. Feedback from students is also provided by formal surveys and informal suggestions. Policies and procedures provide criteria for the development and maintenance of library holdings, and professional standards guide planning and decisions in support of the College's mission. The Learning Center

also conducts an annual program review and surveys students who utilize learning support services. (II.B.3)

Taft College subscribes to databases through the Council of Chief Librarians for California Community Colleges and ordered through the Community College League of California Consortia and maintains contracts with other sources for library and learning support services. These are regularly evaluated for quality assurance, reliability, and effectiveness. Annual assessments of usage data with faculty feedback determine whether a database needs to be replaced or promoted. A similar process is also used to assess Learning Center resources, including those offered online and on-demand. (II.B.4)

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

II.C. Student Support Services

General Observations:

The team found that Taft College has created a system of ongoing evaluation of all programs, including student support services through the established comprehensive Annual Program Review (APR) process. The College ensures all students have access to student support services, regardless of modality, through the implementation of online tutoring and counseling. With the implementation of Guided Pathways, counselors have been assigned to designated pathways further ensuring more targeted student support services. The college engages in the evaluation of these programs by using the CCSSE surveying tool as well as others completed by individual programs. Co-curricular and athletic programs are supported and regulated through a series of thorough Board Policies and Administrative Procedures.

Findings and Evidence:

The college regularly evaluates its student support services through its implementation of the CCSSE survey every three years and the Annual Program Review (APR) process. The College plans to work with the Institutional Research department to design instruments to measure satisfaction in a timelier manner. The APR is also utilized to align the services to the college mission. The college evaluates the services by modality through their comprehensive yearly APR process, through the responsible governance committee structures, or the individual departments such as is the case with the evaluation of online tutoring (NetTutor) or tutorial zoom sessions. (II.C.1)

Learning support outcomes are evaluated in the Annual Program Review each program must submit every year. The APR requires program reflection on assessment results and plan for assessments in the following year. Governance structures, such as the Academic Development Committee are utilized to evaluate some student services such as tutorial services. Informal weekly and monthly tutorial staff meetings provide anecdotal and qualitative evaluation

mechanism of services offered whereas more quantitative data is gathered through Tutor Trak data shared to institutional research department. (II.C.2)

All students have access to both the Learning Center and NetTutor. The Learning Center provides tutoring in a variety of disciplines both face to face and through online technologies such as zoom. The Distance Education department implements NetTutor integration in instructional Canvas shells available to all students through the course navigation menu. Students can request tutorial services through text messaging, the Remind app, calling the Learning Center, or walk-in. The online platform NetTutor delivers a satisfaction survey which is used to evaluate the quality of services by modality and is reviewed by the Distance Education Director. Students are able to submit an online request form for access to the student pantry resources which include food, hygiene, and clothes. Services are evaluated for equitable delivery through monitoring and evaluation by the responsible areas such as distance learning or counseling. Counseling services are also offered via multiple modalities. Through the counseling front desk students are able to make a face to or online zoom appointment with their pathway counselor. (II.C.3)

Through the Annual Program Review (APR) process the college determines if their co-curricular programs are appropriate for their mission and students. Student Life conducts an annual program review in which alignment of college mission is analyzed. In addition to the annual program review a student survey was sent out to students through Canvas. Based upon the student response the College now provides an ongoing link within the Canvas navigation for easy access to Student Life. The Athletics Department provides an exit survey to determine if the program meets its mission, which is aligned to the college mission through the APR process. A variety of board policies and administrative procedures are in place for Athletics and student clubs and organizations to ensure effective operation. (II.C.4)

The institution offers counseling and academic advising department services and they are evaluated through the APR process. The advising services provided through the meta major pathway have been developed and implemented. Students are able to see who their counselors are in their meta major through the college webpage and distributed fliers. The matriculation process is clearly delineated for students through a five-step numbering process found on their website as well as on published documentation. Through the monthly student services meeting and ongoing training for counselors provided through a variety of contexts including guest presenters at monthly meetings, the institution verifies that all disseminated information is accurate and counseling faculty and other advisors are prepared for their roles. (II.C.5)

Board Policies exist outlining admissions and concurrent enrollment requirements and processes for students. All policies and processes align with Taft College's mission. Board Policies and Administrative Regulations clearly and thoroughly outline the specific qualifications for students depending on admission status (SSSP, Concurrent Enrollment, Special Admit). Specific policies adhering to outside licensing regulations exist. The college has implemented Guided Pathways providing structural support for students to stay on the path towards completion. Counselors have been assigned to specific pathways to further support students in obtaining their educational goals. Degree Works, an online platform, is used by the college and allows students to see their course work completed and plan for future semesters. (II.C.6)

Through the admissions office's APR the College evaluates the effectiveness of the admissions processes. The college has a clear outline of placement processes, as well as special program placement requirements such as found with the dental program. (II.C.7)

BP 5040 ensures the College maintains students' records and privacy in accordance with federal and state laws. AR 5040 and 5045 direct the College in matters concerning student privacy. Banner and Laserfishe document are utilized by the college to store documents securely requiring VPN to access documents. The College established and utilized a process including electronic form request for the release of student records. (II.C.8)

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

Standard III

Resources

III.A. Human Resources

General Observations:

Taft College has board policies, administrative procedures, and collective bargaining agreements that govern all aspects of Human Resources. The College has procedures in place for the effective recruitment and hiring of employees. The College has an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) plan and screening committee members are trained in appropriate hiring practices. There are professional development opportunities provided for all employee groups and personnel records are kept secure.

Findings and Evidence:

Taft College assures the integrity and quality of its programs and services by employing administrators, faculty and staff who are qualified by appropriate education, training, and experience to provide and support these programs and services. The College's recruitment and hiring procedures are defined by BP 7100 and AP 7120. The team observed the procedures are current and the college recently reviewed the procedures in May 2020. Job descriptions include position duties, responsibilities, qualifications, and authority. The team reviewed the EEO training provided by the HR Department to screening committee members. The college has a process to track that screening committee members have been trained in appropriate hiring practices. (III.A.1)

For faculty positions, the College consults the *Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Educational Administrators in California Community Colleges* published by the Chancellor's Office when developing job descriptions. AP 7211 outlines faculty service areas, minimum qualifications, and equivalency processes. Job announcements include appropriate degrees. Faculty job descriptions include development and review of curriculum. Faculty job descriptions include "complete reports, grades, and outcomes of student learning within established guidelines" as a responsibility, the team interprets this to include the assessment of student learning. (III.A.2)

The team verified that the College has a process to ensure administrators and other employees responsible for educational programs and services possess qualifications necessary to perform duties required to sustain institutional effectiveness and academic quality. Job descriptions for educational administrators include duties, qualifications, and responsibilities of the position. (III.A.3)

Human Resources confirms that required degrees held by faculty, administrators and other employees are from institutions accredited by recognized U.S. accrediting agencies. There are

policies in place that define minimum qualifications and equivalencies. The team confirmed that job announcements include notice that degrees from non-U.S. institutions are recognized only if equivalence has been established by a certified transcript evaluation service. (III.A.4)

Taft College assures the effectiveness of its human resources by evaluating all personnel systematically and at stated intervals. Evaluation procedures are documented in policy and collective bargaining agreements. Classified employees are evaluated once per academic year per the Classified School Employees Association (CSEA) contract. Contract and adjunct faculty evaluations are defined in the Taft College Faculty Association Agreement. Management and confidential employees are evaluated annually per AP 7150. The team reviewed a sample Program Improvement Plan that is utilized when employee performance does not meet expectations of the position. The team reviewed evidence that evaluations are done on a regular basis. (III.A.5)

No longer applicable. (III.A.6)

The institution maintains a sufficient number of qualified faculty, which includes contract faculty and adjunct faculty, to assure the fulfillment of faculty responsibilities essential to the quality of educational programs and services to achieve institutional mission and purposes. The College defines a sufficient number based on local regulations and guidelines. (III.A.7)

The team verified that the College has employment policies and practices which provide for the orientation, oversight, evaluation, and professional development of adjunct faculty. The collective bargaining agreement for faculty includes faculty assignment and evaluation. The team reviewed the agenda for the orientation of adjunct faculty. Taft College provides opportunities for adjunct faculty integration into the life of the institution through involvement in a variety of committees, club advisor opportunities, professional development, senator representation in Academic Senate, division meetings, and participation in activities during the in-service weeks. (III.A.8)

The institution has a sufficient number of staff with appropriate qualifications to support the effective educational, technological, physical, and administrative operations of the institution. Taft College employs approximately 120 classified employees and ten confidential employees to meet the institutions' operational and support needs. Organizational charts were reviewed by the team. The annual program review process allows for additional positions to be requested and considered. (III.A.9)

The institution maintains a sufficient number of administrators with appropriate preparation and expertise to provide continuity and effective administrative leadership and services that support the institution's mission and purposes. Taft College employs 27 administrators to meet the institutions' operational and support needs. Organizational charts were reviewed by the team. The College maintains board policies regarding the employment of managers and administrators. The annual program review process allows for additional positions to be requested and considered. The College maintains job descriptions for each management position and bases job announcements on the job description. The college invests in developing the administrative team

through programs such as PALM (Program for the Advancement of Leadership of Managers), executive coaching and Leadership 101. (III.A.10)

The team confirmed the College has developed, maintained, and administered board policies and procedures regarding personnel matters that are publicly available on the college website. (III.A.11)

Through its policies and practices, the College creates and maintains appropriate programs, practices, and services that support its diverse personnel. The college uses its EEO plan and board policies to guide its efforts in providing equal employment opportunities throughout all programs. The College has comprehensive diversity and equity training programs. The institution regularly assesses its record in employment equity and diversity consistent with its mission. The team reviewed an annual report to the board that included demographic data of applicants and those hired. (III.A.12)

The college upholds a written code of professional ethics for all of its personnel, including consequences for violation. The team reviewed BP 3050 and confirmed this policy, along with other policies and procedures, contained the expectations of ethical behavior, due process, and potential consequences of a violation. Managers are regularly trained on unlawful discrimination, harassment prevention and other misconduct topics. (III.A.13)

The college plans for and provides all personnel with appropriate opportunities for continued professional development. The team reviewed the Professional Development Plan 2017-2018 to 2019-2020. The professional development goals in the plan are in support of the mission, vision, and strategic plan of the college. The college offers many professional development opportunities to all personnel and has a form for suggesting topics. The team found the example of emotional intelligence training to be impressive. The team noted that attendees of professional development opportunities are asked to complete satisfaction surveys upon completion. (III.A.14)

Human Resources maintains the security and confidentiality of personnel records in compliance with education and labor codes. Records are kept in locked cabinets. Each employee has access to their personnel records in accordance with law and collective bargaining agreements. (III.A.15)

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

III.B. Physical Resources

General Observations:

Taft College serves it's 2,445 students on a 39 acres site in Kern County. The campus provides a comprehensive range of facilities ranging from instructional, student support and administrative centers, to athletic fields, a learning resources center and on-site student dormitories for students with 12 or more units. Of the 150 rooms provided, 32 are allocated to the Transition to

Independent Living Program, to help students with developmental or intellectual disabilities prepare for living a productive and normalized lifestyle in the community.

The college will be celebrating 100 years at this location in 2022. Their Facilities Master Plan provides a comprehensive overview of their current facilities and plans through 2026, underwritten by a 2004 Bond Measure that provided $39.8M for facilities construction and renovation. That bond has to date facilitated construction projects totaling $77.45M. The team observed a strong, transparent, and well-integrated planning process which includes facilities planning and provides a participatory governance process for allocating facilities resources and future planning. The College's facilities planning process aligns with their Educational Master Plan, enrollment projections, land use, vehicular circulation, pedestrian circulation and the quality of campus life. The College participates in the State Chancellor's Office's facilities planning process and is subject to their review and guidance.

Findings and Evidence:

Taft College maintains a safe and secure campus that provides for the needs of its administrative, instructional, student services, operational, and student life requirements. The director of Facilities and Planning conducts an annual review and inventory of all facilities and reviews them for usage and efficiency. The college elicits the assistance of outside agencies, such as the California Community College Chancellor's Office's Facilities Planning Unit, the Foundation for California Community Colleges' Facilities Condition Assessment, and architectural firms to ensure there are safe and sufficient physical resources at all locations where it offers courses, programs, and learning support services. They use an online feedback form/service to collect constituents' safety concerns and respond accordingly, and the Campus Safety and Security Committee meets regularly to review college safety concerns and facilitate regular safety training for employees. The College's Facilities Master Plan, their integrated planning approach to facilities planning, and their proactive involvement with their constituents to gather feedback and improve performance, ensures that Taft College's facilities are constructed and maintained to assure access, safety, security, and a healthful learning and working environment. (III.B.1)

Taft College uses a comprehensive Facilities Master Plan, aligned with their college mission, Educational Master Plan, and constituent involvement, to maintain close touch with its college and local communities when planning facilities construction or improvement. They publicly publish their progress with the 2004 Measure A bond funds and show great pride in their campus and achievements in this regard. Their Facilities Master Plan has clearly stated outcomes and progress to date aligns well with prior planning documents. The team observed examples of large-scale facilities projects that align with the college mission and underwrite student success such as their solar power project and the completion of the new Student Center. (III.B.2)

The College's Facilities Committee meets monthly to discuss facilities and physical resources and they review the Facilities Master Plan annually for progress, efficiency, and alignment with college goals. In addition, their short-term facilities needs are incorporated into their Program Review planning processes, providing a method for constituents to request short-term facility resources to meet their immediate needs. The team observed that this combination of effective long-term planning with short-term agile responsiveness to immediate needs indicates that the

institution plans, acquires or builds, maintains, and upgrades or replaces its physical resources, including facilities, equipment, land, and other assets, in a manner that assures effective utilization and the continuing quality necessary to support its programs and services and achieve its mission. (III.B.2)

It is this high level of integrated long-term master planning combined with short-term agile and responsive addressing of facilities needs in a participatory process that assures the feasibility and effectiveness of physical resources in supporting institutional programs and services. The College has demonstrated that they seek feedback and assess their performance and progress, and adjust accordingly with broad participation and input, indicating that the institution plans and evaluates its facilities and equipment on a regular basis, taking utilization and other relevant data into account. (III.B.3)

The College actively analyzes total cost of ownership parameters for their campus facilities, in participation with outside architects, to assess utilities costs and facility efficiency. In this way the College develops long-range capital plans that support institutional improvement goals and reflect projections of the total cost of ownership of new facilities and equipment. (III.B.4)

Conclusions:

Taft College meets the Standard.

III.C. Technology Resources

General Observations:

Taft College provides a comprehensive range of professional technology services and expertise to support the operational, administrative, instructional and student support programs of the College. This level of service is supported by a well-thought-out and comprehensive Technology Master Plan that provides a clear and balanced roadmap through the year 2024.

Their Technology Master Plan shows solid integration with their Educational Master Plan and Strategic Action Plan and has resulted in IT resources allocation that maintains alignment with their college mission, vision, and values. The team observed that Taft College has invested in a planning process that includes broad community input and provides for the assessment and evaluation of results with which to inform further decisions. Their technology plans are reviewed annually, which contributes to a high level of transparency observed in their technology resource allocation processes. The College demonstrates a robust, current, and well-maintained technology infrastructure which would appear to be a direct result of their emphasis on planning and assessment.

The College provides clear and easy-to-comprehend policies and procedures for the provision and use of technology. They also provide training and professional development to reinforce those policies and to maintain the technology proficiency of their constituents. This is particularly evident in the information security training they provide employees.

Overall, the team was impressed by Taft College's integrated and detailed technology planning that aligns with clear and effective policy and procedure and provides ample opportunity for constituent participation and contribution. The team observed that the net result of this comprehensive approach and feedback assessment is a high level of community involvement with a well-written roadmap that addresses the College's short-, medium- and long-term technology needs.

Findings and Evidence:

Taft College provides technology services and support including the provision of hardware and software, communications technology, infrastructural applications, and network systems. Their services and expertise range from desktop support to enterprise-level data security and backup, maintenance, and operation of their Banner Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, support for their Canvas online Learning Management platform, and the provision of a fast and available high-bandwidth network backbone, among many additional technology services and resources. The College maintains a large inventory of technology equipment and an appropriately staffed department to support and maintain it. (III.C.1)

The College's annually reviewed Technology Master Plan provides clear information, budget projections, and a technology roadmap for constituents which, when combined with a high level of participation in their resource planning process, facilitates the College's provision of right-sized and appropriate technology facilities, hardware, and software to support the institution's management and operational functions, academic programs, teaching and learning, and support services. (III.C.1)

To maintain this infrastructure and level of service, the College provides a comprehensive planning and resource allocation process that ties program review to the identification and allocation of technology to meet the college needs. This, coupled with a strong participatory governance involvement through their Information Technology Committee (ITC), Distance Education department (DE), and the Office of Information Technology Services (ITS), shows clear evidence of institutional support through a comprehensive planning and review process that is data-driven and focused on assessment of, and learning from, outcomes and results. In addition to the College's comprehensive IT planning processes, they also use the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, along with robust data gathering to make informed decisions and review progress. They review their planning documents on an annual basis, providing many built-in opportunities for course correction and improvement. Taft College uses this data feedback with their strong planning processes and culture to ensure that the institution continuously plans for, updates, and replaces technology to ensure its technological infrastructure, quality, and capacity are adequate to support its mission, operations, programs, and services. (III.C.2)

The College provides an Information Technology Services (ITS) department of 11 employees (three hands-on tech support) to maintain reliable and secure IT infrastructure and services at all locations. In addition, the College procured the services of the California Community Colleges Tech Center to provide an outside assessment of both network security and online accessibility. The College's ITS department responded to and remediated concerns based upon the external

findings. In addition, the College has provided extensive IT security training opportunities for employees as well as incident simulations and examples to build a vigilant culture of security awareness. Furthermore, the College shows evidence of recent revision and alignment of district policies and procedures to align better with current best practices, and purchased additional technology tools to assist with online compliance assessment and review. Taft College has planned for and takes proactive steps to ensure that technology resources at all locations where it offers courses, programs, and services are implemented and maintained to ensure reliable access, safety, and security. (III.C.3)

The College provides technology training and support to faculty, staff, students, and administrators through professional development opportunities, such as in-person and online workshops and seminars offered by their ITS department (their High-Tech Access Specialist), Distance Education Department, and online professional development resources provided by outside vendors such as Keenan Safe Colleges, Degree Workshop training, and Ellucian Live Online 2020 (Banner). In addition, they provide numerous in-service workshops and regular training events to maintain their constituent's technology currency and awareness. Furthermore, their High-Tech Center provides training for students with special learning or accessibility needs in an environment where specialized training and equipment are provided. In these ways the institution provides appropriate instruction and support for faculty, staff, students, and administrators, in the effective use of technology and technology systems related to its programs, services, and institutional operations. (III.C.4)

The College provides clear and comprehensive Board Policies and Administrative Procedures, namely BP and AP 3720 (Computer and Network Use), that guide their constituents in the correct and appropriate use of college-provided technology and communications resources. Those policies and procedures were recently reviewed and updated to better align with current industry and educational best practices. The team observed these policies and procedures are published and freely available on the college website and are incorporated into other operational documents and manuals such as their Student Handbook. These policies, procedures are annually reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees to ensure that the institution has policies and procedures that guide the appropriate use of technology in the teaching and learning processes. (III.C.5)

Conclusions:

Taft College meets the Standard.

III.D. Financial Resources

General Observations:

Taft College has policies and procedures in place to effectively manage the finances of the college. The annual budget process integrates planning and budget with opportunity for all constituent groups to participate. The College has appropriate internal controls to ensure fiscal

integrity. Annual independent audits are conducted and any findings are appropriately addressed. The College manages its resources and has sufficient reserves to meet its mission and goals.

<u>Findings and Evidence:</u>

Taft College has an annual budget process that integrates its planning and budgeting. An annual Budget Development Calendar illustrates how local planning processes integrate into the state budgeting timeline. This calendar also details how the local Annual Program Review (APR) process informs the development of the annual budget. A balanced budget with prudent reserves provides evidence that financial resources are sufficient to support and sustain student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness. The College projects revenue out three years to ensure revenue trends are taken into consideration when determining future financial stability. (III.D.1)

The College has appropriate policies and procedures for budget development. BP 6250 sets an institutional general fund reserve target of 12%. AP 6200 sets the expectation that budget allocations will be in support of the college mission and the annual program review process. Financial information is discussed with all constituent groups through the Governance Council. The Governance Council reviews and prioritizes each department's annual program review goals and budget requests as they relate to supporting the mission and student learning. Funding allocation decisions are shared with the campus community at in-service events. (III.D.2)

All constituencies have opportunities to participate at multiple points in the development of institutional plans and budgets. Representation from faculty, administration, classified staff, and students make up the membership of the Budget Committee and Governance Council to ensure that all constituencies are included in the budget development process. (III.D.3)

Institutional planning reflects a realistic assessment of financial resource availability, development of financial resources, partnerships, and expenditure requirements. The 2019-2020 Adopted Budget clearly explained the assumptions upon which the budget was based. The narrative portion of the budget also provided information on the condition of the State budget, including out year considerations. The budget as presented was a balanced budget with a projected ending fund balance of 25.25%. The budget document included prior year fiscal information for comparative purposes. (III.D.4)

The team reviewed policies and audits to conclude the college has appropriate internal controls, policies, and procedures to ensure financial records support sound fiscal accountability and stability. Financial information is shared widely on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis. (III.D.5)

The team reviewed budgets and audits of the College. Assumptions are clearly defined in the budget. Recent audits had no findings and any prior year findings had been addressed. This review indicates the financial documents, including the budget, have a high degree of credibility and accuracy, and reflect appropriate allocation and use of financial resources to support student learning programs and services. (III.D.6)

The team reviewed prior year audits of the College. The College complies with annual external audit requirements. Audits are presented to the Board and are available on the college website. The College had an internal control finding in 2017-2018, took appropriate steps, and corrected the deficiencies to the satisfaction of the auditor by the 2018-2019 audit. This is evidence that the College responds to audit findings in a comprehensive and timely manner. (III.D.7)

The most recent financial statements, as of June 30, 2020, had no findings or questioned costs and received an unmodified opinion. The College qualifies as a low-risk auditee. The College also conducts internal audit evaluations to ensure financial and internal control systems are valid and effective. (III.D.8)

The College maintains prudent reserves which provide for sufficient cash flow and is available to address unforeseen financial emergencies. The College participates in the statewide association Statewide Association of Community Colleges (SWACC) Joint Powers Authority (JPA) for appropriate insurance coverage. (III.D.9)

The College has appropriate internal controls that provide for separation of duties in the awarding and disbursement of financial aid. The Taft College Foundation is included as a discretely presented component unit within the college audit. Budget managers are responsible for monitoring grant and categorical program expenditures. The results of the annual external audit are evidence that the college has effective oversight of finances. (III.D.10)

The team reviewed the annual budget to verify that the level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of both short-term and long-term financial solvency. The team also reviewed audits and documents showing the College plans for its Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB) liabilities. When making short-range financial plans, the institution considers its long-range financial priorities to assure financial stability. The institution clearly identifies, plans, and allocates resources for payment of liabilities and future obligations.

The team confirmed the College has policies and procedures that address debt and future obligations. The College's credit rating as determined by Standard and Poors has been stable. Long term debt obligations are budgeted for and disclosed in financial statements. (III.D.11)

The team confirmed that the actuarial plan to determine Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) is current and prepared as required by appropriate accounting standards. The College plans for and allocates appropriate resources for the payment of OPEB as evidenced by funding the actuarially determined annual liability for the past three years. (III.D.12)

The team reviewed budget and audit documents to confirm the College assesses and allocates resources for the repayment of any locally incurred debt instruments that can affect the financial condition of the institution. The team confirmed through interviews that the College has recently paid off the 2008 COP and has the debt service for the 2019 COP budgeted. (III.D.13)

The team reviewed audits to verify that all financial resources, including short- and long-term debt instruments (such as bonds and Certificates of Participation), auxiliary activities, fund-raising efforts, and grants, are used with integrity in a manner consistent with the intended purpose of the funding source. The team reviewed the 2019 audit for Measure A General

Obligation bonds and confirmed the audit had no findings or questioned costs. The Taft College Foundation is audited annually and is included in the district audit as a discrete component unit. (III.D.14)

The College began participation in the Federal Student Financial Aid Direct Loan Program in 2019/20, therefore the institution does not yet have a three-year cohort default rate. (III.D.15)

The College has board policies and procedures that address contractual agreements with external entities. College administrators are responsible for reviewing contracts to confirm they are consistent with the mission and goals of the institution. Per policy, contracts are not enforceable obligations until ratified by the Board. (III.D.16)

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

Standard IV

Leadership and Governance

IV.A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

General Observations:

The College has clear lines of communication in a carefully constructed governance system that outlines decision-making roles and processes. Decision-making begins with a data-informed Annual Program Review that provides the recommendations for implementing improvements to student learning. College and Academic Senate committees provide another avenue for suggesting changes for improvement. All constituencies, students, faculty, classified professionals, and managers, have opportunities to participate in the process. The Governance Council provides the vehicle to bring the various campus constituencies together. The Council's roles and functions are described in the Governance Guide. The Governance Guide and Board policies define the roles of the constituents and the processes which are followed. Decisions reached by the Governance Council are sent as recommendations to the president who works with the Board to effectively lead the College in a consensus-based model.

The team was impressed by the clarity and transparency of decision-making roles and processes, as reflected in board policy, administrative procedure, committee structure, and the Governance Guide. These documents provide the scaffolding for activities in support of student success. Through regular evaluation and improvement in the Annual Program Review and committee charters, the college has created a data-informed process clearly tied to its strategic goals. This environment welcomes innovation and collaboration.

Findings and Evidence:

The College's leadership and planning structure is built upon clear lines of communication. This process is visualized in an easy-to-follow diagram. These processes allow all constituent groups a place and voice within the institution. The transparent structure encourages innovation and excellence, giving individuals and groups an on-ramp into college conversations. This is particularly evident in the relationship between the Annual Program Review (APR), college committees, and the Governance Council. The APR and college committees are the primary vehicles for surfacing innovation and improvement. In a data-informed process, interests rise to the Governance Council where they are carefully considered and then disseminated back to college community through constituent groups. Requests are formally documented with specific analytics of planning goals as they relate to approved institutional plans. Processes allow for input and suggestion through to final recommendations to the President by the Governance Council. The College relies heavily on collective participation and decision-making. Documenting and tracking institutional improvements assist in further assessment of individual program improvements. The college administration refers to prioritized recommendations to cross reference resources in an effort to make the most effective choices to positively impact the College overall. Analysis of the cost and benefit of the program/procedure occurs once a request is approved and put into action. (IV.A.1)

Board Policy and Administrative Process 2510 clearly defines each constituency groups' responsibilities within their governance hierarchy. Each constituency has an avenue for representation, such as the Academic Senate, which operates as a committee of the whole. Students formally participate in this process with seats on the college and Senate committees, such as the Curriculum and General Education Committee, as well as the Governance Committee. A student trustee participates on the Board of Trustees as a non-voting member. Governance Council minutes show a strong interest in student participation. Students also have informal opportunities to engage with institutional discussions with events such as "Pizza with the President." (IV.A.2)

Administrators and faculty have multiple opportunities to participate in governance at the College. Individuals participate in decision-making beginning with their program and committee membership. The Governance Guide and regular reviews of committee charters further delineates the relationships of individuals to the college community. Beginning with the Annual Program Review and moving through to the Governance Council, the College supports student learning programs and services. Administrative Policy, committee charters, and governance guidelines provide the necessary policies and procedures to support these processes. (IV.A.3)

Beginning with faculty leadership (division chairs) and moving through defined structures to the Board of Trustees, the College has developed processes to support curriculum. If needed, faculty also have the opportunity to go directly to the Board to represent their interests. (IV.A.4)

The College uses identified documentation and processes to guide decision-making. The College relies on the expertise of its faculty and staff within this process. This allows ease in understanding processes while keeping decisions around curriculum and planning open to the needs of college constituencies while providing for timely action. (IV.A.5)

Decision-making at the College occurs within clear processes in administrative procedure and board policy. The policy title, "Participation in Local Decision-Making," highlights the multiple opportunities for all constituent groups to help shape the College. The Governance Council brings groups together; its minutes are available on the website and shared by individual members with their respective constituencies. A Board Brief written by the Superintendent/President informs the college community of Board of Trustees decisions. Each constituent group is also represented by a specific body, such as the Academic Senate and Associated Student Organization. (IV.A.6)

The College participates in an annual review and evaluation of its committee charters, realigning as needed. The review is incorporated into Governance Council discussions. Recommendations are then shared back to committees and constituency groups through minutes on the website and representatives of constituencies. Governance Council minutes reflect discussions of committee names, membership, and charter responsibilities at both the committee and college-level, illustrating evaluations are used as basis for improvement. The Governance Guide is regularly referenced and went through a comprehensive review in 2016. (IV.A.7)

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

IV.B. Chief Executive Officer

General Observations:

The Superintendent/President (S/P) has the primary responsibility for effective leadership, planning and assessing institutional effectiveness. The team observed that the Superintendent/President guides institutional improvement, sets Institutional Set Standards, and follows the Strategic Action Plan and Program Review process to link resource allocation with program and strategic planning. The Superintendent/President is charged with the implementation of Board policies and administrative procedures. The College is administered through the Superintendent/President who delegates operational decisions to staff to manage the College. Under the direction of the (S/P), the Office of Institutional Research and Planning regularly examines research on student learning and provides this information with the campus community. Accreditation at Taft College is supported by the S/P. In addition, the S/P is active in campus and college committees as well as community organizations. By policy and practice, the Superintendent/President regularly communicates with the College as a part of a leadership team. An excellent example of this transparency and collaboration is an open forum called "Ask an Administrator."

Findings and Evidence:

The Superintendent/President is the CEO of the College, and these responsibilities are described in BP/AP 2430. The S/P has the primary responsibility for the quality of instruction, budgeting, providing effective leadership for the College and recommending all hires to the Board of Trustees. To guide these decisions, the Superintendent/President relies on evidence from the Annual Program Review, prioritized by strategic goals. For example, faculty positions are processed through the Academic Senate and Classified positions are processed through the Classified group; non-personnel resource requests are processed through the Governance Council for scoring and ranking. The recommended requests for funding are sent to the Superintendent/President for approval based upon the availability of resources. (IV.B.1)

The College is administered through the Superintendent/President who delegates operational decisions to appropriate staff to manage the college through established policies and procedures. The S/P communicates to the leadership team through weekly meetings with the Vice-Presidents, bimonthly meetings with the senior leaders in the Cabinet, and participation on the Governance Council. (IV.B.2)

The Superintendent/President supports collegial processes defined in Board Policy and Administrative Process. The S/P utilizes a variety of mechanisms to communicate broadly with the campus. Monthly, the S/P communicates issues and events of the College to the BOT and shares a newsletter to employees of the district. At least once a semester, the S/P holds constituency information sessions called, "Ask an Administrator" where employees submit questions, and administrators answer them in an open forum style meeting. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this arena was moved online and offered more often to keep all constituent groups informed and engaged as the campus transitioned to remote learning. This method of

communication followed campus policies on civility while also opening the conversation for interaction. The S/P also meets individually with employees to learn what is working and what could be improved on the campus. (IV.B.3)

The Superintendent/President provides authority to the Office of Institutional Research and Planning (IR&P) to provide data and help support its analysis. The S/P delegates goal setting to IR&P and the Strategic Planning Committee. A data-informed program review process allows all areas of the College to evaluate and document the needs of the College and recommend improvements. All program review requests are reviewed and prioritized according to institutional goals. The Governance Council, co-chaired by the S/P, serves as the recommending body for planning, organizing, budgeting, and assessing institutional effectiveness. The Governance Council is the primary participatory governance body at the College. (IV.B.3)

Led by the Superintendent/President, the College has developed a clear process to meet the needs of accreditation. The Vice President of Information and Institutional Effectiveness serves as the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). The ALO and the Superintendent/President co-chair the Accreditation Steering Taskforce where representatives from each constituency meet to guide the ISER progress and the processes related to accreditation. (IV.B.4)

All Administrative Policies (AP) or Board Policies (BP) on academic and professional matters follow collegial consultation with the Academic Senate, and policies on working conditions follow collegial consultation with the affected employee union or employee group. Administrative Policies (AP) and Board Policies (BP) on administrative matters include the Superintendent/President and senior leadership recommendations. The Budget Committee is responsible for evaluating, developing, and recommending policies and procedures related to budget planning and its link to all aspects of the College's finances. The Budget Committee includes all constituency groups and reports to the Governance Council, co-chaired by the Superintendent/President. (IV.B.5)

External communications include speaking regularly at civic clubs, participating in regional groups and events, and leading, as a member of several Boards of Directors, such as the Taft Chamber of Commerce and the Kern Economic Development Council. Additional community events include the "Legislator Update," the "Annual Report to the Community Breakfast," and community member advisory lunches. The team reviewed the College's internal and external communication processes which highlighted how the College provides updates to the campus community through newsletter and the community at large during annual community presentations. (IV.B.6)

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

IV.C. Governing Board

General Observations:

The governing board has authority over and responsibility for policies of the institution which is clearly described in board policy. The Board of Trustees acts according to its established policies and procedures. In executing that responsibility, the Board is committed to its obligation to ensure that appropriate members of the District participate in developing recommended policies for Board action and administrative procedures for the Superintendent/President's action under which the District is governed and administered. The Board holds an annual retreat each year and conducts a self-evaluation, set college priorities, evaluate the Superintendent/President, and receive topical presentations and training.

The Board has established policies that are consistent with the College's mission. The Board reviews the College's educational programs as part of its authority given through Board policy. The Superintendent/President of the College executes policies and procedures and provides oversight to the needs of the operations of the College. The Board delegates full responsibility and authority to the Superintendent/President and has established a strong working relationship. The processes and procedures defined in policy and procedures have been working effectively. The team observed this through interviews with the Superintendent/President and through a review of Board meeting minutes.

Findings and Evidence:

The team reviewed the Board policies (BP2200) which outlines the Board of Trustees responsibilities and includes establishing policies and setting prudent, ethical, and legal standards for college operations. The Board hires and evaluates the Superintendent/President and delegates power and authority to the Superintendent/President to effectively lead the district, assure fiscal health and stability, monitor institutional performance and educational quality and to advocate for and protect the district. (IV.C.1)

BP4020 describes the role of the Board of Trustees who has oversight and approval for all new and discontinued programs and the oversight for individual degree applicable credit courses offered as part of a permitted educational program. Additionally, the Board maintains authority over the Budget process in BP6200, BP6250, and BP6300. The Superintendent/President is responsible for the budget preparation, budget management, and fiscal management of Taft College. The Board receives a quarterly report showing the financial and budgetary conditions of the district. The budget management processes are clearly outlined in how the Board handles major expenditures and transfers from the College's reserve funds. The Board receives presentations on the budget (tentative and final) and provides public hearings per applicable laws. (IV.C.1).

BP2510 outlines process for the Board of Trustees in their oversight of the participatory processes within the district. The Board hears recommendations from the constituencies of the College and makes the final decision after receiving the necessary input. A review of Board meeting minutes shows Board members act in support of final decisions. (IV.C.2)

BP2431 describes a fair and open process in compliance with regulations in the case of a vacancy of the Superintendent/President position. During the most recent vacancy the Board used a presidential search firm who conducted the search. The Board of Trustees has a regular

annual evaluation process for the Superintendent/President that is outlined in BP2435. An evaluation instrument was developed and has been used consistently in the evaluation of the Superintendent/President, recently updated to include performance goals and objectives related to the district's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. These goals are presented to the Board of Trustees. (IV.C.3.)

The team confirmed BP 2715, Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice, provides guidance for the Board to act as an independent, policy-making body reflecting the public interest. (IV.C.4)

Taft College's governing board establishes policies consistent with the college's mission to ensure the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them. The Board regularly reviews the College mission, vision, and core values and approves revisions. The mission, vision, and core value statements were reviewed by the campus, confirmed by the Governance Council, and approved by the Board of Trustees. A review of the minutes from Board meetings demonstrates how the governing board regularly reviews key indicators of student learning and achievement and institutional plans for improving academic quality through updates from the college administration. Student performance data is included in the Strategic Action Plan and other college plans reported to the Board of Trustees, i.e., Student Success Score Card. Additionally, campus tours are arranged of different areas every two months where board members visit the facilities and learn about activities and purpose of the area. (IV.C.5)

Recently, the governing Board has made a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) through its self-evaluation process and the evaluation of the Superintendent/President. In April 2021, the Board passed a resolution in support of DEI work and has declared every April as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Awareness month. (IV.C.5)

Board bylaws and policies are easily accessible on the Taft College website. The Board consists of five voting members and a non-voting student member. Taft College's board policies and procedures specify their duties, responsibilities, and operating procedures such as Board evaluations, the election of Board officers, and Board meetings (IV.C.6).

The Board acts in a consistent manner with its policies and bylaws and engages in a process of adopting and revising policies and procedures on a regular basis based upon a review of Board minutes. The College uses the Community College League of California's (CCLC) legal service and an internal review to maintain compliance. The Superintendent/President provides an annual update to the Board regarding the process and includes a review of all policies from the previous year (IV.C.7)

The Board engages in the review of key performance indicators for student learning and institutional plans. The Taft College Strategic Action Plan is presented on an annual basis and includes the integrated planning process, a data dashboard review of data with leading and lagging indicators and a comparison of peer institutions. (IV.C.8)

The Superintendent/President meets individually with new board members to review the mission, vision, and core values, the Strategic Action Plan, the budget, and college information. The

Superintendent/President joins new board members for a statewide training. Board members also attend state or national trustee conferences as a group where they participate in conference information sessions. A schedule of conferences attended by the Board of Trustees outlines the name of the conferences and the participating individuals. The Board has annual retreat and planning sessions which are conducted around areas of the Strategic Action Plan and board goals. Campus leadership (vice presidents and executive directors) provide regular presentations to the board to inform and instruct them on areas of the institution. The continuity of membership and staggered terms of office are outlined in BP 2100 Board Elections. (IV.C.9).

The governing board regularly evaluates its practices and performance, including full participation in board training, and makes public the results. The results are used to improve board performance, academic quality, and institutional effectiveness. An annual Board of Trustees self-evaluation is performed per BP2745 and is reviewed during the planning retreat. The outcomes of the Board goals are reviewed and discussed by the senior leadership team. The Board also added to their evaluation that the criterion for the Board self-evaluation shall also include performance goals and objectives related to the districts and Board's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. (IV.C.10)

All Board members file an annual economic interest form, each declaring that they are not owners of the institution per AP2712. The Board has a clear policy for dealing with behavior that is in violation of its code and implements it as appropriate. None of the Board members have employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interests in the institution. (IV.C.11)

Taft College's Board Policy 2430 Delegation of Authority says, "the Superintendent/President shall be responsible for reasonable interpretation of board policy." Administrative Policy 2410 Board Policies and Administrative Procedures gives the Superintendent/President the authority to establish Administrative Policies as needed to carry out the direction of the board policies. The team observed that the Superintendent/President is responsible for the operation of the College and is held accountable by the Board of Trustees. (IV.C.12)

According to BP3200 the Taft College Board of Trustees receives regular updates on accreditation processes at the College. All reports sent to the ACCJC are reviewed by the Board and the Board has included a goal on upholding accreditation principles as one of its continuing Board goals and is reviewed annually. Additionally, training sessions on accreditation at state and national conferences are attended by Board members. (IV.C.13)

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

Quality Focus Essay

The College stated that the primary goal of the Quality Focus Essay (QFE) is implementing a plan to address diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) through a series of projects. The four primary projects are a curriculum and syllabus audit, comprehensive outreach efforts, the administration of a DEI survey, and offerings of professional development (PD) resources. The College identified a pre-post evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of the projects. Effects on enrollment, course success, and measures of engagement were the primary outcomes identified in the essay to be used for the evaluation. The College identified an action plan with 13 specific activities that outlined responsible constituencies or committees and gave a timeline for intended completion.

The team acknowledges the College's identification of DEI work as being of central importance. The College's efforts are aligned with the state-wide call by the California Community College Chancellor's office (CCCCO) to "enact policies and procedures that will dismantle systemic racism and advance diversity, equity, and inclusion."

The team also recognizes that the efforts outlined in the QFE suggest a first step approach which still includes evaluating and establishing committees, goals, and activities. Given the nascent stage of these efforts, linking the outlined DEI efforts to student success, levels of engagement, or enrollment might be premature, and seeing a positive impact on equity gaps may be difficult to confirm.

The team would like to highlight the practice of the cultural curriculum audit. If this audit results in instructional and curricular changes, this approach might hold the most promise of changing the experiences and outcomes of students in the classroom. The team also commends the inclusion of DEI and anti-racist objectives in the board policies on board self-evaluation and evaluation of the superintendent/president (BPs 2200, 2435, and 2745).

The team encourages the College to continue on the path of evolution and push forward with high-impact, large scale activities to address the needs identified. Here are some specific suggestions for the College to consider:

1. Strengthening alignment of the integrated DEI plan to the College's mission, strategic plan, and other planning documents.

2. Outside of the introduction, the team observed very few objectives, activities, or projects that mention Latinx or any other specific racial identity of students. Identifying specific student groups is important to addressing the systemic racism and racial opportunity and equity gaps that these students may experience and tailor the activities or structural changes directly to those experiences.

3. The QFE does not reference any data that is already available such as enrollment rates, success rates, English and math achievement rates, completion rates, or any internal data. The surveys mentioned in the QFE will provide needed detail and nuance, but available

data sources can already be used to establish baseline data, to compare to other colleges, to identify disproportionately impacted (DI) groups, to develop profiles of specific student enrollment groups, and to offer insights into potential targets or benchmarks the College would like to achieve.

4. Assess progress with clearly identified metrics in order to document and validate when the College has reached desired benchmarks.

5. The recent report from the USC Race and Equity Center's evaluation of current faculty Professional Development opportunities may be a helpful resource to consider how PD opportunities at the college can be structured to serve the stated DEI goals.

6. Expand the well-established Annual Program Review process to include disaggregated data, links to the DEI plan and goals, results or goals from the curriculum audit, and program-level analyses of disproportionately impacted students within the program.

References the team has found helpful in conducting DEI work:

Review and recommendations of equity plans: Chase, Felix, & Bensimon (2020). California Community College Student Equity Plan Review: A focus on racial equity. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5eb5c03682a92c5f96da4fc8/t/600f48b93e23721b6ca72efa/1611614397014/CCC+Equity+Plan+Review_A+Focus+on+Racial+Equity.pdf%5B47%5D.pdf

Review and recommendations of professional development offerings: Hernandez-Hamed, Chase, & Bensimon (2021). Delivering on the promise of progressive Policy. https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3Ascds%3AUS%3Ad6d93351-4a82-41af-a9dd-c052a0fb0682#pageNum=1

Transfer-level Gateway Completion Dashboard: https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Educational-Services-and-Support/transfer-level-dashboard

Student Success Metrics Dashboard: https://www.calpassplus.org/Launchboard/Student-Success-Metrics-Cohort-View