FOLLOW-UP VISIT EVALUATION REPORT

ANTELOPE VALLEY COLLEGE
3041 WEST AVENUE K
LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA 93536

A CONFIDENTIAL REPORT PREPARED FOR
ACCREDITING COMMISSION
FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited Antelope Valley College on November 19, 2008.

RANDAL LAWSON, CHAIR

EVALUATION TEAM

RANDAL LAWSON, CHAIR
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, SANTA MONICA COLLEGE

DR. VOIZA ARNOLD
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AND SPEECH, RIO HONDO COLLEGE

On November 19, 2008, a two-person team conducted a visit to Antelope Valley College to validate the Follow-Up Report submitted by the College on October 15, 2008. Both team members had been part of the team for the Antelope Valley College 2004 comprehensive visit, and the chair had also participated in a 2006 Progress Report visit.

The team found the College to be very well prepared for the visit. The Follow-Up Report was clear, focused, and well written. College staff provided excellent assistance to the team chair in planning and organizing interviews, meetings, and access to both printed and electronic documents to ensure the most productive and efficient use of limited time.

In the course of the visit, team members met with more than twenty individuals—including the Accreditation Co-Chairs; the Board of Trustees President and Vice President; the Superintendent/President; the Vice President, Academic Affairs; the Vice President, Student Services; the Vice President, Business Services; the Interim Vice President, Human Resources; the Academic Senate President and President-Elect; the Enrollment Management Committee Faculty Co-Chair; Academic Policies and Procedures Committee representatives; the Strategic Planning and Budget Council Co-Chairs and subcommittee co-chairs; the Director, Institutional Research; the Program Review Coordinator; and the Student Learning Outcomes Committee outgoing and incoming Co-Chairs and Academic Policies and Procedures Committee Liaison. (Some individuals fulfill multiple roles.) Team members also attended a portion of a College Coordinating Council meeting, held a well attended forum open to all members of the college community, and conducted a brief classroom observation.

With its acceptance of the Antelope Valley College midterm report submitted October 8, 2007, the Accrediting Commission required the College to prepare a Follow-Up Report demonstrating resolution of three recommendations that emanated from the 2004 comprehensive visit:

> Recommendation #1: *The college must develop a complete blueprint for planning that includes a review of the mission statement, and the research, planning, and evaluation process and ensure clear communication of these processes to faculty, staff, and the community.* (Standards I.A.3, I.B, I.B.3, I.B.4. I.B.6)

> Recommendation #3: *The college must develop and implement student-learning outcomes for all its courses, programs, services, and for the institution as a whole while linking the outcomes to planning and the budgeting process. Equally important, the college must develop mechanisms for measuring those outcomes and commit to using the findings to improve student learning for its diverse students.* (Standards I.B, I.B.3, II.A.1c, II.A.2a, II.A.2d, II.A.2e, II.A.2f, II.B.3, II.B.4, II.C.2)

> Recommendation #6: *The Board must review and develop (1) personnel policies and procedures, including but not limited to recruitment, hiring, labor relations,*

classification, compensation, benefits, and staff development and training; (2) participatory governance policies (Board Policy 2051) with an eye to incorporate a directive to include data, both qualitative and quantitative, in participatory governance planning and decision making; and (3) program review (Board Policy 5041) to incorporate data-driven analysis. Furthermore, program review reports must be prepared on a regular cycle, and the report findings and recommendations must be disseminated campuswide. Report recommendations must be actively incorporated into campus planning and decision making to enhance student learning. (Standards III.A.3, I.B.3, II.A.1a, IV.B1b)

The purpose of this report is to evaluate Antelope Valley College's resolution of the issues reflected in each of these three recommendations through evidence gathered in the review of the Follow-Up Report and the subsequent team visit.

Recommendation #1: *The college must develop a complete blueprint for planning that includes a review of the mission statement, and the research, planning, and evaluation process and ensure clear communication of these processes to faculty, staff, and the community.* (Standards I.A.3, I.B, I.B.3, I.B.4. I.B.6)

Since the midterm report, the College has been productively engaged in efforts to strengthen and institutionalize the planning process. Central to these efforts have been the commendable contributions of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, both in producing data and in communicating its importance in effective institutional planning. Team members found participants in the planning process to be not only cognizant of the value of research in planning, but genuinely enthusiastic about recent successful data-driven planning experiences.

The College's planning process revolves around the Educational Master Plan, which includes strategic goals based upon the Institutional Learning Outcomes, program review data, and accreditation recommendations. Other major planning documents, such as the Technology, Human Resources, Facilities, Finance, and Enrollment Management plans, are derived from the Educational Master Plan. The Human Resources and Finance plans, which were pending at the time of the midterm report, have now been completed. The Strategic Planning and Budget Council, the central planning body, has developed a useful graphic illustrating the relationship to the Educational Master Plan of not only these five major planning documents, but also related planning documents such as the Communication/Marketing, Student Equity, Basic Skills, Matriculation, and Equal Employment Opportunity plans. This chart was used to create an informational brochure "Strategic Planning at Antelope Valley College," which has been disseminated to the college community. Team members observed a general awareness and basic understanding of the planning process during the visit.

The Strategic Planning and Budget Council conducts an annual review of the Educational Master Plan, which includes a review of the college mission. The 2008 review resulted in a revision of the mission statement to incorporate the Title 5 definition of Basic Skills Courses. (This was in response to a recommendation that originated in the Basic Skills Committee.) The annual review of the Educational Master Plan provides direction for the allocation of resources. The College has now experienced several cycles of the Strategic Planning and Budget Council process of reviewing budget augmentation requests and making recommendations based upon institutional learning and operational outcomes and program review data. This process has been enriched by the recent adoption of standardized program review data for instructional programs.

An important milestone in the development of a data-driven planning process was its recent use in making a crucial institutional decision. Through analysis of the College's growth and its effect upon apportionment by the SPBC Budget Subcommittee and the Enrollment Management Committee, it was determined that the College would exceed its fundable growth for 2007-2008 and that over cap growth would probably not be funded. This resulted in a discussion of shifting some Summer 2007 FTES to the 2006-2007 fiscal year. Based upon fall 2007 enrollment data, the Office of Institutional Research made enrollment projections for the winter and spring terms, and a recommendation to shift 400 FTES was approved and implemented. This resulted in an

addition of $2.6 million in revenue for the College. Although hindsight would have allowed for a larger shift because actual enrollment exceeded projections, all participants interviewed by team members seemed satisfied with both the data-driven process and its outcome.

Conclusion:
The College has now satisfied this 2004 recommendation and has moved beyond the awareness level expressed in the recommendation well into the development level. The progress toward a data-driven institutional culture in a relatively short period of time is quite impressive. However, it is imperative for the College to continue to build upon these commendable efforts with the same intensity as it works toward proficiency and sustainable continuous quality improvement in institutional planning.

> **Recommendation #3:** *The college must develop and implement student-learning outcomes for all its courses, programs, services, and for the institution as a whole while linking the outcomes to planning and the budgeting process. Equally important, the college must develop mechanisms for measuring those outcomes and commit to using the findings to improve student learning for its diverse students.* **(Standards I.B, I.B.3, II.A.1c, II.A.2a, II.A.2d, II.A.2e, II.A.2f, II.B.3, II.B.4, II.C.2)**

The College has made steady and solid progress toward addressing this recommendation. In 2005-2006, the College developed and approved Institutional Learning Outcomes, which are now central to the planning and budget process through the annual review of the Educational Master Plan. This process includes assessment of planning recommendations and expenditures to determine their relationship to the Institutional Learning Outcomes. An annual survey to assess student opinion regarding the six Institutional Learning Outcomes is being refined to be distributed to a larger sample size than that used for an inconclusive spring 2008 effort.

To date, Student Learning Outcomes have been established for approximately 93% of existing courses. During fall 2008, faculty began to collect and analyze assessment data for approximately one-third of these courses. They will submit their data to the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, and that office will compile for them reports that analyze the numbers of students achieving the stated student learning outcomes. Faculty will use these reports for discussion and analysis and develop corrective action plans for areas in which there are problems. Results will also be incorporated into both the formal program review process and a yearly summary document that will indicate any corrective actions that need to be taken and document requests for personnel and equipment to support these efforts. The summary document will be used by the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee in developing recommendations about resource allocation. The College is working with a web-based program called WEAVE to facilitate the entering of Student Learning Outcomes assessment data and the accompanying analysis. The goal of the College is to make this a user-friendly process.

During spring 2008, the Student Learning Outcomes Committee discussed the need to address Program Learning Outcomes. This resulted in a decision to use the Title 5 definition of educational program:

> *an organized sequence of courses leading to a defined objective such as a degree, a certificate, a diploma, a license, or transfer to another institution of higher education*

Using this definition, faculty are determining whether they have a "program" in their area and what Program Learning Outcomes might be appropriate. In addition to such educational programs listed in the catalog, student services, instructional support services, and college operations are being classified as programs. Student support services and learning support services faculty and staff developed Student Learning Outcomes early in the process and are now assessing these learning outcomes and using the results to develop quality enhancement plans. These Student Learning Outcomes are now being converted to Program Learning Outcomes. During spring 2008, administrators and staff in non-instructional areas were given training in developing "Operational Outcomes" relative to the impact of their services on student learning. All non-instructional areas have now submitted their Operational Outcomes.

The process for developing the Student Learning Outcomes and Operational Outcomes is a very collegial one. Faculty and staff submit their Student Learning Outcomes and Operational Outcomes to the Technical Review Subcommittee of the Student Learning Outcomes Committee. After review, they are submitted to the Student Learning Outcomes Committee for approval. Upon approval, Student Learning Outcomes go into the master file that contains the course outline of record. Program Learning Outcomes will follow this same process. Effective fall 2008, no courses are accepted for review by the Academic Policies and Procedures Committee without approved Student Learning Outcomes. Therefore, the few remaining courses that do not have Student Learning Outcomes should, over time, come into compliance, since course updating is mandated by the program review process. It was clear in speaking with several faculty from different disciplines that the process has been one that has fostered discussion, interaction, and renewed commitment from all faculty, including adjunct instructors, who have participated in the process.

Conclusion:
The College has come a long way since the Progress Report visit in 2006 and the 2007 midterm report. It is now well into the development level in terms of Institutional Learning Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes and remains at the awareness level only for the development and assessment of Program Learning Outcomes. Again, the College has made steady and solid progress toward addressing this recommendation.

> **Recommendation #6:** *The Board must review and develop (1) personnel policies and procedures, including but not limited to recruitment, hiring, labor relations, classification, compensation, benefits, and staff development and training; (2) participatory governance policies (Board Policy 2051) with an eye to incorporate a directive to include data, both qualitative and quantitative, in participatory governance planning and decision making; and (3) program review (Board Policy 5041) to incorporate data-driven analysis. Furthermore, program review reports must be prepared on a regular cycle, and the report findings and recommendations must be disseminated campuswide. Report recommendations must be actively incorporated into campus planning and decision making to enhance student learning.* **(Standards III.A.3, I.B.3, II.A.1a, IV.B1b)**

Since the midterm report, the College has adopted two new Board policies and sixteen new administrative procedures, thus completing those policies and procedures that were pending at the time of that report. Additionally, the College has established a process through the College Coordinating Council to ensure that policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated. The Council regularly reviews revisions recommended through its membership in the Community College League of California policy service based upon changes in state laws and regulations and assigns the task of incorporating the recommended revisions to the appropriate entity—Administration, the Academic Senate, the Academic Policies and Procedures Committee, or the relevant bargaining unit. The team observed a meeting of the College Coordinating Council during which the most recent recommendations from the League were discussed and assigned, and the process appeared to be both well established and effective. Since the midterm report, 75 policies and procedures have been updated through this process. It is noteworthy that, among these, Board Policy 2510 *Participation in Local Decision Making* was revised to include the statement that "data, both qualitative and quantitative, will be used to drive district planning and decision making." Board approval of this revision in May 2008 has resulted in function statement and membership changes for the Strategic Planning and Budget Council and several other college and Academic Senate committees.

The College is now current in the program review cycle for instructional and student services programs, and, as previously noted, program review data and findings have become integral to the institutional planning process through the annual review and updating of the Educational Master Plan. Instructional programs in the 2007-2008 cycle were the first to receive standardized sets of data from the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, and this has been influential in a movement toward developing a more streamlined program review process to reduce narrative descriptions and focus more on data analysis relative to Institutional Learning Outcomes. There has also been a decision to move to a four-year, rather than a six-year, cycle. A program review procedure for non-instructional areas approved in fall 2007 has been implemented. Information Technology Services was the first non-instructional area to complete the process, and the review of four other areas is currently in process. A six-year cycle has been established for program review of non-instructional areas.

<u>Conclusion:</u>
In regard to policies and procedures, the College has satisfied this recommendation and is to be commended for establishing an effective, ongoing process for updating policies and procedures. The directive for data-driven planning and decision making recently incorporated into Board Policy 2510 *Participation in Local Decision Making* has already had an impact upon the Strategic Planning and Budget Council's function. Since the midterm report, the College has become current in the program review cycle for instructional and student services programs, has developed and implemented a standard set of data for use in the program review of instructional and student services programs, and has implemented a program review process for non-instructional programs. These accomplishments have moved the College from the awareness to the development level for program review. In terms of integrating program review results into institutional planning, the College is approaching proficiency. While the team acknowledges that the proposed change to a more streamlined, data-driven program review model is worth pursuing, it cautions the College to avoid allowing the discussion and implementation of a revised process to interrupt the established cycle after having just achieved currency.