

Victor Valley Community College District

**Accreditation Project:
Executive Summary of
Gap Analysis, Report, and
Recommendations**

*Revised
November 14, 2011*

**Matthew C. Lee, Ph.D.
PPL, Inc.**

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Preamble

Victor Valley College provides excellent educational opportunities to a significant population in the High Desert Region of San Bernardino County. It is also a major player in the economic vitality of the area. Based on the information gathered for this report, it is clear that College employees are deeply interested and invested in serving their students effectively.

In response to the recommendations issued by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) over the last two accreditation cycles, the College took steps on many fronts to improve its effectiveness in preparation for the March 2011 visit. Members of the campus community, judging from the Self-Study, clearly believed that the College was in compliance with ACCJC Standards, and were unpleasantly surprised and extremely disappointed when the Commission placed Victor Valley on Probation, especially after having removed it from Warning in January 2009.

Since learning of the ACCJC evaluation team's concerns, the College and its constituency groups have taken some significant steps to address them. For example, the Board of Trustees has adopted a revised ethics policy that fully resolves Commission Recommendation 1. Many faculty, staff, and management are gaining a fuller understanding of what needs to be done to respond to the other Recommendations, and have come together in groups to help move forward toward resolution of the problems. However, much remains to be done, and it is unlikely that the College can fully resolve all the Recommendations, which are numerous and complex, by March 15, 2012.

Taking Action to Close the Gap

The main purpose of the *Gap Analysis, Report, and Recommendations* is to identify actions that the College can take to close the gap between where it is now and where it needs to be, in terms that are more concrete and detailed than the Commission's Recommendations. The aim is not just to resolve those Recommendations and gain reaffirmation of accreditation—to "get out of trouble"—but more importantly, to improve the effectiveness of Victor Valley College permanently. The consultant recommendations listed in each section are designed to facilitate planning and implementation of lasting, positive change. If the College follows them, it will be in a position to demonstrate resolution of many issues in the March 2012 Follow-Up Report, and to provide specific plans and timelines for resolving the rest.

Even a casual reader will see that the number and scope of consultant recommendations in the report are considerable. In my professional judgment, all are important, and the College should follow all of them as best it can, or take equivalent actions that will produce the same effects. However, I recognize that not all that needs to be done can be done all at once. Therefore, to help the College in developing specific action plans and timelines for the next 17 months, I have suggested a priority category for each the actions under my recommendations as follows:

- **Priority 1:** The recommended action is required as soon as possible to reach full resolution of the associated team Recommendation(s), or to demonstrate significant progress toward it, in time for the March 15, 2012 Follow-Up Report. This category may also apply to actions that are relatively straightforward to carry out, and can thus produce meaningful progress with minimal effort. Priority 1 actions comprise 41 percent of the total.
- **Priority 2:** The recommended action, though just as important, is not quite as urgent for a variety of reasons. It might take a bit longer to get started, or it might be more complex, or it should follow a Priority 1 action. It might also be needed before a Priority 3 action can be undertaken. In any case, work still must be substantially complete in time to demonstrate full resolution of the associated team Recommendation(s) by March 2013. Priority 2 actions comprise 43 percent of the total.
- **Priority 3:** The need for the recommended action is not as pressing as it is for Priority 1 and Priority 2 items. If necessary or appropriate, work may begin later—perhaps even after the evaluation team visit—but it must still be substantially complete in time to demonstrate full resolution of the associated team Recommendation(s) by March 2013. Priority 3 actions comprise 16 percent of the total.

To assist the College further, I have listed by number all the actions under my recommendations by priority category in a table at the end of the report.

Finally, it is the nature of a report such as this to focus more on the specific steps that still need to be taken than on what is already in good shape or well underway. Consequently, readers will not see as much coverage of all the many positive aspects of the College as might appear in, say, a history of the institution. I urge readers to view the report not as a source of discouragement, but rather as a call to action, to move toward a brighter future for the College, its personnel, and most importantly, its students.

Consultant Recommendations: Actions to Close the Gap

The College and its constituency groups have already made progress on each of the Recommendations; see the full report for brief descriptions. This executive summary focuses exclusively on the concrete, detailed steps that are still needed to resolve the ACCJC evaluation team's eight Recommendations and improve institutional effectiveness overall.

The seven general consultant recommendations immediately below apply to resolving multiple team Recommendations, while the consultant recommendations in each of the remaining sections apply to resolving the specific team Recommendation shown at the beginning of the section.

General Consultant Recommendations

1. Leadership and Responsibility

- a. It is crucial for the President, the Vice Presidents, and constituency leadership to set aside the differences they may have, overcome the factionalism that has characterized the College for the last several years, unify their efforts, employ their skills to help all members of the campus community recognize the urgency of the problems the Commission has identified, and inspire and lead them to contribute actively to the solutions. Moreover, every group and every individual at the College should take responsibility for making meaningful contributions toward the common cause, or share responsibility for the College's failure to gain full reaffirmation, and more importantly, to improve its effectiveness in the long run. (Priority 1)
- b. It is especially crucial for the President, among all the leaders at the College, to be active, productive, and visible at the forefront of the institution's drive to move forward. He should acknowledge the reality and importance of the issues raised by the evaluation team and ensure that he himself, the Cabinet, management team, faculty, staff, and students are all actively engaged in resolving those issues. (Priority 1)
- c. The President, in conjunction with constituency group leadership, should facilitate development of a community of dialogue on campus, in which all constituent groups receive information on College progress in improving student learning and other crucial tasks, discuss the effectiveness of the institution in those efforts, and, through appropriate structures, processes, and plans, contribute to a culture of continuous improvement. (Priority 2)
- d. The College Council, with assistance from PPL under the provisions of its existing contract, should develop and distribute campus-wide a one-sheet "What Can I Do?" handout and/or electronic publication as soon as possible, with concrete suggestions on what individual employees and students can do to help resolve the Recommendations and move the College forward. Updates, excerpts, tips-of-the-day, or similar suggestions should be disseminated regularly, as the College progresses toward full reaffirmation. (Priority 1)

2. **Formal Structures and Processes:** To remain viable in the future, the College should move with all deliberate speed to adopt well-defined, formal, documented structures and processes designed to improve and maintain institutional effectiveness, including assessment, planning, resource allocation, and communication—and then follow through with proper execution in all areas. That does not mean that personal relationships should be forsaken, only that those relationships cannot be allowed to drive planning, resource allocation, and decision-making processes. Formal structures and processes, well communicated and consistently executed, should not only make the College a better place for learning, they should also produce measurable improvements in campus climate (see Team Recommendation 4).
(Priority 1)
3. **Governance**
 - a. The College Council should coordinate development, publication, and maintenance of an authoritative governance handbook for VVC, to clarify committee functions, relationships, and roles in collegial consultation and decision-making processes, and to help educate the campus community about them. Such a handbook, properly organized and written, would be a very important and useful resource for everyone at the College, but especially for those serving in leadership positions or serving on shared-governance committees.
(Priority 2)
 - b. The College Council should go beyond review and revision of AP 1201, and accomplish the following tasks during 2011-12 (All Priority 1):
 - (1) Coordinate a systematic evaluation of the governance structures and processes on campus (including all shared-governance committees).
 - (2) Recommend revisions as needed of all Board policies and administrative procedures related to governance, to ensure that they reflect both sound practice and College reality. Policies and procedures should incorporate the governance handbook by reference.
 - (3) Analyze participation rates and practices in all constituencies.
 - (4) Make recommendations for improvement, including some aimed at realizing the following objectives:
 - a) Improve campus-wide communication about and documentation of governance and decision-making processes and their results.
 - b) Break down organizational silos.
 - c) Broaden meaningful participation within each constituency.
 - d) Improve efficiency, perhaps through consolidation of functions into a smaller number of bodies.
 - e) Both reduce and spread the burden that now falls on a relatively small proportion of people.
 - (5) Establish a method and schedule for periodic reevaluation of governance effectiveness going forward, and document the ongoing process in the governance handbook.
4. **Accreditation**
 - a. The College Council, in consultation with the Interim Executive Vice President for Instruction and Student Services as Accreditation Liaison Officer, should establish a permanent, standing Accreditation Committee. The Council should

ensure that the new committee's defined responsibilities are properly coordinated with those of existing committees and decision-making processes, to avoid any duplication of effort. A formal procedure should specify member eligibility and the selection process. (Priority 2)

I suggest that the College consider the following model for Committee functions:

- (1) The Committee and its members will receive appropriate training to become the expert campus resources on accreditation processes and requirements.
 - (2) The Committee will guide and monitor the accreditation process for the entire college, including:
 - a) Develop timelines and recommend policies and procedures for accreditation, consistent with the guidelines provided by ACCJC.
 - b) Coordinate training for faculty, staff, and management with regard to accreditation requirements and related College policies and procedures.
 - c) Monitor progress on preparing reports, resolving recommendations, and other accreditation-related processes, and initiate corrective action where appropriate.
 - d) Provide assistance for or, if necessary according to established criteria, replace Committee or subcommittee chairs or members, if work is found inadequate at specified milestones.
 - (3) The Committee will provide a forum for ongoing campus dialogue on accreditation issues and practices.
 - (4) In consultation with the appropriate governance structures and processes, the Committee will recommend a pool of candidates to the President for editing the self-study under the supervision of the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO), and will recommend faculty and staff to the President for subcommittees as needed.
 - (5) Members will serve as co-chairs on subcommittees.
 - (6) The Committee will review and provide input on midterm, follow-up, and other special reports to the Commission. If requested by the ALO, it will help draft such reports.
 - (7) The Committee will report to the College Council.
 - (8) Members and conveners will fulfill their responsibilities as described in an appropriately constructed Committee Responsibilities document.
 - (9) Members will volunteer to serve on accreditation teams.
- b. The President and vice presidents should encourage all managers, faculty members, and classified staff members, for the good of the institution and their own professional development, to volunteer for service on a Commission accreditation team, and to participate in formal accreditation training. The President should distribute a request for volunteers, with appropriate explanatory information, at least annually. ()
5. **Evidence Files:** The Accreditation Liaison Officer should ensure that all evidence referred to in the Follow-Up Report is compiled in accessible form for the visiting team, so that nothing is missing, forgotten, or rushed into place. ()

6. **Communication and Documentation** (All)
 - a. People who attend meetings and conferences should make a regular practice of sharing what they have learned with their supervisors, colleagues, and direct reports at the next available opportunity, to help facilitate all employees' understanding of the issues and to promote an atmosphere of openness and transparency.
 - b. The College should document properly every process, structure, plan, and action it chooses to implement in response to the Team Recommendations and to the consultant recommendations in this report. The documentation should be readily accessible to the visiting team, and more importantly to the College community that will rely on it to move the institution in the right direction, both now and in future years.
7. **Dissemination of Report:** The College should make at least the Executive Summary of this report available to all College personnel. ()

Team Recommendation 1: Mission and Educational Master Plan

In order to meet the Standards, the College should revise its planning documents to reflect the current mission so that the mission is central to institutional planning and decision making. Furthermore, the College should adhere to its policy of annually reviewing its mission statement and update its Educational Master Plan using its current mission statement. (I.A.3, I.A.4)

1. **Mission Review, Revision, and Consistency**
 - a. The College, with the assistance of the PPL consultant under the provisions of PPL's existing contract if desired, should fully implement the mission review process set forth in AP 1200, confirm or revise the mission statement, and publish it if at all possible in time to include it in the evidence files for the March 15, 2012 Follow-Up Report. ()
 - b. To the extent feasible, the committees responsible for the College's major planning documents should incorporate the confirmed or revised mission statement in those documents in time to include documentation of those actions in the evidence files for the March 15, 2012 Follow-Up Report. ()
 - c. The College Council, in consultation with the responsible committees, should develop and publish a schedule for incorporating the confirmed or revised mission statement in the next updates of the remaining major planning documents, adhere closely to that schedule, and document the results. ()

Team Recommendation 2: Integrated Planning and Continuous Improvement

As noted in recommendations 1 and 6 of the 2005 Accreditation Evaluation Report, and in recommendations from the reports of 1993 and 1999, and in order to meet the Standards and the Eligibility Requirements, the College should establish and maintain an ongoing, collegial, self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes. (I.B.1, E.R. 19) This process should include:

- *Goals to improve effectiveness that are stated in measurable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be determined and widely discussed. (I.B.2)*
- *An evaluation of all programs throughout the College so that it assesses progress toward those goals and ensures that participation is broad-based throughout the College. (I.B.3, I.B.4)*
- *Documented assessment results for all courses, programs, and the institution. (I.B.5, II.A.1.a, II.B.4)*
- *Formal processes to evaluate the effectiveness of its ongoing planning and resource allocation processes. (I.B.6, I.B.7)*
- *Integration of planning with decision-making and budgeting processes to ensure that decisions to allocate staff, equipment, resources, and facilities throughout the College are based on identified strategic priorities and to ensure a continuous cycle of evaluation and improvement based upon data. (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.6, III.C.2, IV.B.2.b)*
- *An integration of the total cost of facilities ownership in both the short and long term planning processes. (III.B.1.c) [NOTE: III.B.1.c does not exist; the team probably means III.B.2.a, given context]*
- *An assessment of physical resource planning with the involvement of the campus community. (III.B.1.a, III.B.2.a, III.B.2.b)*
- *A systematic assessment of the effective use of financial resources, with particular regard to meeting the needs of Library materials and technological resources, and the use of the results of this assessment as the basis for improvement. (II.C.1, II.C.2, III.D.3)*

1. **PRAISE Coordination and Organization** (All Priority 2)

- a. The College Council, in consultation with the Academic Senate, should systematize the coordination of the PRAISE process across the College by assigning that responsibility either to an existing shared-governance committee (e.g., FBPC or the Institutional Effectiveness Committee) or to a new shared-governance committee established for that purpose. An Academic Senate representative should chair or co-chair the PRAISE coordinating committee, and Senate representatives should comprise the largest single group of constituency members. The functions of the existing Academic Senate Program Review Committee should be folded into those of the coordinating committee. The PPL consultant, under a mutually agreed-upon modification of the provisions of PPL's existing contract, could facilitate and guide the initial work of the coordinating committee. Suggested elements of the charge of the coordinating committee include the following:
 - (1) Develop and implement formal procedures for the process (including requirements, standards, schedule, evaluation, and closing the loop) that adhere to both best practices and accreditation standards, and recommend appropriate changes to AP 3250. An appropriate starting point might be the Academic Senate Program Review Committee's draft handbook.

- (2) Design clear forms, templates, and other documents used in the process that adhere to sound practices in integrated evaluation, planning, and resource allocation.
 - (3) Ensure adequate training of participants as needed on the components, principles, and terminology of proper program review as applied at Victor Valley College, based in part on the documented procedures.
 - (4) Monitor the quality of submissions, and send back for revision those that do not meet standards.
 - (5) Communicate in timely fashion with all participants and the rest of the campus community about the process, its procedures, and its results, and take steps to ensure the widest feasible participation.
 - (6) Ensure integration of evidence-based evaluation, planning, and resource allocation within the process.
 - (7) Facilitate integration of the process and its results with other major planning, evaluation, and decision-making processes and products (e.g., the SLO assessment cycle, District Goals, Educational Master Plan, Faculty Hiring Priorities). For example, the ACCJC Rubric for SLOs requires that
 - (8) Coordinate the process with other committees (e.g., FBPC, Technology Committee), groups (e.g., Academic Senate), and offices (e.g., Office of Institutional Effectiveness) as needed.
 - (9) Evaluate the process on a regular basis, using input from participants as one source of evidence, and recommend and implement improvements as warranted.
- b. To ease the burden of program review while maintaining rigor, the College should move to a staggered three-year cycle, with comprehensive program review in the first year, followed by a shorter version in each of the next two years that reports any significant program changes or implications of updated performance data, progress on previously identified improvement goals, and identification of new improvement goals. The form and contents of resource requests should be identical in the comprehensive and shorter versions, so that all programs participate the same way every year in the resource allocation prioritization process. Planning and preparation for this move by the PRAISE coordinating committee should take place during Spring 2012, with implementation of the new cycle structure beginning in Fall 2012.
 - c. The coordinating committee should clarify, ensure that all forms and procedures reflect, and continually emphasize to all participants, that the point of the PRAISE process is not mere justification of resource requests, but rather improvements in the effectiveness of programs and services. Additional resources are not necessary for every improvement, and when they are needed, they are means, not ends in themselves.
 - d. To facilitate prioritizing resource requests, the coordinating committee, in consultation with the FBPC, should require that program-level requests be prioritized first based on discussion among program representatives and the department chair or supervisor at the department level, then based on discussion among department representatives and the dean or director at the division level, and then based on discussion among the deans and directors at the vice

- presidential area level, before going to the FBPC for the development of an institution-wide priorities list.
- e. The coordinating committee should clarify the important roles of department chairs, directors, and deans in preparing, reviewing, and assuring the quality of program review documents, and, where applicable, in rolling up unit-level program review and resource allocation documents into the department, division, and area levels.
 - f. The coordinating committee, in consultation with other appropriate groups and departments, should establish a centralized file or database that tracks and reports progress on program review across the institution, and update it regularly. Constituency leadership and senior management should receive a copy of a report on completions and results at least annually, so that the entire College remains well-informed about the status of program review. If all program reviews eventually reside on the TracDat system, then that system should provide the requisite tracking and reporting mechanisms.
2. **Standards** (All Priority 2)
- a. The coordinating committee should move as quickly as it can to ensure that every program review includes the following elements at minimum:
 - (1) Assessment of program effectiveness using appropriate measures (including applicable outcomes), evidence, and methods
 - (2) Assessment of the effects of any previously implemented improvements, and progress on any previously established goals and objectives
 - (3) Analysis of the results of the assessments
 - (4) Analysis of the implications of and for plans and outcomes at other levels
 - (5) Specific goals clearly based on analysis results, to maintain or increase effectiveness and/or to facilitate achievement of outcomes (including SLOs)
 - (6) Measurable objectives for each goal, including timelines and identification of those responsible for ensuring progress
 - (7) Resources demonstrably required to achieve each objective or make significant progress toward each goal
 - b. The coordinating committee, in consultation with other appropriate groups and individuals, should establish a process to ensure consistency among the set of courses that defines each instructional program in the OIE data reports, the corresponding set of courses listed in the Program of Study in Curricunet, and the corresponding set of courses that comprise the program for which program SLOs have been defined. For example, before beginning each comprehensive program review or annual update, instructional program faculty could check for consistency among these course sets. If they uncover discrepancies, they should initiate immediate corrective action, and the responsible data custodian should make corrections in timely fashion, before the faculty begins work in earnest on the review or update. (See Program SLOs under Team Recommendation 3 below.)
3. **Data Integrity:** The College, under the leadership of the Cabinet, should devote the necessary resources to ensure that the data used for PRAISE and other planning and decision-making processes are accurate and reliable. One approach would be to form an ad-hoc data integrity task force, with representatives from OIE, the coordinating

- committee for PRAISE, TIR, primary data custodians and their data entry staff, and other offices as needed, and charge it with identifying the primary sources of error, recommending solutions to the root problems, and monitoring effective implementation of those solutions, until such time as regular checks of data integrity show that the primary sources of errors have been eliminated. (Priority 2)
4. **Dialogue:** The College should establish a schedule of recurring opportunities for campus-wide dialogue on program review results, outcomes and other performance assessment, and resource allocations in relation to the improvement of student learning and institutional effectiveness. Such forums, workshops, and/or other experiences should be designed to help break down departmental and constituency boundaries, and to enrich, enliven, broaden, and make permanent the productive conversation about student learning and institutional effectiveness that makes a community college a great place to be, for both educators and students. (Priority 2)
 5. **Physical Resources Planning**
 - a. The Facilities Committee, with the assistance of the PPL consultant under the provisions of PPL's existing contract, should undertake an assessment of the effectiveness of physical resource planning. The assessment should include input from the campus community. (Priority 2)
 - b. The Facilities Committee should prepare for approval by the President and the Board a formal update of or addendum to the Facilities Master Plan that reflects significant changes and initiatives that have occurred since its adoption, that incorporates the Public Safety Training Center and the Workforce Development Center, and that provides for regular review and revision of the Plan. (Priority 2)
 - c. Administrative Services, the FBPC, and the Facilities Committee should collaborate to analyze the Total Cost of Ownership of every capital project now in progress: the Facilities Committee should ensure that the results are incorporated into the next update of the Facilities Master Plan; and the FBPC should ensure that the results are incorporated into the current and future budgets and budget projections. (Priority 2)
 - d. Administrative Services, the FBPC, and the Facilities Committee should collaborate on an ongoing basis to ensure that the Total Cost of Ownership is built into the planning and budgeting for every future capital project in the District. (Priority 2)
 6. **Technology Planning**
 - a. The College Council should review the composition of the Technology Committee, and recommend any adjustments needed to ensure appropriately broad representation of user perspectives and functions. If adjustments proved necessary, the constituency group leaders should take action to implement the Council's recommendations, through their own recommendations to the President. (Priority 2)
 - b. The Technology Committee should complete the draft Technology and Resource Plan, solicit campus-wide feedback on it, incorporate feedback as appropriate, and recommend its adoption to the President by the end of Spring 2012. It should include provision for regular review and revision, based in part on user input. (Priority 2)

- c. The Technology Committee, with appropriate input from the user community, should develop a systematic method for prioritizing both annual and long-term technology needs. (Priority 2)
 - d. If feasible, the PRAISE process should build in the review and, if necessary, the modification of technology requests by TIR or the Technology Committee (in close consultation with the requester) to ensure that technology purchases adhere to College standards and are coordinated. The review should take place before the resource request review by FBPC, which should in turn require a sign-off by TIR or the Technology Committee prior to its approval. ()
7. **Library Resources Planning:** The Interim Executive Vice President for Instruction and Student Services should convene an ad hoc task force with appropriate representation and expertise to develop a long-term Library Plan that includes recommendations on addressing the need for stable resources for the acquisition of materials. ()
 8. **Integration of Planning:** The College Council, with the help of the applicable committees, should ensure that program-specific plans, in their next revisions, incorporate as appropriate consideration of and references to other major planning processes and documents at the College, such as the Educational Master Plan, District Goals, and the PRAISE process. ()
 9. **Overall Institutional Effectiveness:** The Institutional Effectiveness Committee, in collaboration with the College Council, should coordinate the design, implementation, dissemination, and discussion of a biennial or triennial assessment of overall institutional effectiveness. The assessment should make use of an appropriate combination of available quality and performance measures already created for other planning processes and reports (e.g., PRAISE, the Annual Plan, Educational Master Plan, District Goals), and any new measures of effectiveness deemed suitable for the purpose. (Priority 1)

Team Recommendation 3: Student Learning Outcomes

As noted in recommendation 2 of the 2005 Accreditation Evaluation Report, and in order to meet the Standards and the Eligibility Requirements, the College should complete the development of student learning outcomes for all programs and ensure that student learning outcomes found on course syllabi are the same as the student learning outcomes found on the approved course outlines of record. The institution must accelerate its efforts to assess all student learning outcomes for every course, instructional and student support program, and incorporate analysis of student learning outcomes into course and program improvements. This effort must be accomplished by Fall 2012 as a result of broad-based dialogue with administrative, institutional and research support. Student learning outcomes need to become an integral part of the program review process, including incorporating detailed documented analysis from SLO assessments and data based research. Additionally, faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated learning outcomes should have, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes. (I.B.1-7, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a-b, II.A.2.e-f, II.B.4, II.C.2, III.A.1.c, E.R. 10)

1. **Leadership and Guidance**
 - a. The Academic Senate, in coordination with the Interim Executive Vice President for Instruction and Student Services, should assume leadership in immediately making it a top campus-wide priority for 2011-12 and Fall 2012 to fulfill all requirements of the Proficiency level on the Commission's SLO rubric. (Priority 1)
 - b. The Academic Senate, in coordination with the Interim Executive Vice President for Instruction and Student Services, should take the leadership in broadening the dialogue about assessing and improving student learning to the campus-wide level. (Priority 1)
 - c. The President and the full-time faculty union should resolve their differences regarding faculty engagement in outcomes assessment and program review (including the relationship between learning outcomes and the evaluation process) as soon as possible, so that progress on those processes may occur. (Priority 1)
 - d. The PPL consultant, under the provisions of PPL's existing contract, should meet monthly with the Academic Senate ad hoc outcomes committee or other appropriate body to respond to questions and provide guidance as needed to assist the College in its efforts to reach the Proficiency level on the ACCJC SLOs Rubric by Fall 2012. He should also offer assistance to the committee by providing feedback on a sample of course SLOs, and on the processes for developing, assessing, and revising them. (Priority 2)
2. **Integration:** The PPL consultant, in consultation with the Academic Senate and other appropriate individuals and groups, should develop recommendations for fully integrating the SLO cycle with the PRAISE process in all departments in such a way as to assure reasonable quality and continuous improvement. (Priority 2)
3. **TracDat:** As soon as possible, the College should properly install, test, implement, load, and maintain TracDat, to schedule firmly, track reliably, and report accurately all aspects of the SLO cycle for every course, program, GE, and institutional/degree SLO. The database should be updated at least annually, before each ACCJC Annual Report is due, and a consolidated report of SLO status at all levels, along with the schedule for the next year, should be disseminated to the campus community. (Priority 2)
4. **Consistency:** The PPL consultant, under the provisions of PPL's existing contract, should assist the Office of Instruction or other appropriate body in conducting a comprehensive review of syllabi and course outlines of record to ensure that the correct course SLOs appear in both, and in coordinating development and implementation of a better process for monitoring the consistency of syllabi and course outlines of record going forward. (Priority 1)
5. **Program Outcomes**
 - a. The Academic Senate ad hoc outcomes committee should request a copy of every SLOs worksheet submitted in the PRAISE process by the December 1, 2011 deadline, and determine the status of every program in the Program SLO cycle: from SLO identified, to means of assessment identified, to criteria of success identified, to assessment completed (with data summarized), to program changes needed. Alternatively, if TracDat is up and running and will accommodate these data, the committee should ask each program to enter them in that system. Either

- method should produce a comprehensive status report for all programs (as currently defined) on the progress of the Program SLO cycle. (Priority 1)
- b. Depending on the results, the committee should take appropriate action to facilitate completion of that cycle by all programs no later than Fall 2012. (Priority 2)
 - c. The PPL consultant, under the provisions of PPL's existing contract, should offer assistance to the Office Student Services if requested, by providing feedback on Program SLOs, Service Area Outcomes, and the processes for developing, assessing, and revising them. (Priority 2)
 - d. The PPL consultant, under a mutually agreed-upon modification of the provisions of PPL's existing contract, should assist Administrative Services, Human Resources, and TIR in developing sound administrative outcomes and/or objectives and assessment methods in their departments. (Priority 1)
6. **Timely Completion of the Cycle in Noninstructional Areas:** Programs in Administrative Services, Student Services, and Human Resources, which operate over the summer and winter intersessions with a full or nearly full complement of personnel, should strive to complete SLO/SAO assessments, analyze the results, identify improvements, and implement those improvements by Fall 2012. (Priority 2)
7. **General Education SLOs**
- a. The College should ensure that the GE SLOs as set forth in AP 4025 are accurately quoted in every applicable publication, including the Catalog. (Priority 1)
 - b. The Academic Senate ad hoc outcomes committee should develop and coordinate the implementation of a plan for assessment of the GE SLOs by Fall 2012. (Priority 2)
8. **ILOs:** The Academic Senate ad hoc outcomes committee, in consultation with appropriate groups and offices, should immediately identify appropriate assessment methods for, and coordinate assessment of, the ILOs, and establish a schedule for completing the ILOs cycle no later than Fall 2012. (Priority 2)

Suggested steps in the process include the following:

- a. Make any necessary preparations to apply the assessment methods.
 - b. Establish a criterion for each ILO, achievement of which demonstrates the desired degree of institutional effectiveness.
 - c. By the end of Fall 2011, assess achievement of each ILO; analyze the results to establish a baseline; and identify and plan for needed course, program, or service improvements or ILO modifications, if any.
 - d. Implement identified course, program, or service improvements, and/or modified ILOs, beginning in Spring 2012.
 - e. By the end of Fall 2012, reassess achievement of each ILO; analyze the results; identify and schedule needed course, program, or service improvements or ILO modifications, if any; and continue the cycle.
9. **Evaluation:** The College should complete a systematic evaluation of SLO structures and processes at all levels by Fall 2012, perhaps in conjunction with the Learning Improvement Forums mentioned above (or similar campus-wide dialogue

opportunities). Based on the evaluation results, it should identify needed improvements in the structures and processes, and implement them in Spring 2013 if possible, but no later than the beginning of Fall 2013. (Priority 2)

Team Recommendation 4: Campus Climate

As noted in recommendation 6 of the 2005 Accreditation Evaluation Report, and in order to meet the Standards, the College should cultivate a campus environment of empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence by creating a culture of respect, civility, dialogue and trust. (I.B.1, I.B.4, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.C.1.a, III.A, III.A.1.d, III.A.4.c, IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.3, IV.A.5, IV.B.2.b [emphasis on "collegial process"])

1. **Leadership:** The College Council, which has representatives from all constituent groups and factions on campus, should take the leadership in improving campus climate and facilitating creation of a "culture of respect, civility, dialogue, and trust." The PPL consultant, under the provisions of PPL's existing contract, should meet monthly with the Council to provide guidance and assistance in this ongoing effort. (Priority 1)
2. **Communication/Dialogue**
 - a. The College, under the leadership of the College Council and the Vice President for Human Resources, should contract with an expert experienced in the community college environment to develop materials and facilitate workshops and/or other employee experiences that will directly and effectively engage, and make significant progress in resolving, the issues of respect, civility, and trust among all groups and individuals in the institution, using tools and approaches suited to the specific needs of Victor Valley College. These materials and experiences should help everyone at the College identify common ground and recognize the contributions that all constituencies can and should make to a positive campus climate. (Priority 2)
 - b. All individuals and groups at the College should make a genuine, concerted, and sustained effort to leave behind the anger and hurt produced by old offenses, and to begin anew constructive relationships with each other and the College. They should deal with new issues as they arise in their own terms, and seek to resolve them without dredging up old grudges. (Priority 1)
 - c. As soon as negotiations and proper planning permit, the College should reestablish at least two mandatory flex days per year, to provide systematic opportunities for College-wide sharing and dialogue. All College employees in all categories—including part-time faculty and staff—should be required to participate for at least that portion of each day devoted to issues of College-wide significance. (Priority 2)
 - d. The College Council should establish a shared-governance Communications Task Force, and charge it with making recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of telephone, email, and other communication among individuals and groups on campus. The OIE should assist the task force in measuring the effectiveness of communication, using Campus Climate Survey results and perhaps other methods. The task force should solicit campus-wide input, and complete its report to the College Council by March 2012. The Council should

then forward its recommendations, based on the task force's work, to the President, and establish a system for regularly scheduled reevaluation and improvement of communication effectiveness going forward. (Priority 2)

3. **Research and Evidence**

- a. The College Council, with the assistance of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), should add a few questions to the Fall 2011 and subsequent Campus Climate surveys (only a few; the survey is already quite long) that will facilitate rigorous evaluation of the extent of respect, civility, dialogue, and trust on campus. (Priority 2)
- b. The College Council, with the assistance of OIE, should evaluate other methods for measuring the extent of respect, civility, dialogue, and trust on campus, and, if any promise to improve understanding of the relevant issues and solutions beyond what the Council gathers from the augmented Campus Climate Surveys, implement one or more, at least on a pilot basis. (Priority 2)
- c. OIE, under the auspices of the College Council, should administer the Campus Climate Survey again this Fall, and conduct a full analysis to determine the nature and extent of change from 2010, and to establish a baseline for the extent of respect, civility, dialogue, and trust on campus. (Priority 2)
- d. **Distribution and Use of the Campus Climate Survey Results and Analysis (All Priority 2)**
 - (1) OIE should distribute to every shared-governance committee and campus department a report of the results and analysis most applicable to it as soon as possible after completion of the survey.
 - (2) Every shared-governance committee should discuss the OIE report of Fall 2010 and Fall 2011 survey results, and incorporate discussion of that report into a formal self-evaluation of the committee's effectiveness that results in identification and implementation of improvements, if warranted.
 - (3) Every campus department to which the survey results are applicable should incorporate the OIE report as evidence into its PRAISE process, and if the results indicate the need for operational improvements, include those improvements in its planning.

4. **Recognition:** The College should establish one or more programs to provide recognition periodically for classified staff members and other employees who do exemplary work in their positions, or otherwise make especially valuable contributions for the benefit of the College and its students. The point is to give praise where praise is due, and to do so generously. (Priority 2)
5. **Celebration:** The College should also provide support on a permanent basis for occasional celebrations at the departmental, divisional, and institutional levels, perhaps with the assistance of the Foundation. Such celebrations, appropriately organized, can help facilitate social interaction, promote camaraderie across departmental boundaries, boost morale, and dispel some of the doom and gloom that has beset many of the California community colleges, Victor Valley included, for the last few years. (Priority 2)

Team Recommendation 5: Distance Education

In order to meet the Standards, the College should examine and provide evidence that appropriate leadership ensures the accessibility, quality and eligibility of online and hybrid courses and programs and that such programs demonstrate that all services, regardless of location or means of delivery, support student learning and enhance achievement of the mission of the institution. (I.A, II.B, IV.A.1)

1. **Distance Education Coordination** (All **Priority 1**):
 - a. The College should formally assign the responsibility for oversight of the distance education to a specific administrative position, and include that responsibility in the applicable job description.
 - b. As part of its review and evaluation of governance structures and processes (see General Consultant Recommendations above), the College Council, in coordination with the Interim Executive Vice President for Instruction and Student Services, should review the purposes and work of the DEAC (particularly in relation to that of the FSDEC) and make a recommendation regarding institutionalizing distance education planning, evaluation, improvement and related functions on a permanent basis. Those recommendations should answer questions such as, “Should the work of the two committees be combined under the auspices of the Academic Senate? Or should the DEAC be converted into a campus-wide shared-governance committee?”
2. **Planning and Documentation:** DEAC should complete its recommended Distance Education Plan, and forward it through the appropriate review and approval process, as quickly as possible, consistent with sound practice and high quality. (**Priority 2**)
3. **Evaluation, Improvement, and Monitoring:** The PPL consultant, under the provisions of PPL’s existing contract, should (All **Priority 2**):
 - a. Evaluate and provide further written feedback on the evaluation processes for DE as a whole set forth in the latest draft of the Distance Education Plan, including courses, program, and services.
 - b. Meet up to once per month with the DEAC or its successor body, if desired.
 - c. Assist DEAC or its successor body in evaluating DE processes, programs, services, support, and outcomes, in consultation with the interim dean of STEM and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.
 - d. Assist the interim dean of STEM and DEAC or its successor body in drafting recommendations for improvements in DE accessibility, quality, and contribution to student learning and the College mission.
 - e. Make recommendations to the interim dean of STEM and DEAC or its successor body for systematically monitoring and improving DE going forward.
4. **Standardization:** The Distance Education Plan should include steps to move toward full standardization of distance education delivery on a single standard platform, the most practical current candidate for which is Blackboard. A single standard platform for all courses will make it easier for students, once they have learned the platform, to move from online course to online course smoothly; facilitate professional development and support for distance education instructors; and facilitate ongoing, systematic evaluation of DE effectiveness. One approach to achieving this goal is to permit the use of a platform other than the standard by an instructor for a course

taught via DE only if that instructor has taught that course via DE using that nonstandard platform at least once within the prior two semesters. DE courses that are new to the College or to that instructor, or that have not been taught using another platform recently, would thus have to conform to the standard platform. Of course, how to move all DE instruction to a single standard platform is subject to collective bargaining. Whatever approach is chosen, it should apply equally to full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, managers, and classified staff who teach DE courses. ()

Team Recommendation 6: Fiscal Plans and Information

In order to meet the Standards, the College should develop long-term fiscal plans that support student learning programs and services that will not rely on using unrestricted reserves to cover deficits. Additionally, the College should provide timely, accurate and comprehensive financial data and budget projections for review and discussion throughout the institution. (III.D, III.D.1.a, III.D.1.c, III.D.2.b, III.D.2.c, E.R. 17)

1. **Guidance:** The PPL consultant, under the terms of PPL's existing contract, should meet monthly with the FBPC, to respond to questions related to accreditation and provide guidance in improving fiscal planning, dissemination of fiscal information, and mechanisms for campus-wide review and discussion of fiscal plans and information. ()
2. **Managing GIC Funds:** The College should complete development of the new method of controlling GIC funds, formalize it, document it, and apply it consistently. ()
3. **Long-term Fiscal Planning and the Structural Deficit Resolution Plan**
 - a. In the interests of transparency, the VPAS should disseminate the plan to resolve the structural deficit in the long term to the campus community. ()
 - b. The President should convene a task force to coordinate a campus-wide discussion of the structural deficit, actions which might feasibly contribute significantly to its resolution, and the plan to resolve it. The task force should include representatives of administration and of both shared-governance constituencies and collective bargaining groups, as well as other members he regards as appropriate (e.g., business and/or community leaders). The aim of the discussion is to educate everyone in the College community about the issues, and to strengthen the structural deficit resolution plan if at all possible. ()
 - c. Under the guidance of the VPAS, the FBPC should devote meeting time on a regular basis to the analysis and discussion of the College's long-term fiscal plans. (Priority 2)
 - d. At least annually, the FBPC should create and disseminate to the campus community a brief report of progress on the structural deficit resolution plan, and on the long-term fiscal outlook of, and fiscal planning for, the College. ()
4. **Financial Information and Training**
 - a. Administrative Services should post on its website the latest five-year budget summary for the unrestricted general fund as soon as each update is available, and notify the campus of where to find the new information. ()

- b. In the interests of transparency and broadening understanding of financial issues, the FBPC should evaluate the availability, timeliness, and utility of financial information tools and data provided to the College community, and make recommendations for improvement as needed. For example, it might recommend posting updates of unrestricted general fund or other budget summary reports on the Administrative Services website on a monthly basis. Or it might recommend that Fiscal Services offer one workshop per year on understanding financial data, for anyone who wishes to attend. (Priority 2)
 - c. Fiscal Services should formalize scheduling and effectively promoting at least one group training session on understanding financial information and using the financial systems each Fall for any users who wish to attend. (Priority 2)
 - d. Fiscal Services should make more systematic the monitoring and training of users who need regular access to financial data. For example, at the beginning of each Fall semester, the office could send an email to an up-to-date list of all managers, department chairs, and applicable departmental support staff, asking them for a timely response indicating whether or not they lack logon access or would like one-on-one or group training. The email could also announce the next group training session. ()
5. **Dialogue**
- a. The College should devote part of each flex day (see Consultant Recommendations under Team Recommendation 4 above) to clear and cogent updates on the financial status of the institution and the budgetary issues that face it, and to dialogue regarding those issues. (Priority 2)
 - b. The VPAS and other campus leaders should take the opportunity during constituency-group, departmental, and other meetings to which they are regularly invited to incorporate at least some coverage of long-term financial issues into their presentations and discussions. ()

Team Recommendation 7: Leadership and Participation in Governance

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College build and maintain a system for effective, stable and sustainable leadership, to include:

- *Creating a process for succession planning in order to avoid gaps in leadership.*
- *Assisting all employees and students to grow professionally by developing their leadership skills and encouraging their participation in governance groups.*
- *Addressing leadership needs in the key campus areas of student services and distance learning. (IV.A, IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.2.a, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.3, IV.A.5, IV.B.1, IV.B.1.j, IV.B.2, IV.B.2.a)*

1. Succession Planning

- a. In response to the part of the Recommendation dealing with a succession planning process, with the help of PPL under the provisions of its existing contract, the Board should either expand on BP 2431, or develop a procedure to go with it, to specify 1) how it will prepare for the next presidential vacancy whenever it might occur, and 2) when it does occur, the steps it will take to facilitate an effective search and minimize disruptions in campus planning, decision-making, operations, and improvement. For example, preparation might involve

periodically attending CCLC or other conferences or workshops to learn more about presidential succession and selection, or specifying the essential characteristics of a successful presidential candidate for the College. Steps to minimize disruption in campus leadership during a presidential vacancy might include specifications and timelines for the selection process, and guidelines for the use of interims and outside consultants. (Priority 1)

- b. The President and Board should consider formulating, with the assistance of PPL under the provisions of its existing contract, a set of essential characteristics for successful vice presidential candidates as well, to include the capacity for executive leadership at the highest level. (Priority 2)
- c. The College should update the language of BP 2432 so that it is flexible enough to accommodate title changes that have occurred or might occur from time to time in the future. (Priority 2)
- d. The College, under the leadership of the President and the Board, in accord with District Direction 4, and after successful implementation of other improvements recommended in this report, should make a concerted effort to redefine the image of the institution as a fine place to work, as an effective leader in student learning, and as a valuable contributor to the economic success of the community. (Priority 2)

2. Leadership Skills

- a. The College, under the leadership of the Vice President for Human Resources and the Staff Development Facilitator, should expand the staff development program to offer opportunities for leadership skills training to members of all constituent groups, and build those opportunities into every annual plan and schedule. (Priority 2)
- b. The PPL consultant, under the provisions of PPL's existing contract, should assist in analyzing staff development needs and options in this area, and if requested, may facilitate up to three scheduled leadership skills workshops. (Priority 2)

3. **Effective Participation:** Under the provisions of its existing contract, PPL should provide up to three workshops for managers, faculty, staff, and/or students on effective participation in shared-governance committees. (Priority 2)

The workshops should include coverage of the following items:

- a. The essential responsibilities of committee conveners and members, consistent with meeting norms now specified in AP 1201
- b. Model ground rules for committee meetings
- c. Decision models, including the meaning of consensus in this context
- d. Title 5 regulations on shared governance

Team Recommendation 8: Board Practices and Evaluation

In order to meet the Standards, members of the Board of Trustees must limit their role in governing the College to those responsibilities established in Board Policy, including delegating power and authority to the Superintendent/President to lead the district and to make administrative decisions regarding the effective implementation of Board Policies without Board interference. Trustees must avoid micromanaging institutional operations including their participation in campus committees and governance groups.

Additionally, the Board must establish and follow a specific, regular time interval for evaluating its performance. (IV.B, IV.B.1, IV.B.1.a-e, IV.B.1.g, IV.B.1.j, IV.B.2, IV.B.2.a-e)

1. Board Self-Evaluation

- a. The President, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, should document the results of the most recent self-evaluation, the Board's discussion of them, and any conclusions, recommendations, or goals the Board formulated in consequence. In the interests of transparency, the President and Board should report out to the campus community any Board goals or activities that result from the self-evaluation. The same process should apply after every self-evaluation cycle. (Priority 2)
- b. The Board should revise Policy 2745 to specify a regular interval for the Board self-evaluation cycle. (Priority 2)

2. Governance, Delegation, and Avoiding Micromanagement

- a. Under the provisions of its existing contract, PPL should provide one workshop for the Board of Trustees specifically on the issue of micromanagement. The workshop, using as at least one of its texts "Preventing Micromanagement—Creating High Performance Boards" (Community College League of California, *Board Focus*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Fall 2006), should provide the Board and the Superintendent/President with concrete methods for preventing most micromanagement and dealing with it constructively when it does occur. Materials developed for the workshop, or other suitable materials on the same subject, should be made available to the entire campus community, to help educate all College constituencies on the appropriate delineation of responsibilities. (Priority 2)
 - b. Going forward, the Board of Trustees should devote some meeting or retreat time on a periodic basis—perhaps biennially or after every Board election that results in new members, whichever comes first—to a facilitated discussion of sound practices and District Policies and Procedures related to board governance, the delegation of authority to the Superintendent/President, and avoiding micromanagement, to ensure that all members, whether longtime or new, remain on the same page regarding these issues. (Priority 2)
 - c. The Board of Trustees and the Superintendent/President need to establish formal procedures for the orientation of new Board members, and for ongoing staff development for the Board. (Priority 2)
 - d. The Board, with the assistance of PPL under a mutually agreed-upon modification of the provisions of PPL's existing contract, should refine or develop Administrative Procedures and/or Board Policies related to succession and other Board-related issues identified in the process of producing this report. (Priority 2)
3. **Improving Campus Understanding of Board Responsibilities:** The College should devote part of the next flex day (see Consultant Recommendations under Team Recommendation 4 above) to a presentation and discussion of the proper delineation between Board responsibilities and those of the President. (Priority 2)

4. **Affirmation of Value:** The President, on behalf of the Board, should take specific steps to ensure that the Board's actions accurately reflect that members value the input received from all constituency groups. For example, the Board could take the simple but powerful step of moving the Reports from all employee groups to a slot significantly earlier in the Board meeting agenda, or otherwise manage its time to ensure that all constituency Reports are an integral part of each meeting. (Priority 1)

Accrediting Commission Action Probabilities

Making predictions about Commission actions is a dangerous enterprise at best, because of uncertainties inherent in its processes. However, I will hazard an estimate of probabilities, based on the gap analysis in this report. In my judgment, if the College works very productively between now and March 2012 along the lines set forth in the consultant recommendations above, and writes a strong Follow-Up Report, the most probable outcome of the June 2012 Commission meeting is continuation on Probation, with a requirement for another Follow-Up Report by October 2012 or March 2013. Moving up to Warning, also with a requirement for another Follow-Up Report, is possible if the College makes extraordinary progress over the next few months. Full reaffirmation is unlikely. Also unlikely is a move down to Show Cause, given appropriate College effort and significant progress over the next few months.

Summary of Recommended Actions by Priority Category

Section	Priority 1	Priority 2	
General	1a-b, d 2 3b 5 6a-b 7	1c 3a 4a	4b
Team Recommendation 1	1		
Team Recommendation 2	4 5a 6a 9	1a-f 2a-b 3 5b-c 6b-c	5d 6d 7 8
Team Recommendation 3	1a-c 4 5a, d 7a	1d 2 3 5b-c 6 7b 8 9	
Team Recommendation 4	1 2b, d 3a, c 5	2a, c 3d	3b 4
Team Recommendation 5	1a-b	2 3	4
Team Recommendation 6	1 2 3a-b 4a 5b	3c 4b-c 5a	3d 4d
Team Recommendation 7	1a	1b-c 2b 3	1d 2a
Team Recommendation 8	1a 2a 4	2d 3	1b 2b-c