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**General Commendations and Recommendation**
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Wenatchee Valley College

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Introduction

Wenatchee Valley College (WVC) is a comprehensive community college spanning Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan counties. The Wenatchee campus, situated near the Eastern slopes of the Cascade Mountains, is on a 52-acre site, and the Omak campus, located approximately 100 miles north of the Wenatchee campus, is on a 12-acre site in Okanogan County.

WVC is one of the four institutions in the region covered by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) to pilot the new accreditation standards (draft 4.0) and oversight process. The new oversight process requires four scheduled evaluations in a seven-year period, as opposed to two evaluations in a ten-year period. Under this septennial accreditation process, the institution submits reports in the first and fifth years and hosts committees of evaluators in the third and seventh years. The current evaluation site visit was the third-year evaluation and included Standards One and Two.

WVC’s accreditation activities started with its initial accreditation by NWCCU in 1948. Below is the accreditation history of the College in chronological order:

1949-60: Series of progress reports, visitations, and full-scale visit in 1959.
1960-70: Series of progress reports, regular interim visit, and full-scale visit in 1969.
1970-80: Regular interim visit and full-scale visit in 1979.
1980-90: Focused interim visit, regular interim visit, and full-scale visit in 1989.
2001-03: Two focused interim visits to address a subset of recommendations from the 2000 full-scale evaluation report.
2005: Regular interim visit included two recommendations.
2008: Focused interim visit.

The evaluation visit on October 14-16, 2009, lasted two and a half days, during which the evaluators conducted interviews, reviewed evidence in the team room organized by the College, reviewed documents on the intranet, and visited the Omak campus located 100 miles north of the Wenatchee campus. The College had the evidence documents easily accessible in the resource room and on the intranet that was made available to the evaluators. The faculty and staff were collegial, hospitable, and candid in their interviews with the evaluators, and the support provided to the evaluators in terms of technology, navigating the campus, food, and other clerical needs was excellent.

The evaluation team found the Year Three Report to be open and honest with a commitment to ongoing improvement. The overall study was well-written and organized in a way that made it easy for the evaluators to connect back to the standards.
Standard One—Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

1.A Mission

Wenatchee Valley College’s mission statement clearly states the purpose of the institution, which is widely understood by faculty and staff. The mission statement addresses the comprehensive nature of the program offerings1 and the learning environment provided for the students in order to meet program outcomes. The current mission statement was reviewed and revised by the Board of Trustees in 2007-08. (1.A.1) In addition, the Ends Policy statements were reviewed and revised, with the goal of mapping them to the Core Themes.

The Self Study Report clearly describes how the college community will recognize fulfillment of the mission, by assigning weighted values to the different indicators for mission fulfillment and identifying the thresholds of what is acceptable in the journey toward mission fulfillment. (1.A.2) Specifically, they have two indicators to address mission fulfillment—Student Progress and Success2, and Community Engagement and Enrichment3.

1.B Core Themes

The evaluation team applauds WVC for the tight alignment of Core Themes with the mission of the College. The seven Core Themes are explicitly mapped onto every part of the mission, leaving no gaps (1.B.1):


The team further commends WVC for the clear definitions and the intentional delineation of indicators which demonstrate fulfillment of each theme and hence the mission.

In addition, indicators are consistent and clear across the themes. (1.B.2) For example, the first indicator for the first five themes addresses student retention and enrollment. In Core Theme One, Transfer/Liberal Education, the first indicator addresses the retention and completion rate of students in transfer courses and programs.

It should be noted that the indicators in the first five Themes are much more definitive than those in Themes Six and Seven. The evaluators, however, recognize that the Themes on Student Access (Theme 6) and Diversity (Theme 7) are generally recognized to be more difficult to measure.

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1 Liberal Arts, Professional/Technical, Basic Skills, Continuing Education
2 Student Progress and Success: Retention, Completion, Transition
3 Community Engagement and Enrichment: Satisfaction, Diversity, Sponsorship of community events, Enrollment Demand, Access through alternative delivery of courses
Standard Two—Resources and Capacity

2.A Governance

It is clear that WVC is well positioned to fulfill its Core Themes and mission, as evidenced by a thorough review of institutional policies and by interviews with administrators, faculty, and staff. Unfortunately, the recent reduction (11%) of state appropriations has resulted in institutional budget reductions including the layoffs of a significant number of employees. The Board of Trustees has been actively involved working with the administration to ensure that the budget reductions were made in a way that ensures that the institutional mission would continue to be met. These reductions have had an impact on the morale of faculty and staff. Nevertheless, the evaluators were impressed with the level of commitment from all employees to student success and with the creative thinking used to support the college functions during a time of reduced resources. The evaluators remind the college leadership to develop long-term plans for the College which are fiscally sustainable and still maintain the effectiveness of programs and services.

The governance system of the College is well understood by all constituent groups. In interviews, faculty, staff, students, and managers recognized that the committees in the governance system are advisory groups and that the decision-making authority resides with the administrators. Although there are differing opinions on the ideal governance system, all employees and students have the same understanding and interpretation of the governance system. (2.A.1) A pervasive concern expressed by faculty and classified leadership was the decision made on the construction of dormitories and a maintenance building on campus. Although the senior administration clearly understood these decisions to be a deliberate outcome of feedback from students and the community at-large, faculty and classified felt that there were no conversations or discussions held at any of the governance committees. (2.A.1 and 2.A.2)

WVC’s Board of Trustees has five voting members, all of whom have no contractual, employment, or financial interest in the College (2.A.4). Board members are committed to the Carver model of “Policy Governance” which they adopted in 2001. Under this approach, they fully engage in their responsibilities at the policy level and hold the President accountable to implement the Board-approved policies (2.A.6) by having regular accountability reports, submitted by Administration on a quarterly schedule.

The turnover in the presidency in the last 10 years, and the vacancies of mid-level management, has created a sense of instability in leadership. However, there is a growing sense of stability under the leadership of the current President, who has been in his position for four years. The evaluators encourage the College to examine, and understand, the reasons for this turnover in managers and administrators, and to make the necessary changes to retain individuals in these positions in order to bring long-term stability to the organization.
Policies and Procedures

Academics

Policies related to instruction, which constitute Section 300 of the WVC Policies and Procedures Manual, are accessible by faculty and staff via the Commons intranet site and are available to students through the Human Resources office. (2.A.10) These policies include statements on general academic regulations; development, approval, and implementation of curriculum; general education and related instruction; educational assessment; faculty evaluation; scholarship, research, and artistic creation.

Library and information resources policies and procedures are documented, published, and enforced. (2.A.11), addressing areas such as selection of materials, acceptance of gifts, circulation, library hours, interlibrary loans, damage or loss, overdue charges and fines, foods and beverages, quiet areas, cell phone use, etc.

The College accepts up to 60 quarter credits from regionally-accredited institutions toward a WVC degree. (2.A.12) The Registrar serves as the primary evaluator of transfer credits and consults as warranted with appropriate faculty and administrators. Types of courses not accepted in transfer and other requirements are detailed in the transfer-of-credit policy that appears on the WVC web site.

Students

A variety of processes and procedures are clearly delineated in the Student Handbook and on the web in regard to students, including academic appeals, academic honesty, disciplinary charges in the College’s Code of Conduct, process for students with disabilities including a policy on service animals. (2.A.13) Staff who handle policy implementation and related issues for one or both of the campus are identified.

The institution utilizes well-documented policies and procedures to guide the students into appropriate level coursework through a testing process (Compass) and through review of transcript college coursework. Termination and appeal processes are also documented; student requests for academic re-instatement and similar issues are reviewed by a faculty/student development committee that meets regularly.

The College identifies procedures and policies for co-curricular student activities, as well as their relationship to the institution. The relationship of the College to its intercollegiate athletics, including the organization NWACC, is readily available. A more complete policy is needed for the Wenatchee campus Booster Club. A guide for student media was not available, although there is one publication on the Wenatchee campus.
Human Resources

The institution publishes its human resources policies and files under the Regulations section of the intranet. Policies are drawn from federal, state, and college regulations that govern employee treatment and responsibilities. Grievance and due process guidelines are available for non-teaching personnel. Teaching personnel follow the processes listed in the current Wenatchee Valley College-Faculty Association contract. (2.A.16)

Employees receive an initial view of their work conditions and assignments in the application process. Positions and applications are handled online. The intranet section on Human Resources regulations outlines such processes as evaluation and termination.

The Human Resources department maintains a file on each employee. Only four Human Resources employees are able to access the files, which are protected by key card. Medical records and FMLA requests and approvals are kept in separate files for employees. Supervisors and other authorized personnel are able to view an employee personnel (but not medical) files. These processes ensure that files are kept secure and as confidential as possible.

Institutional Integrity

WVC has several policies that relate to intuitional integrity. Here are a few examples:

200.125: Oversight of all publications and publicity
500.275: Employment of Relatives (Anti-Nepotism)
560.110: Faculty/student relationships
000.200: Political activities
000.210: Religious activities
000.300: Freedom of Inquiry and Expression
500.525: Intellectual property for both college employees and students (2.A.22)
200.110: Contractual agreements

Through review of documents and interviews, it is clear that these policies are followed.

WVC represents itself accurately through its publications (2.A.19) and subscribes to high ethical standards in the treatment of students, faculty, administrators, and staff (2.A.21).

Academic Freedom

The College’s policy on academic freedom (2.A.25) is drawn from the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure of the American Association of University Professors. The WVC academic freedom policy, which appears in both the policies and procedures manual and the faculty contract, outlines freedoms and responsibilities consistent with NWCCU standards.
WVC is part of the system of Washington State Community and Technical Colleges. As such, it must abide by rules of the system, the Office of Financial Management, and other government oversight agencies. In addition, the College has Board policies regarding financial matters. (2.A.28) In some cases, such as the issuance of debt, the College does not have a separate policy from the controlling state agency.

2.B Human Resources

The Institution employs qualified personnel to support its programs and services. (2.B.1) Due to recent retirements and budget cuts, some areas have sustained losses that may begin to reduce their effectiveness. With an increase in students bringing more diverse and complex needs, areas such as Financial Aid, Registrar and Counseling may be unable to maintain efficiency and effectiveness of service to students.

Administrators and staff are to be regularly evaluated in regard to their performance, though no specific dates for performance review periods are listed in the Human Resources regulations. Some employees noted that they had not been evaluated for several years, while others said they had been evaluated yearly.

The institution provides minimal professional development support to its employees, mainly due to budget shrinkages in travel and training funds. (2.B.3) Some online training in sexual harassment and diversity is available to all College staff. Staff are able to access information through their professional organization’s publications and listservs. Computer training, offered in the past by the IT staff, has been eliminated due to the sharp reductions in personnel in that area. Staff are now directed to online tutorials. Faculty have maintained professional development funds in the amount of approximately $1200 per member; additional funds are available through a competitive grant process. An in-service program is held before each term, with a focus on faculty development. Other staff attend a one-day kickoff of the academic year in the fall. In the past, the Classified Association held a retreat day for all members in an off-campus location.

WVC adheres to qualification standards set by the state of Washington in employing its full-time and adjunct instructors (essentially requiring a master’s degree in the primary teaching area for academic/transfer faculty, and vocational teaching certificate and/or Bachelor’s degree for professional/technical faculty). As it has faced budget challenges and made requisite reductions across the College, WVC has preserved a sufficient number of faculty positions to achieve its educational objectives. Through the Curriculum Committee and Instruction Council, the integrity and continuity of the College’s academic programs are overseen by the faculty. Faculty responsibilities and workloads at WVC are consistent with what is customary at a comprehensive community college and are specified in the faculty contract. Evaluation of faculty at WVC utilizes multiple indices and includes input from peers, administrators, and students; the process falls within cycles specified by NWCCU standards and is detailed in the faculty contract.
2.C Education Resources

Wenatchee Valley College offers a wide range of two-year degrees and one-year certificates. The Associate of Arts and Sciences is the primary transfer degree. Other special transfer degrees include the Associate of Science (for science or engineering students), Associate of Business (for business students), and the Associate of Fine Arts (for music students). The Associate of General Studies is a non-transfer degree that serves students with flexible interests and needs. Fourteen (14) Associate of Technical Science degrees and twelve (12) Certificates of Completion are offered in professional-technical fields. Additional certificate programs under one year in length are offered in a number of technical fields. The content and rigor of all programs are overseen by faculty through the Curriculum Committee, with advisory committees providing important input for professional/technical programs, and the statewide Intercollege Relations Commission providing guidance on the structure of transfer degrees. Admission and graduation (degree) requirements are clearly defined and presented in the college catalog and on the college web site. (2.C.1, 2.C.3, 2.C.4)

Student learning outcomes have been defined for all courses, programs, and degrees. Degree-level student learning outcomes are tied to WVC’s “core abilities.” The College has developed student learning outcomes for all of its programs. These are posted on the WVC web site, were available for review during the Year 3 evaluation visit, and overall were found to be well-conceived and thorough. In addition, course-level student learning outcomes are defined, listed in course outlines, and provided to enrolled students via course syllabi.

The Curriculum Committee (comprised largely of faculty) is charged with reviewing and approving new courses and programs, and also reviews and updates existing courses on a regular cycle. After Curriculum Committee approval, new courses and programs are presented to the Instruction Council (comprised of faculty division chairs, as well as administrative and student representatives) for another round of scrutiny. In addition to playing a major role in overseeing the curriculum, WVC faculty are integrally involved in the selection of new instructors through a process set forth in the faculty contract. Furthermore, all faculty members are involved in fostering and assessing student achievement; with important impetus and coordination coming from the faculty-led Assessment Committee. (2.C.5)

Faculty work closely with library personnel to ensure that use of library and information resources is integrated into the learning process. The type and level of use depends on the subject matter, mode of delivery, and instructor preferences. Some courses incorporate links to third-party websites, while others utilize the Library web site or printed, audio-visual, and electronic resources. Some courses emphasize the development and/or reinforcement of information literacy skills by teaching students and providing them an opportunity to practice how to access relevant and appropriate information efficiently, how to critically evaluate information, and list proper citation. Library staff provide tutorials and training sessions for faculty and students on accessing and using library and information resources. (2.C.6)
The College allows students to earn credits through various nontraditional and experiential learning options including cooperative work experience and military experience. Criteria are detailed in the WVC policies and procedures manual and include appropriate faculty input and requisite limits on the maximum number of credits that may be awarded. (2.C.7)

As previously noted in the Governance section of this evaluation report, the College’s transfer-of-credit policy allows for up to 60 quarter credits from a regionally-accredited institution to be applied toward a WVC degree; with appropriate review by the registrar, faculty, and administrators. In support of its own students who intend to transfer into baccalaureate programs, the College advises students to coordinate closely with receiving institutions and maintains various articulation agreements. (2.C.8)

Undergraduate Programs

The Associate of Arts and Sciences, Associate of Science, Associate of Business, and the Associate of Fine Arts degrees require an integrated course of study in general education that helps students develop depth and breadth of intellect. Areas of study, credits required, and course options are clearly presented in the college catalog. In addition to the major general education areas (humanities and fine arts, mathematics and natural sciences, and social sciences), the Associate of Arts and Sciences also includes “life skills” courses in its distribution requirements. Overall, the various components of general education at WVC contribute to development of the College’s core abilities described earlier in this Education Resources section. (2.C.9, 2.C.10)

The Associate of Technical Science degree and one-year Certificate of Completion incorporate related instruction in the required areas of communication, computation, and human relations. Detailed programs of study for professional-technical degrees and certificates, including courses that satisfy related-instruction requirements for specific programs, appear in the college catalog. Related instruction at WVC is taught in blocks of specialized instruction utilizing courses that are aligned with the respective programs. (2.C.9, 2.C.11)

Continuing Education and Non-Credit Programs

Continuing Education at WVC provides a range of self-supporting personal and professional development classes and programs in keeping with the College’s mission and in response to community interests and needs. These offerings are almost exclusively non-credit, but whenever courses are offered for credit, appropriate approval protocols are followed. Faculty are appropriately involved in the planning and evaluation of continuing education offerings. In instances where Continuing Education Units may be earned, this is typically achieved through an external association or agency, with WVC providing necessary documentation to the outside group. Complete records are maintained at the College, as well as submitted to the state, regarding the number of continuing education courses offered and the nature of learning that occurs. (2.C.16-19)
Adult Basic Skills is another area through which the College offers non-credit programs in keeping with its mission. Core offerings include English as a Second Language, Adult Basic Education, and General Educational Development. The program employs a small number of full-time faculty, as well as adjunct instructors, and offers face-to-face and technology-based instruction at both campus and community locations. Beyond teaching necessary basic skills, Adult Basic Skills works with students in setting further educational goals and has been placing students who have reached the latter stages of the program into a college success skills classes to encourage and help them transition to college-level work. Records regarding the number and nature of offerings are maintained at the College and are also submitted to the State. (2.C.16-19)

2.D Student Support Resources

Learning resources appeared to be aligned with the educational programs. However, given the role of distance learning in achieving its Core Theme objectives, there was insufficient evidence of the College intentionally committing the resources for developing faculty, or for developing adequate infrastructure to create an effective online learning environment for students. Further, there did not appear to be an assessment of whether students are prepared to be successful in this alternative learning environment. (2.D.1)

The College has a 24/7 Safety Force that works closely with local law enforcement and fire authorities. The College complies with the Clery Act and other requirements of the federal and state governments.

The College is open-access and, as a result, allows all students who hold a high school diploma or equivalent, or a person who is past high school age, to enroll at the College, depending on their academic achievement levels. Restricted programs have more stringent entrance policies, and information is available in a variety of campus documents. Recruiting for athletes is covered by the various coaches, and outreach staff work with the high schools and other entities, such as the Native Tribal Nations and social service and State agencies. The Division of Basic Skills recruits soon-to-be-GED-graduates for college entrance. Orientation to the College and its programs is held for new students, and information about requirements is disseminated.

The College has not had any teach-out problems or issues, nor does a policy exist, but instructional personnel indicated that they do now, and will continue to, work with any students who need extra assistance in completing courses or degree requirements not offered at the College resulting from any number of reasons. (2.D.4)

The College publishes a yearly catalog and website that provide current and accurate data and information about a variety of important topics, including the College’s mission and Core Themes, information about faculty and administrators, fees and costs, and the academic calendar. Publications also list licensure and employment options for different fields offered by the College in its curricula.
The College provides for permanent and secure retention of student records (transcripts), as well as back-up data. Other student documents are held at the College based on the state’s record destruction schedule.

The College provides a range of federal, state, and private funds for students and participates in various third-party payments, including Tribal and Vocational Rehabilitation schemes. Emergency loans and funds are available to qualified students. Information about financial aid is available in a variety of media. Scholarships are available through local and national programs and are awarded based on specific criteria. Students who apply for student loans must take an online counseling course and a mastery test on the material before they apply for the loan. The program describes the process and problems with loan payment and non-payment.

The College has a well-planned academic advising program which utilizes exempt staff and teaching faculty. There may be a need for more training for educational planners in terms of curricular changes, especially in light of transfer requirements, and also a need to better regulate the number of advisees assigned to faculty. Students appear to be well informed about the advising structure and offered no complaints. (2.D.10)

The co-curricular program at each campus appears to be broad and meet the unique needs of the various student bodies. Weekend and evening programming is limited, but is being expanded. Food service is available every evening and parts of the weekends. (2.D.11)

The Bookstore is well-equipped with textbooks and other materials, as well as supplementary and complementary school supplies. A reasonable amount of college paraphernalia is available, as are health notions and snacks. Newspapers and other books are not stocked, but the staff refers students and employees to a good independent bookstore nearby. The food service is in operation from early morning until early evening during weekdays, on Saturdays for breakfast and lunch, and for Sunday dinner. The expanded evening and weekend service is focused on the new resident students who live in nearby apartments, and evening and weekend students and visitors. A variety of items are sold, including two daily “blue plate” specials. (2.D.12)

The College complies with Title IX equity regulations in regard to intercollegiate athletics and regularly ensures that NWACC guidelines are met in terms of student status. The Vice President of Student Development also acts as the Athletic Director, so there is high visibility of athletics on the cabinet level. Coaches are drawn from the full-time staff and from the community as part-time employees. Athletics is funded from student fees and from Booster Club revenues, the latter of which needs some clarification as to agreements, funding sources, and deposits. (2.D.13)
2.E Library and Information Resources

Over the past eighteen months, the WVC Library has gone through a significant transformation under the leadership of the new Director. These changes positively impacted space utilization, access to resources and services, use of technology, as well as faculty and student training opportunities. These improvements were accomplished while WVC has been experiencing budget cutbacks and some reduction in staff.

A review of the collection (traditional and electronic) and services offered presented evidence that, consistent with its mission and Core Themes, WVC provides access to library and information resources with an appropriate level of currency, depth, and breadth to support the institution’s programs and services wherever offered and however delivered. (2.E.1) Through interviews and open forums with faculty and students, committee members found that faculty and students are satisfied with the resources and services offered through the Library.

Several faculty and students commented on how knowledgeable and helpful the Library staff is. Users also applauded the Library’s efforts to increase access to information resources by focusing more on electronic resources that students and faculty can access anytime, anywhere, without having to make a trip to the Library or being limited to Library hours. Even faculty members who historically have favored traditional printed materials reported that many of their students now prefer electronic resources. The committee found evidence of improvement in the accessibility of library and information resources and services, and in the judicious use of limited human and financial resources. Circulation statistics and gate counts show an overall increase in Library usage and a significant increase in the use of electronic resources such as e-books and online journals. While usage of services and resources increased, the Library is currently operating with two part-time staff and several student employees fewer at the Wenatchee campus and one part-time staff fewer at the Omak Library.

Although the Brown Library is an older facility, and some of the furniture and fixtures are also aging, the building has gone through some renovation, and the Library Director continues to look for ways to improve the utilization of the existing physical space. Examples of recent changes include the move of tutoring services to the Library, the creation of some group study rooms, and a conference room with ITV capabilities. The Library also plans to convert a faculty computer room that has not been utilized into another group study room. They can then move the computers from the converted faculty computer room into group study rooms to allow students to do research while working on various group projects. Students now can utilize Library computers to do word processing or work on presentations and other class projects. While previously only Internet was available on computers in the Library, currently there are more programs available based on individual student logins allowing students to work on a variety of projects inside the Library.

The Library staff member overseeing the Omak Library is satisfied with the overall level of resources and services offered to students and faculty located at the Omak campus.
Availability of electronic resources and services, as well as intra-library and interlibrary loans, complement the book collection consisting of almost 5,000 books. While the Omak Library does not have a security system installed, Library staff reported that loss and/or theft have not been problems. Nevertheless, one of the challenges at the Omak campus is limited library staff (only one full-time staff member). The part-time position was eliminated during the recent budget cutbacks. Library staff have shown resourcefulness and creativity in dealing with limited financial resources. For example, the Omak campus has been utilizing the help of a library science intern. Other areas of the Library also seek and utilize grant funding. The Library Director has been aggressively negotiating and renegotiating licensing agreements and seeking shared purchasing with other libraries to decrease cost.

The Library website has been redesigned. It provides valuable information to students, faculty, staff, and administration, and useful tools such as online access to the library catalog, a federated search system, live 24/7 online chat service, interlibrary loan request forms, tutorials, etc. Students and faculty reported satisfaction with the Library website.

Faculty spoke in very complimentary terms about the Teaching and Learning Center. Although the Teaching and Learning Center has only one full-time staff member, its contributions are significant, from administering Angel (WVC’s online learning management system) to training and supporting faculty in the use of SharePoint, Elluminate, Classroom Gradebook, SurveyMonkey, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, InDesign, Photoshop, ITV system, digital cameras, scanners, document cameras, etc. The Teaching and Learning Center also works at implementing QualityMatters, online course evaluations, an early alert program, e-portfolios, etc. Training sessions are held during in-service and mini-workshops are offered throughout the year. One-on-one training opportunities are also offered.

Challenges reported to the committee included the lack of broadband availability in certain parts of WVC’s service area (some areas only have DSL, while some areas only have dial-up). Another challenge mentioned was the changes in state-wide systems (e.g. Blackboard, Angel, etc.) and their impact on faculty. Faculty voiced some frustration and a sense of lack of control over state-wide decisions and systems.

Faculty praised the Library staff’s positive attitude, enthusiasm, and ability to make faculty feel comfortable with, and help them learn about, various new technologies in order to empower them to provide their students access to quality, current, and relevant information resources. In interviews with Library staff, the committee found that despite budget cuts and staff reductions the staff have shown a great deal of commitment to customer service and continuous improvement of resources and services. Staff are working on a number of larger new projects. The new Library Director energized and inspired the staff. As one staff member jokingly put it, “he turned the whole Library upside down,” but the same staff member enthusiastically spoke of the satisfaction of seeing the tangible positive results of the changes.
The committee found evidence that faculty and students have opportunities to provide input into planning for library and information resources. Collection development input is provided through a variety of channels, both formal and informal. (2.E.2)

Library staff provides appropriate training and support to help students and faculty access and use library and information resources and services effectively and efficiently. Information literacy at WVC has been incorporated into the six core abilities identified by the College and it is infused across disciplines and curricula. The Library does not carry all the responsibility for teaching students how to become information literate. While the Library offers bibliographic instruction, various aspects of information literacy have been incorporated into English, science, social science, nursing, and other subject courses. These courses, through the use of research papers, case studies, presentations, group projects and other assignments, introduce and/or reinforce concepts such as peer reviewed sources, citations, evaluation of information resources, and ethical and responsible use of information. Library staff works collaboratively with the instructors to help students access and use information resources. They offer classroom, small group, and one-on-one training. (2.E.3)

The Library recently has started to make a more concerted effort to evaluate the accessibility, quality, adequacy, and usefulness of its resources and services. With the help of the Online Computer Library Center’s (OCLC) collection analysis tool, the Library was able to more thoroughly analyze its collection, which has led to an ambitious weeding program and the acquisition of a variety of electronic resources. (2.E.4)

2.F Financial Resources

Wenatchee Valley College practices sound and appropriate budgeting and financial practices. The Vice President for Administrative Services serves as the college’s Chief Financial Officer. She has been Vice President since July 2007. Prior to that, she served as the college’s Director of Fiscal Services. (2.F.1, 2.F.2, 2.A.9)

The college’s most recent Accountability Audit Report from the Washington State Auditor’s Office is for the period from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2008. There were no audit findings. The past five audits have reported only three findings. The three findings were from the 2005-07 audit, and all have been resolved. (2.F.7)

The College prepares financial statements for the Board of Directors quarterly, with a customized fund activity report given to the Board on a monthly basis.

During fiscal year 2008-09, Wenatchee Valley College had to deal with a significant reduction in funding from the State of Washington. WVC receives over 60% of its funds from the State. These reductions totaled $1.7 million, equal to 12% of the college’s operating budget.

Wenatchee Valley College had to act quickly to balance its 2008-09 budget and prepare its 2009-10 budget. Reductions were necessary in most budget line items, including
personnel expense. Vacant positions were not filled, layoffs occurred, and a separation incentive was instituted. A philosophical priority in the reductions was to “protect the critical offerings of the college and continue to fulfill WVC’s core mission.” College leadership is cognizant that some particular reductions may not be sustainable over the long term and some future budget adjustments may be necessary. The College must continue monitoring its budget allocations and staffing to ensure that resources are properly allocated to maximize the effectiveness of the institution.

The evaluators found that the College followed its policies, guidelines, and procedures for development of the revised 2008-09 and 2009-10 budgets. The college community had opportunity to participate and comment on the development of the budget. The timeframe for the 2008-09 revised budget was very short, but this was caused by a revenue shortfall at the State level and was unavoidable. (2.F.3)

The Board has adopted a reserve policy which requires a reserve equal to 5% of operating funds. The College has several auxiliary funds, such as the bookstore, printing, and parking. The auxiliaries do not carry negative fund balances. (2.F.6)

One auxiliary fund relates to the recent construction and opening of a new 75-bed residence hall. The residence hall was partially funded through the issuance of $2.9 million dollars in bonds. The amortization period is 20 years.

The residence hall opened for the first time in Fall Semester 2009. Its occupancy is about 76% of potential. During the 2009-10 year, it is estimated that the residence hall fund will run a deficit of approximately $100,000. For the current year, the college plans to transfer funds from the bookstore fund to close the deficit. No analysis has been done on possible future years operating profits or losses.

The College may wish to consider multi-year income and expense and cash flow forecasts for the residence hall with sensitivity analysis under different occupancy levels and pricing structures. This could make it easier to predict when breakeven will occur and how long subsidy may need to continue.

Capital budgets have been constrained with the current budget shortfalls, but in general have been adequate. For fiscal year 2009-10, the equipment budget is $54,000 compared to $279,100 in the initial 2008-09 budget. Persons queried by evaluators generally felt that equipment needs have been met during the past several years.

There are three organizations authorized to conduct fundraising for WVC. Written relationship agreements exist between WVC and the Wenatchee Valley College Foundation and the College and the North Campus Foundation. An agreement exists for the WVC Booster Club to run vending operations on the WVC Campuses in Wenatchee and Omak. No mention is made in the agreement of other events the Booster Club undertakes, such as the annual golf tournament and Hall of Fame dinner. In addition, the vending agreement does not specify how the funds will be used. The College and the Booster Club should formalize this relationship in a written agreement. (2.F.8)
2. G Physical and Technical Infrastructure

Overall, the facilities at WVC are sufficient to meet the needs of the college. (2.G.1) The college has several new buildings that are excellent. Wenatchi Hall was completed in 2006, and a new maintenance building and residence hall were completed in 2009. The completion of the new maintenance building brought the entire facilities department together for greater operational efficiency and will allow for the remodeling of the vacated space for instructional purposes. The College received $500,000 from the legislature that will be used for this purpose.

The College also has some older buildings in need of refurbishment and/or eventual replacement. While some of the buildings and furnishings are showing their age, overall maintenance on the campus is very good.

The grounds on the Wenatchee and Omak campuses are attractive and well maintained.

Accessibility on the campuses is generally good. In Wenatchee, the weight room in the Smith Gym is not accessible to some persons with disabilities as all entrances require the navigation of a set of stairs. On the main level, a workout studio exists which does have some resistance equipment and more could be placed there, if needed. The bleachers in the gymnasium have recently been replaced, and the new bleachers can accommodate wheelchairs in the area of the first set of risers.

WVC most recently updated its Facilities Master Plan in 2008. The plan will serve as a good roadmap for future development of the Wenatchee and Omak campuses. At least annually, the Board of Trustees receives a report on the College’s progress towards accomplishing the District’s Facilities Master Plan. In addition, in 2007, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges commissioned a facility condition survey for all state-owned community and technical colleges, including WVC. It identified six capital repair deficiencies with an estimated cost of $1,283,250. Four of the deficiencies are in buildings that are priorities or candidates for replacement. (2.G.3)

The College has sufficient technical infrastructure to support its programs and services. While the level of service remains good, budget issues have put additional pressure on the IT infrastructure. For example, help desk hours have had to be reduced. Sufficient opportunities still exist for IT staff to receive the training they need to stay current in their jobs, although the training may be through nontraditional sources. (2.G.5)

The College has three dedicated server rooms with independent power and HVAC systems separate from the main building systems. The rooms are also equipped with temperature monitoring equipment which sends alerts via email and text message when the temperature departs from acceptable range. Redundant power supply hardware is utilized for all server rooms. An HP 3000 computer system provides administrative applications such as finance and student records. This system is fully integrated into the disaster recovery plans.
The College has a technology plan that is annually reviewed by the Board of Directors. This plan forms the basis for future years’ activities and budget priorities in the technology area.

The current budget situation has affected the Information Technology department in terms of senior staffing. The IT Director position is vacant, and two employees function as co-directors. If the reduced staffing at the director level continues, the College should be vigilant to see that long and medium range planning does not get lost in the press of day-to-day and week-to-week activities.

The Teaching and Learning Center provides ongoing information, training, and support for faculty in the effective use of a variety of systems and tools such as: SharePoint, Angel, Elluminate, Classroom Gradebook, SurveyMonkey, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, InDesign, Photoshop, ITV system, digital cameras, scanners, document cameras, etc. (2.G.7) The committee did not find evidence of such concerted efforts and focus on staff, administration, and student training in the effective use of technology related to programs, services, and institutional operations.

While recent efforts to support distance learning are to be commended, the College will need to continue to strengthen and expand distance learning capacity, training, and support in order to ensure that it has the potential to achieve the goals of Core Theme 5a. Student Diversity/Access and Core Theme 6a. Responsiveness to Local Needs. When considering alternative delivery methods, the College will need to consider the population of students it intends to serve, the requisite study skills, and the available technological infrastructure. Capacity to develop and expand training and support services required to create effective learning environments will need to be ensured. Both student and faculty training and support must be considered. Instructional design and technical support, as well as faculty training in effective distance learning delivery methodologies and pedagogies, universal design, and various legal and ethical considerations such as accessibility, privacy, and copyright, are some issues to consider as the College pursues alternative delivery methods. Building capacity to expand the availability of accessible student services will also be important.
General Commendations and Recommendation

Commendations

1. The Evaluation Committee commends the leadership of the President, administration, faculty, and staff for integrating the work of the Year Three Report and the adaptation to the new accreditation standards into the fabric of the existing governance system. Further, the committee lauds the definition of the Core Themes and the explicit alignment of the themes with the mission of the College.

2. The Evaluation Committee commends the Board of Trustees, President, administration, faculty, and staff for their commitment to fulfilling the mission of the College during budget reductions. Further, the faculty and staff at both campuses of Wenatchee Valley College are commended for their dedication to student learning and success during difficult times.

3. The Evaluation Committee commends all employees at both Wenatchee and Omak campuses for their level of engagement and involvement with students at the College. The interaction among faculty, staff, and students both in the in-class and out-of-class environments, and the student-centered leadership and activities on both campuses, have created a positive “vibe” in one student’s words, and a place where students can learn, make friends, and grow.

4. The Evaluation Committee commends members of the Board of Trustees for implementing and committing to the principles of Policy Governance and for their dedication to fully engaging with their responsibilities at the policy level.

5. The Evaluation Committee commends Wenatchee Valley College’s library and information technology staff for significant improvements in the utilization of physical, technical, and human resources in order to expand access to, and training in, the utilization of library and information resources and support of distance learning.

6. The Evaluation Committee commends the faculty and staff for their work in the development and redesign of credit and non-credit educational programs to ensure currency and relevance in the curriculum. Further, faculty and staff work collaboratively with local employers and receiving universities to foster the success of students after completion of their studies at Wenatchee Valley College.
Recommendation

1. Given the role of distance education in achieving its Core Theme objectives, the Evaluation Committee recommends that the College carefully consider the population of students it intends to serve and the requisite study skills and technological proficiency for students to be successful when the College selects the delivery methods of instruction. In addition, the Evaluation Committee recommends the College ensure the adequacy of the technology infrastructure to support instruction delivered by distance education methods. Finally, the Evaluation Committee recommends the College ensure that faculty and staff have the technological and pedagogical knowledge to create an effective learning environment for distance education. (2.D.1)