

PEER REVIEW TEAM REPORT

Deep Springs College
HC72 Box 45001
Dyer, NV 89010

This report represents the findings of the Peer Review Team that conducted a focused site visit to Deep Springs College from April 1 - 3, 2024. The Commission acted on the accredited status of the institution during its June 2024 meeting and this team report must be reviewed in conjunction with the Commission's Action letter.

Daren Otten
Team Chair

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FOCUSED SITE VISIT**

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Summary of Focused Site Visit

INSTITUTION: Deep Springs College

DATES OF VISIT: April 1 – 3, 2024

TEAM CHAIR: Daren Otten

This Peer Review Team Report is based on the formative and summative components of the comprehensive peer review process. In October 2023, the team conducted Team ISER Review (formative component) to identify where the college meets Standards and to identify areas of attention for the Focused Site Visit (summative component) by providing Core Inquiries that the team will pursue to validate compliance, improvement, or areas of excellence. The Core Inquiries are appended to this report.

A 3-member peer review team conducted a Focused Site Visit to Deep Springs College April 1-3, 2024, for the purpose of completing its Peer Review Team Report and determination of whether the College continues to meet Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and U.S. Department of Education regulations.

Team Chair Virginia Guleff led the team through the evaluation process from Team ISER Review through the planning stages of the Focused Site Visit. The team chair and vice chair held a pre-Focused Site Visit meeting with the college CEO on March 12, 2024, to discuss updates since the Team ISER Review and to plan for the Focused Site Visit. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the team chair was not able to attend the visit and the vice chair led the team through the Focused Site Visit and completion of the team report. During the visit, the team members met with approximately 30 faculty, administrators, staff and students in formal meetings, group interviews and individual interviews. The team held an open forum, which was well attended, and provided the College community and others to share their thoughts with members of the Focused Site Visit team. The team evaluated how well the College is achieving its stated purposes, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement. The team thanks the College staff for coordinating and hosting the Focused Site Visit meetings and interviews and ensuring a smooth and collegial process.

Major Findings and Recommendations of the Peer Review Team Report

Commendations

Commendation 1: The team commends the entire college community for their integration of self-governance into the students' learning experiences. Administrators, faculty and staff support students to carry out innovative decision-making and leadership; students embrace their self-governance responsibilities and actively engage in the work of the college – which is powerful evidence that the college is accomplishing its mission (I.A.1; IV.A.1)

Recommendations

Recommendations to Meet Standards:

None

Recommendations to Improve Quality:

Recommendation 1: In order to increase effectiveness in evaluating the library resources to ensure their adequacy in meeting student needs, the team recommends the College continue the projects begun for library services to ensure their completion and sustainability (II.B.3)

Introduction

Deep Springs is a two-year liberal arts college with several unique characteristics:

- All students attend for free – receiving a full scholarship, including room and board, equivalent to over \$50,000. Books and lab fees not covered by the college generally total about \$2,000 per student.
- The college is located in a remote high-desert valley in eastern California, just over the Nevada border. Deep Springs is the only presence in the valley, with the nearest town over a mountain pass approximately forty-five minutes away. Excepting emergencies and religious services, Deep Springs students observe a self-imposed isolation policy which requires them to remain in the valley for the whole of each seven-week term.
- The college is organized to give students a high degree of responsibility and beneficial ownership with respect to their own education. Students (along with faculty) serve on and chair the college's four standing committees, which (1) select the incoming classes, (2) hire and review the faculty and select courses, (3) review their peers, and (4) the Communications Committee which oversees publicity and interactions with media and the press.

Three Pillars:

Deep Springs is structured according to the principles of three pillars: academics, labor, and self-governance.

- **Academics:** The Deep Springs academic program provides both a rigorous and intellectually stimulating learning environment. Its success is partly due to the caliber of the faculty the college is able to attract, but it is also the product of the involvement and investment of a highly motivated Student Body. Each student's participation is extensive: not only do they have a say in which particular courses will be taught within the overall curricular plan of the college, students also take a great deal of responsibility for participating in discussions and ensuring that learning is instructional, collaborative, and maintains high standards of rigor.
- **Self Governance:** Deep Springs students are considered the beneficial owners of the college during their time here and are given a substantive role in stewardship over almost every aspect of the college's operation (including academics and labor). Implied in the notion of beneficial ownership is the responsibility to the community at large, as well as all aspects of the college's operation. Students regularly discuss this responsibility, often aspiring to leave the college in the same condition as when they arrived – if not better. Each student is a member of the Student Body, the governing body that manages and oversees the college (in conjunction with the college's administration and the trustees) and helps ensure that Deep Springs adheres to its core purpose, principles, and mission. As mentioned above, each student serves on one of the four standing committees: The Applications Committee solicits applications from prospective students and selects the final class to admit; the Curriculum Committee hires and evaluates faculty; the Review Committee evaluates student performance; and the Communications Committee oversees

publicity and interactions with media and the press. The Student Body elects a new president every two terms (approximately 14 weeks, or one semester). Two students sit as full voting members of the Trustees of Deep Springs.

- Labor: The Deep Springs program includes a ranch of 270 head of cattle and a farming operation that produces approximately 900 tons of alfalfa per year. In addition, students are involved in the management of chickens, the college's dairy, and the college's boarding house, where meals are cooked and served. Each student is assigned a new labor position on average every 7-14 weeks, during which time their work is supervised by a staff member. The Student Body elects a student Labor Commissioner approximately every 14 weeks who serves as commissioner/foreman of the labor program and coordinates with staff to ensure that program and the ranch, farm, grounds, and boarding house operations run smoothly.

During the focused visit, the team greatly appreciated the opportunity to observe the following notable effective practices that Deep Springs College fosters:

- Student leadership in college governance and operational decision making (curriculum, labor, Board of Trustees)
- Mission-driven integration of curricular and co-curricular experiences
- Range of student learning that occurs through the three pillars

Eligibility Requirements

1. Authority

Deep Springs is a private incorporated institution operating under their Articles of Incorporation and accredited by ACCJC.

2. Operational Status

Deep Springs is an operational institution with approximately 26-30 students annually enrolled in its two-year program.

3. Degrees

The Deep Springs College curriculum is designed to allow students to earn an Associate's Degree within two years. The Deep Springs College Academic Catalog delineates requirements for an Associate's Degree and outlines the required courses, course offerings by subject and distribution and the Goals of the Deep Springs Academic Program.

4. Chief Executive Officer

The Deep Springs President is appointed by the Board of Trustees who ensures the President's authority in implementing and administering college and board policies. The President does not serve as chair of the governing board.

5. Financial Accountability

Deep Springs undergoes regular financial audits as part of the college's long-term financial accountability and planning. There have been no audit findings based on the review of recent reports.

Checklist for Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Related Commission Policies

The evaluation items detailed in this Checklist are those which fall specifically under federal regulations and related Commission policies, beyond what is articulated in the Accreditation Standards; other evaluation items under ACCJC standards may address the same or similar subject matter. The peer review team evaluated the institution’s compliance with Standards as well as the specific Checklist elements from federal regulations and related Commission policies noted here.

Public Notification of a Peer Review Team Visit and Third Party Comment

Evaluation Items:

X	The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comment in advance of a comprehensive review visit.
X	The institution cooperates with the review team in any necessary follow-up related to the third party comment.
X	The institution demonstrates compliance with the <i>Commission Policy on Rights, Responsibilities, and Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions</i> as to third party comment.

[Regulation citation: 602.23(b).]

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

X	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

Narrative:

Standards and Performance with Respect to Student Achievement

Evaluation Items:

X	The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance across the institution, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. Course completion is included as one of these elements of student achievement. Other elements of student achievement performance for measurement have been determined as appropriate to the institution’s mission. (Standard I.B.3 and Section B. Presentation of Student Achievement Data and Institution-set Standards)
X	The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance within each instructional program, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. The defined elements include, but are not limited to, job placement rates for program completers, and for programs in fields where licensure is required, the licensure examination passage rates for program completers. (Standard I.B.3 and Section B. Presentation of Student Achievement Data and Institution-set Standards)
X	The institution-set standards for programs and across the institution are relevant to guide self-evaluation and institutional improvement; the defined elements and expected performance levels are appropriate within higher education; the results are reported regularly across the campus; and the definition of elements and results are used in program-level and institution-wide planning to evaluate how well the institution fulfills its mission, to determine needed changes, to allocating resources, and to make improvements. (Standard I.B.3, Standard I.B.9)
X	The institution analyzes its performance as to the institution-set standards and as to student achievement, and takes appropriate measures in areas where its performance is not at the expected level. (Standard I.B.4)

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(i); 602.17(f); 602.19 (a-e).]

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

X	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

Narrative:

Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

Evaluation Items:

X	Credit hour assignments and degree program lengths are within the range of good practice in higher education (in policy and procedure). (Standard II.A.9)
X	The assignment of credit hours and degree program lengths is verified by the institution, and is reliable and accurate across classroom based courses, laboratory classes, distance education classes, and for courses that involve clinical practice (if applicable to the institution). (Standard II.A.9)
X	Tuition is consistent across degree programs (or there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition). (Standard I.C.2)
X	Any clock hour conversions to credit hours adhere to the Department of Education's conversion formula, both in policy and procedure, and in practice. (Standard II.A.9)
X	The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission <i>Policy on Credit Hour, Clock Hour, and Academic Year</i> .

[Regulation citations: 600.2 (definition of credit hour); 602.16(a)(1)(viii); 602.24(e), (f); 668.2; 668.9.]

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

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	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

Narrative:

Transfer Policies

Evaluation Items:

X	Transfer policies are appropriately disclosed to students and to the public. (Standard II.A.10)
X	Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to accept credits for transfer, and any types of institutions or sources from which the institution will not accept credits. (Standard II.A.10)
	Transfer of credit policies identify a list of institutions with which it has established an articulation agreement.
X	Transfer of credit policies include written criteria used to evaluate and award credit for prior learning experience including, but not limited to, service in the armed forces, paid or unpaid employment, or other demonstrated competency or learning.
X	The institution complies with the Commission <i>Policy on Transfer of Credit</i> .

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(viii); 602.17(a)(3); 602.24(e); 668.43(a)(11).]

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

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	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

Narrative: The college does not have articulation agreements with other institutions.

Distance Education and Correspondence Education

Evaluation Items:

For Distance Education:	
	The institution demonstrates regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor in at least two of the methods outlined in the Commission <i>Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education</i> .
	The institution ensures, through the methods outlined in the Commission <i>Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education</i> , regular interaction between a student and an instructor or instructors prior to the student's completion of a course or competency.
	The institution demonstrates comparable learning support services and student support services for distance education students. (Standards II.B.1, II.C.1)
	The institution verifies that the student who registers in a distance education program is the same person who participates every time and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit.
For Correspondence Education:	
	The institution demonstrates comparable learning support services and student support services for correspondence education students. (Standards II.B.1, II.C.1)
	The institution verifies that the student who registers in a correspondence education program is the same person who participates every time and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit.
Overall:	
	The technology infrastructure is sufficient to maintain and sustain the distance education and correspondence education offerings. (Standard III.C.1)
	The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission <i>Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education</i> .

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(iv), (vi); 602.17(g); 668.38.]

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the Institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

X	The college does not offer Distance Education or Correspondence Education.
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Narrative:

Deep Springs does not offer Distance Education, so this section is non-applicable.

Student Complaints

Evaluation Items:

X	The institution has clear policies and procedures for handling student complaints, and the current policies and procedures are accessible to students in the college catalog and online.
X	The student complaint files for the previous seven years (since the last comprehensive review) are available; the files demonstrate accurate implementation of the complaint policies and procedures.
	The team analysis of the student complaint files identifies any issues that may be indicative of the institution’s noncompliance with any Accreditation Standards.
X	The institution posts on its website the names of associations, agencies and governmental bodies that accredit, approve, or license the institution and any of its programs, and provides contact information for filing complaints with such entities. (Standard I.C.1)
X	The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission <i>Policy on Representation of Accredited Status</i> and the <i>Policy on Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions</i> .

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(ix); 668.43.]

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

X	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

Narrative: The visiting team validated that the student complaint files are maintained on Dean’s Computer and the files demonstrate accurate implementation of the complaint policies and procedures as outlined in the Deep Springs Handbook.

Institutional Disclosure and Advertising and Recruitment Materials

Evaluation Items:

X	The institution provides accurate, timely (current), and appropriately detailed information to students and the public about its programs, locations, and policies. (Standard I.C.2)
X	The institution complies with the <i>Commission Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Policy on Representation of Accredited Status</i> .
X	The institution provides required information concerning its accredited status.(Standard I.C.12)

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(vii); 668.6.]

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

X	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

Narrative:

Title IV Compliance

Evaluation Items:

	The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program, including findings from any audits and program or other review activities by the U.S. Department of Education (ED). (Standard III.D.15)
	If applicable, the institution has addressed any issues raised by ED as to financial responsibility requirements, program record-keeping, etc. If issues were not timely addressed, the institution demonstrates it has the fiscal and administrative capacity to timely address issues in the future and to retain compliance with Title IV program requirements. (Standard III.D.15)
	If applicable, the institution’s student loan default rates are within the acceptable range defined by ED. Remedial efforts have been undertaken when default rates near

	or meet a level outside the acceptable range. (Standard III.D.15)
	If applicable, contractual relationships of the institution to offer or receive educational, library, and support services meet the Accreditation Standards and have been approved by the Commission through substantive change if required. (Standard III.D.16)
	The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission <i>Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Accredited Organizations</i> and the <i>Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV</i> .

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(v); 602.16(a)(1)(x); 602.19(b); 668.5; 668.15; 668.16; 668.71 et seq.]

Conclusion Check-Off:

X	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

Narrative:

The College doesn’t participate in Title IV, so Title IV compliance is not applicable. The College doesn’t have any existing contractual relationships to offer or receive educational, library, or support services.

Standard I

Mission, Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness

I.A. Mission

General Observations:

Deep Springs College has a clearly defined and institutionally applicable mission statement. Its mission statement emphasizes the College's overarching goal to prepare young people for a life of service to humanity through the three pillars of academics, labor, and student self-governance.

Its mission affirms that learning is pursued to solve real problems, both practical and social, for the joy of intellectual understanding and humane action and that those who are educated at Deep Springs incur a lifelong obligation to improve the human condition. The College is committed to the assertion that every institutional decision is guided by its mission statement. The mission is regularly reviewed and updated. The mission is published in official documents and communicated widely. The team would like to underscore and congratulate Deep Springs for the integration of its mission throughout the life of the College.

Deep Springs College's commitment to its mission and unique student population are clear throughout the submitted evidence. The team observed an overall commitment to dialogue focused on each of the three Mission pillars of Self-Governance, Labor, and Academics, which was present throughout the submitted evidence and reports, and regular review of the Mission statement was documented through submitted Board of Trustees minutes.

Findings and Evidence:

Deep Springs College's mission describes its unique student population and location, the degree offered, and the college's commitment to "leadership and enlightened service." Each of the three pillars (Academics, Labor, and Self-Governance) are referenced in the Mission Statement. The team observed during the site visit that the work of the students and the college community is accomplishing its mission. It was these conversations and our observations during the visit, while watching the governance process in action, that the team saw (students and staff) working to navigate and lead in what only could be described as a community classroom, where there was intention in working to bring together divergent backgrounds, roles, self-expectations, identity, and purpose, in living the Deep Springs Mission. (I.A.1)

The College uses a variety of institutional data and student outcome data to determine its effectiveness in accomplishing its mission. The data are used to assess how the mission is guiding the programs and policies of Deep Springs College to meet the needs of its students. The team found that the institution utilizes outcomes data to assess its effectiveness in carrying out the goals of its three pillars: academic, labor and self-governance. (I.A.2)

The team verified that Deep Springs College regularly reviews institutional goals for student learning as evidenced by the reports documenting academic, self-governance, and labor goals. Academic policy review process materials confirm these materials are reviewed in alignment

with the college mission. Budget and planning matters are referenced in the provided Trustees reports, and additional evidence provided by the College documents review of the Mission statement with the Board of Trustees. (I.A.3)

The team confirmed the College's mission statement is published on its website and in its catalog with a date of adoption and revision by the Board. The ISER notes that "A community-wide review of the Mission Statement led by the administration has been formalized and integrated since the last Self-Study." The College's "physical central resource database" indicates the mission is reviewed annually and documentation is maintained for ten years. Evidence documents are primarily focused on policy review; additional evidence provided by the College documents review of the Mission statement by the Board in Fall 2023. (I.A.4)

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

Commendation 1: The team commends the entire college community for their integration of self-governance into the students' learning experiences. Administrators, faculty and staff support students to carry out innovative decision-making and leadership; students embrace their self-governance responsibilities and actively engage in the work of the college – which is powerful evidence that the college is accomplishing its mission (I.A.1; IV.A.1)

I.B. Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness

General Observations:

Deep Spring College demonstrates a sustained commitment to dialogue on institutional effectiveness and academic quality in support of its mission. The college regularly reviews and discusses its academic policies and institutional goals and connects these directly to the college mission through its three pillars of Labor, Academic Programs, and Self-Governance.

Findings and Evidence:

Deep Springs College engages in sustained dialogue regarding student equity and academic quality as reflected in the reports for Academic, Labor, and Self-Governance goal review. Instructor evaluations of courses confirm that these goals are qualitatively assessed as part of academic evaluation. (I.B.1)

Student learning outcomes are assessed in connection with the College's Academic Program Goals. The team reviewed instructor reflections on course instruction based on the Academic Goals along with provided student success data. Student learning and learning support services are assessed in connection with the labor and self-governance pillars. (I.B.2)

The team confirmed the College sets and reviews data for institution-set standards in the introduction to the report. The team verified that institution-set standards are published with the College's ISER on the college website. (I.B.3)

The team observed the College's commitment to dialogue on student learning and achievement in the submitted materials, including reporting on the Academic, Labor, and Self-Governance goals. Processes are organized to support this dialogue, as evidenced in committee reports and academic policy. (I.B.4)

Evaluation of goals and objectives, student learning, and student achievement are connected to the college mission and evaluated through the college's reporting on Academic Program, Labor and Self-Governance goals. Quantitative data related to the college's institution-set standards are disaggregated by measures identified as meaningful to the college and its goals, although the small data set presents disaggregation challenges. The college offers a single liberal arts degree – curriculum discussions related to overall approach to this degree are documented as part of regular college dialogue in the curriculum committee's Passover documents. (I.B.5)

The team verified that the college disaggregates data for categories it has identified as meaningful to its mission. Although the college's small population size makes year-to-year disaggregation challenging, the college may consider reviewing aggregate data over time in connection with its equity goals. The team verified that the college has allocated some resources toward support for subpopulations of students it has identified as meaningful and should continue to work toward meaningful improvement in this area in line with its planning goals. (I.B.6)

The team verified that the institution regularly evaluates and reviews its academic policies through an academic policy review process. A provided review schedule shows regular review of documents governing policies and practices, including the college handbook, catalog, and other college reports and policies listed in the centralized database. (I.B.7)

The team verified in the college's evidence that the institution broadly communicates its assessment and evaluation activities through dialogue. This dialogue is documented in trustee reports and codified/sustained through committee Passover materials and in college handbooks describing committee processes. The institution sets priorities via this process of dialogue, which involves the full college community. (I.B.8)

The team reviewed long-term planning reports submitted in evidence, including the coeducation and infrastructure reports, as well as Passover committee documents. These provide evidence of short and long-term planning processes at the college, which align with the college's mission and rely heavily on dialogue and discussion. Although planning is addressed in these reports, the college will likely benefit from more systematic strategic planning, which would combine these reports with technology, infrastructure, etc. As currently submitted, each of these plans appears to occur in some degree of isolation. During the focused visit, the team learned more about the proactive integrated efforts headed by the College's leadership to support the college's current activities and future sustainability plans. These plans crossed from replacement planning for end of life teaching and ranch equipment, to increased investment into library and student services. (I.B.9)

Conclusions:

The College meets this standard.

I.C. Institutional Integrity

General observations:

Deep Springs College (DSC) provides clear and accurate information about all aspects of the institution. The Academic Catalog is available online, as well as detailed information about the mission of Deep Springs and what college life is like. The college catalog and Deep Springs College Handbook are the primary sources of information that outline and explain the mission of the college and how it is executed. Students, faculty, and staff of the College community are provided with appropriate guidelines for acting honestly, ethically, and fairly in carrying out the work of the College. As a private institution, DSC relies on fundraising as well as endowment for its operating budget; the institution has a strong commitment to focus resources to support its mission.

Findings and evidence

The team verified that the College provides information about its mission statement, academic policy, educational programs, and student support services in the College Handbook. The course catalog and information about accreditation is accessible on the College website. The team confirmed in the Physical Central Resource Database that information provided to current and prospective students is updated/reviewed every two years. (I.C.1)

Deep Springs provides a catalog for students that is updated annually and accessible on the college website. The team verified that the catalog is updated annually and contains detailed descriptions of each course, the professor(s), and the term in which it is offered. The catalog contains the facts, requirements, policies and procedures listed in "Catalog Requirements," except for program learning outcomes and available learning resources. Learning resources are referred to in the College Handbook, and Goals for the Academic Program are listed in the provided documents. Additional procedures and policies are described in detail in the College Handbook. The team suggests that the college include learning outcomes and a reference to available learning resources in its catalog. Notably, the team would like to highlight the impressive practice that the reviewing committees are chaired by students. (I.C.2)

The team verified that the College conducts ongoing assessments of student learning and achievement using Goals of the Deep Springs Academic Pillar (GODSAP) and narrative assessments. Faculty and student evaluations of courses show detailed assessments of individual students (and faculty) and of the classroom experience as a whole. Documentation of transfer colleges, academic awards, and achievements of Deep Springs alumni are shared with the public on the college website and narrative alumni updates in newsletters. Students and alumni are often the authors of these communications. (I.C.3)

The team reviewed the College catalog, which describes requirements for the College's Associate of Arts degree. Evidence provided by the College demonstrates that the Curriculum Committee plays a central role in deciding the scope and sequence of courses, ensuring that the program of study meets the requirements for an A.A. degree. The process by which courses are proposed, developed, and populated is outlined in the Deep Springs College Handbook. Expected learning

outcomes are identified in the College's Goals for the Academic Program. (I.C.4)

The College Handbook delineates the Academic Program Review Process, which describes the timeline and scope of the review of programs and policies. The Curriculum (student-driven) and Faculty (faculty-driven) committees review these processes separately and collaborate to make recommendations for the following year. The team verified this process in evidence documenting committee review of the College's writing requirement. Consistent with the college's evaluation policies, data are "disaggregated" into individual students and faculty. (I.C.5)

The team confirmed that the College accurately informs current and prospective students about the total cost of education. The College mission and application process documents on the College website state that no tuition or fees are levied on any student. Students are informed in the College Handbook that they are expected to pay for books and certain specific expenses, but these can be waived in case of financial need. Detailed information about expenses, and the application process in general, are available on the "Apply now" tab on the College website. (I.C.6)

The statement of academic freedom is comprehensive, inclusive, and described in Appendix C of the College Handbook and the college catalog. The College's Academic Review Process describes regular review of the catalog. (I.C.7)

The team confirmed that the College catalog includes Academic Regulations, including Academic Honesty, in which the processes and responsible parties for disciplinary actions in response to academic dishonesty are described. Academic honesty, as well as other college policies, are also discussed thoroughly in the College Handbook. The student-led Curriculum Committee plays a leading role in developing, evaluating, and refining these policies. (I.C.8)

The team verified that the Statement of Academic Freedom contained in the College Handbook includes guidelines about the distinction between personal and professional opinions without stifling free speech (I.C.9)

The team verified that the College provides standards of academic honesty and specific policies that preserve the dignity and safety of members of the community (e.g., policies on sexual harassment and accommodation of special needs) in the College Handbook. Deep Springs College does not seek to instill specific world views or beliefs, other than service to humanity as described in the College's mission. (I.C.10)

I.C.11 does not apply.

The team verified that Deep Springs College confirms its accredited status in its catalog and on the College website. Additionally, the College is committed to implementing ACCJC recommendations in such a way that supports Deep Springs College's mission. (I.C.12)

Deep Springs College is not accredited by any agencies other than ACCJC. The College communicates its accreditation status and any updates through its website. (I.C.13)

The institution ensures that its commitments to high quality education, student achievement and

learning. Deep Springs College is a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation that is privately funded and does not accept federal or state funding. The college does not generate financial returns for investors, contribute to a parent organization, or support external interests. Donors are primarily alumni and foundations, contributing approximately one-third of the annual operating budget. The website, which contains comprehensive information about the mission and programs of the college, also contains a mechanism for individuals or groups to donate to the College (I.C.14)

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

Standard II

Student Learning Programs and Support Services

II.A. Instructional Programs

General Observations:

Deep Springs College demonstrates a commitment to Instructional Programs designed to engage students rigorously and in alignment with the Deep Springs College Mission. Students have a high degree of control over the curriculum offered each year, and the institution manages the instructional programs in a highly structured manner, which is designed to allow all students to achieve a goal of transfer or associate degree. Very few associate degrees are awarded as most students use their education as a pathway to transfer to a bachelor's program at a university.

The team noted a highly reflective culture among faculty and students in evaluating their teaching and learning. As described below, the team has suggestions to improve consistency of course descriptions.

Findings and Evidence:

Deep Springs College provides all its classes and programs on one site. As a very small college with a well-defined program for all students, consistency is achieved in adherence with its mission. This consistency is anchored by the Goals of Deep Springs Academic, Labor and Self Governance Programs. (II.A.1)

At Deep Springs College faculty are evaluated by students and their peers. Faculty also do a self-evaluation and evaluation of the outcomes of their courses in relation to the Goals of Deep Springs Academic Program (GODSAP) goals. The team was impressed by the depth of reflection in the narrative assessment of how GODSAP goals were supported in their courses. Evidence reviewed included sample course and faculty evaluations and the GODSAP and supporting documents. (II.A.2)

Evidence was provided which showed a clear connection and assessment of coursework in terms of the institutional GODSAP. Most of the course syllabi provided as evidence show course level outcomes. While information about each course is available through the catalog description and courses syllabi, there does not appear to be a consistent format for a "course outline of record." Catalog descriptions were inconsistent in terms of the amount of detail given. It is understood that Deep Springs' courses change from term to term; however, a standard format for describing courses would ensure that students and faculty have a clear understanding of the teaching and learning that can be expected and a lasting record of those learning outcomes for future reference. (II.A.3)

Deep Springs does not offer pre-collegiate curriculum (II.A.4)

Deep Springs College provided evidence that indicates coursework adheres to common practices in American higher education. Courses earn units according to recognized standards. They ensure that 60 units are earned for transfer and are achieved across a breadth of general education areas.

During the site visit, the team learned that the Dean actively communicates with common transfer institutions to help ensure currency in expectations and brings this information to the Curriculum Committee decision making process. (II.A.5)

Deep Springs has a highly structured, and student-driven program which allows students to complete the 60 units required to earn the associate degree. As described in the Academic Catalog, the schedule is designed to allow for the labor aspects of each student's obligation. (II.A.6)

Courses at Deep Springs College are taught in classroom seminar formats, in labs and in the field. Course delivery is partially designed to fit the college's mission, which promotes a hands-on and discussion-based learning style. Journal Storage (JSTOR) is provided as a database to maintain currency. Also, students can pursue independent and directed studies, including taking courses at other institutions to supplement their Deep Springs education. (II.A.7)

Deep Springs does not use department-wide examinations. (II.A.8)

Deep Springs awards credit based on an accepted standard of hours in class and outside of class. The Academic Policies section of the College Handbook provides a detailed narrative about grading in each course. (II.A.9)

Deep Springs has a clear policy on how transfer credit from other institutions is awarded. (II.A.10)

The team reviewed evidence on site and in the ISER that indicates that this Standard is met through the Goals of Deep Springs Academic, Labor and Governing Programs. These documents reveal strong program and institutional learning outcomes in a variety of areas, including communication, information, quantitative reasoning, analytic inquiry, ethical reasoning and the ability to engage in diverse perspectives. (II.A.11)

Deep Springs College provides an academic program for its students that includes General Education requirements and a carefully considered philosophy apparent in its literature. The faculty are engaged in developing and approving curriculum in collaboration with students. (II.A.12)

The Deep Springs Associate of Arts includes a study of an interdisciplinary core. However, students are not expected to complete a degree and only do so on special request. They are expected to transfer to a Bachelor of Arts program at a 4-year university. (II.A.13)

There are no career-technical certificates or degrees awarded (II.A.14).

Deep Springs has an established method for evaluating curriculum changes and additions as shown in the College Handbook. Their response to COVID illustrates their commitment to allow students to complete their program when change was needed. (II.A.15)

Deep Springs College presents various evidence pieces indicating a culture of reflection and evaluation, involving peer and self-evaluation tools. The College has developed the Goals of Deep

Springs Academic (GODSGAP), Goals of Deep Springs Labor (GODSLAP), and Goals of Deep Springs Self-Governance (GODSGAP) tools that invite deep reflection on all aspects of student life at Deep Springs. (II.A.16)

Conclusions:

The College meets the standards.

II.B. Library and Learning Support Services

General Observations:

Deep Springs College maintains a library with a Journal Storage (JSTOR) subscription and many physical volumes. During the site visit, the team observed that new goals and purpose were defined for the culling and acquisition of volumes for the library and the beginning of an electronic catalog. The new catalog will allow for improved assessment of library resources. While the team was able to find evidence indicating that the institution meets the standards associated with Library and Learning Support Services, Deep Springs College is encouraged to ensure that the processes being implemented in the beginning stages are carried forward and institutionalized. Specifically, the cataloging project, the implementation of a student orientation and the continual assessment of library usage will require attention to become fully implemented and sustained practices.

Findings and Evidence:

Deep Springs College provides a library with 24,000 volumes and 20 subscriptions and a subscription to JSTOR for online research. However, the “Library Report” included as a key piece of evidence indicates that the library was in a state of disorganization at the time of the report (2021). According to the report, there was no accurate way to know what volumes were being used, and no plan for determining what collections needed updating. However, additional evidence was provided to indicate that the shortcomings identified in this report are being addressed by moving to a new electronic catalog system which will allow for accurate tracking of the use of library resources. Additionally, information was provided during the site visit indicating that incoming students will receive orientation to the library and its resources (II.B.1).

Deep Springs consulted with a librarian from a California Community College to assess their library services. The “Library Report,” included in the evidence folders, indicates that what oversight was being offered with a student librarian position was removed. Additionally, the “Passover” document with instructions for maintaining library information was missing in 2021. Since the time of that report, evidence has been presented which indicate that not only has the student librarian position been reinstated, but a library committee (Lib Com) has been active in establishing student centered goals and purposes for the library collection (II.B.2).

The recent reinstatement of the student librarian position and renewed activity of the Lib Com indicate a commitment to considering the library collections and resources in relation to student learning outcomes. Specifically, the Lib Com has considered the purpose of the collections held at the campus library and the contribution they should make to student academic progress and

learning. (II.B.3).

Deep Springs does not rely on or collaborate with other institutions for library or learning support systems (IIIB.4).

Conclusions:

Deep Springs College meets the Standard.

Recommendation 1: In order to increase effectiveness in evaluating the library resources to ensure their adequacy in meeting student needs, the team recommends the College continue the projects begun for library services to ensure their completion and sustainability (II.B.3)

II.C. Student Support Services

General Observations:

Student Support Services at Deep Springs College are unique. The College provides a variety of support services that meet the needs of its exceptionally small student population, isolated campus and the physical, mental, and emotional challenges associated with its core mission of labor, academics, and self-governance. The College routinely assesses the quality of its support services through regular evaluations and Trustee meetings. These evaluations and reports provide the basis for program improvements. The College has structures in place to verify that information regarding academic requirements is accurate and disseminated to students in a timely manner. Consistent with its mission, the college offers one associate degree program. Students typically transfer to a four-year institution. The college advises students along a clear academic path.

Findings and Evidence:

The team confirmed that Deep Springs College offers a variety of student support services including Library and learning support services, health and emergency health services, and mental health services that are all aligned with and support the institutional mission. The team also confirmed that the college has assessed the quality of its student support services. For example, with the admission of women in Fall 2018, the college ensured that comparable support services including health, mental health and peer counseling were equally available to all. The evaluation of student support services occurs through the regular evaluation of faculty and staff, and during biannual Trustees meetings. As described in the report and on the College website, instruction and student support services take place on a cattle ranch in an isolated desert-mountain valley. The college does not routinely offer online instruction. (II.C.1)

The team confirmed that Deep Springs College provides a variety of student support services including those listed above as well as Wilderness First Responder (WFR) training to support its educational mission. The Trustees of Deep Springs College receive biannual reports on student support services. A review of the Trustee minutes indicates that the College has developed assessment methods to ascertain the effectiveness of student support services and uses evaluation results to inform program improvements. During the site visit, the team learned that students also play a central role in driving the direction and nature of student support services.

For example, the students' "Outreach Committee" recently provided a proposal to the Trustees regarding the recruitment and support for a more diverse student body. (II.C.2)

Given the size and structure of the College, regular Trustee reports verify that the College continues to monitor the equitable provision of support services. Since admitting women in Fall 2018, the College continues to evaluate the equity of support services for all students. Through regular Trustee reports, the College regularly assesses student needs for support services. During the site visit, the team learned that Deep Springs is developing strategies for more formally documenting key agreements (which lead to resource allocations) that are reached through the rich informal communications that often include the entire community's input. One example of this is the process of budget development, which includes a review of line-item allocations with all members of the community. (II.C.3)

The team confirmed that the college provides co-curricular programs that are well suited to its mission and students. The team acknowledges the variety of co-curricular programs that are relevant to life in an isolated high desert valley including Auto Mechanics, Horsemanship, Outdoor Skills, Riflery and Wildland First Responder training. The college noted that courses such as Horsemanship and Auto Mechanics complement academic courses and are inherently included in the evaluation of the Labor Pillar. The college noted that they will revisit the evaluation process for these courses to determine if evaluation should occur as an academic course or as a separate co-curricular program. (II.C.4)

The team confirmed that Deep Springs College offers counseling/advising support services to support student success. Given the small size of the student body, the College provides one-on-one advising between the Dean and individual students. Additionally, the college re-affirmed the need to support strong mental health services. During the site visit, the team learned that a new mental health service had been engaged, which allowed for better quantitative and qualitative data for evaluation of the services. Faculty also serve as informal advisors for students with respect to course selection and transfer. The job description for the "Dean of the College" notes that the Dean will "provide academic advising and student support" and "serve as Transfer Advisor." The evaluation of these services is embedded into the evaluation of the Dean. The team confirmed that the College has structures in place to verify all pertinent information on academic requirements is accurate and disseminated in a timely manner through the *Deep Springs Handbook*. (II.C.5)

The team confirmed that the Deep Springs College community admits a small number of some of the most promising students each year. The college notes in its Course Catalog that there is no single type of student that the college looks for, nor any single criterion that is used in making admissions decisions. The college noted that a list of students is determined by the Applications Committee and is submitted to the President for approval. The Trustees of the college approve the admissions policy that guides the structure of the application and admissions decision process. Consistent with its mission, the college offers one associate degree program. The qualifications of the students who are admitted are appropriate for this program of study. The Course Catalog notes that virtually all students transfer to another college to complete their Baccalaureate Degree and that only three or four students per decade have requested their Associate of Arts

degree from Deep Springs. Through the College Catalog and academic support services, the college advises students on clear pathways to obtain their educational goals. (II.C.6)

The team confirmed that the admissions process includes a variety of quantitative and qualitative data. The College uses the annual report to the Trustees of Deep Spring College to report on the admissions process and to review data related to applicant diversity. These discussions have precipitated changes in both the application and the application process. During the site visit, the team learned that the student representatives from the Communications Committee have proposed new practices for creating and maintaining a more diverse student body (II.C.7)

The team confirmed that the Dean maintains a variety of student records including applications, evaluations, and transcripts. Physical records are maintained by the Dean and digital records are located on the Dean's computer. The college confirmed that student files are kept on a secure digital database accessible only by the Dean and the President. Records are released by the Dean after receiving a formal request. The process for the release of transcripts is located on the college website. The team observed that the college has established policies for the release of student records which are published on the website. During the site visit, the team determined that the college has an established process to maintain students records permanently with a provision for secure backup of all files. (II.C.8)

Conclusions:

Deep Springs College meets the Standard.

Standard III Resources

III.A. Human Resources

General Observations:

The College is organized according to the principles of the “Three Pillars” of academics, governance, and labor. Students are expected to play a leading role in developing, not just participating in, each of these pillars. To the extent possible, the administration, faculty, and staff (“staffulty”) guide, rather than execute, the operation of the college, including aspects of human resources. The College has a unique infrastructure, including how decisions are made and documented guided by their policies and procedures.

Findings and Evidence:

All communications about employment at Deep Springs College are directly related to the mission. Core staff consists of up to eleven members who are responsible for instruction and operations. This is a residential school and a working ranch; the core staff share overlapping responsibilities. The student to staff ratio is approximately two to one; and the student to faculty ratio is approximately four to one.

The job descriptions for administration and staff positions clearly describe position duties, responsibility, and authority. While the sample job advertisements for faculty positions that were provided as evidence did not fully describe the working conditions, other resources on the website such as the FAQ, clearly describe the unique living and working conditions at Deep Springs to ensure that faculty are well suited to work and teach in this environment. The College Handbook provides comprehensive information about the working conditions and expectations. (III.A.1)

At Deep Springs, the student-led Curriculum Committee (with faculty advisement) chooses the faculty, courses and curriculum for upcoming terms. Faculty are hired on the basis of their subject matter expertise, and visiting faculty are invited to design their own courses in addition to teaching more general classes. Faculty are hired based on their skills and subject matter expertise, as well as their “fit” into the Deep Springs environment. Assessment of learning is highly individualized and conducted according to Goals of Deep Springs (GODSAP) criteria. (III.A.2)

Academic administrators also teach. Like instructional faculty, they are expected to facilitate student leadership and decision making wherever possible. Thus, in addition to the skills these employees need to perform their jobs, they must be able to provide the mentorship that students need to exercise ownership of their college experience. These expectations are clearly explained and sought out during the hiring process. (III.A.3)

All employees hold the requisite degrees or other qualifications necessary to perform their duties. Visiting faculty often teach at Deep Springs while on sabbatical from four-year institutions. (III.A.4)

Faculty are evaluated annually and for each course they teach. The schedule, timeline, and components of evaluations for long-term and visiting faculty are described in the Deep Springs College Handbook. For faculty, evaluations are performed by students, and input from faculty and/or the dean may be included. Staff are evaluated annually by their supervisor, and the campus community takes an active role in evaluating administrators through a reflective, narrative process. (III.A.5)

The college employs three long-term faculty, each of whom specializes in humanities, natural sciences, or social sciences. The President and (one) dean also serve as long-term faculty. Long-term faculty serve a maximum of six years. The academic program includes a small set of required courses, but the other courses are determined annually by the curriculum committee for the following year. The committee works to ensure that the courses are distributed throughout the broad General Education areas anchored by the long-term faculty. This system ensures (and requires) that faculty are recruited and hired in a timely fashion to help execute the academic program. (III.A.7)

At Deep Springs, part-time faculty live and work at Deep Springs for only a few months to a year, but they are encouraged to participate fully in all aspects of community life. Appendix C of the College Handbook delineates faculty rights and responsibilities. Deep Springs does not offer internal professional development activities per se (beyond the immersion experience itself) but does provide resources like travel expenses to enable faculty to attend conferences in their fields. The Deep Springs website indicates that visiting faculty sometimes teach at Deep Springs while on sabbatical, so that the assignment itself fulfills their goals for professional development. (III.A.8)

The core staff at Deep Springs consists of the President, the Dean, three long-term faculty, and managers of the operations, the ranch, the farm, the boarding house, machinery, and the office manager. The overall ratio of students to staff is two to one. Supporting and guiding students is an essential component of their work. (III.A.9)

Academic administrators serve multiple functions, and train students to serve along with them. The administrative tasks are distributed among existing faculty and staff. While permanent faculty and administrators must multi-task, all important functions of the college are covered. (III.A.10)

The Deep Springs Handbook is the repository for all college-wide policies. It is reviewed and updated regularly. There is a grievance procedure. (III.A.11)

Deep Springs publishes a Fairness Policy and a statement of community ethics. Deep Springs is striving to increase the diversity of its student body, most notably by admitting female students as of 2018. Accordingly, the college is evaluating its hiring practices with the goal of increasing diversity among its employees as well. This is the subject of one of the quality focused essays submitted with this ISER. There is a recurring theme about improving clarity in its communications with the public and potential recruits, especially about what the Deep Springs College experience is like. During the site visit, the team also learned that the students have developed a proposal for increasing the recruitment and support of diverse students (III.A.12)

The College Handbook, which is the “encyclopedia” of all college operations, policies, and procedures, includes statements of Professional Ethics and Community Ethics. Consequences for violation are clearly defined. The community developed a sexual harassment committee to develop policies to define, report, and respond to sexual harassment. (III.A.13)

Resources for professional development and enhancement are enumerated in the college handbook, including travel to professional meetings, library research, computer upgrades, and childcare. During the site visit, the team determined that funding is allocated for each staff and faculty member to pursue professional development. A proposal and reimbursement process is established and followed. (III.A.14)

The team verified that the institution makes provision for the security and confidentiality of personnel records, including allowing each employee to have access to their personnel records in accordance with law (III.A.15)

Conclusions:

The College meets this standard.

III.B. Physical Resources

General Observations:

The Physical Resources at Deep Springs College are an integral part of the College’s programs, especially as they support the Academic and Labor Pillars. Also, due to the remote location of the College, the physical resources are critical for self-sufficiency. As such, the College has Safety and Budget and Operations Committees that make regular reports to the Trustees and are engaged in planning efforts to ensure physical resources are adequate to support safety, quality of programs, and the mission of the College.

Findings and Evidence:

The team acknowledges that Deep Springs College sits in a very remote location which can create additional challenges in an emergency. The team observed that Deep Springs College has self-identified that its geographical location can affect access, safety, and security. The recent abnormal winter weather, coupled with the remote location, strained the aging facilities and tested the College’s self-sufficiency. As described in the Trustees of Deep Springs College Reports, the College had issues with adequacy of supplies, utilities, and emergency response during a recent blizzard. The College acknowledges the access and safety shortcomings and discussed the need for improvement in emergency response and preparedness. The team also observed that the College is working on a system for planned replacement of vehicles and large equipment. The College is also working on budget planning for the maintenance of older facilities. The College has a Safety Committee that works to maintain oversight of buildings, determine allocation of resources, and act on renovation projects as needed. The College is continually improving its processes to assure that physical resources are safe and sufficient, and that they are constructed and maintained to assure access, safety, security, and a healthful learning and working

environment. (III.B.1)

The team observed that Deep Springs College regularly discusses its facilities and makes recommendations on appropriate actions to maintain safety and quality of assets to support programs and services. Due to the academic and labor pillars, it's critical that facilities, equipment, land, and other assets are maintained in a way that assures effective utilization and quality. As is evidenced by the Safety Committee and Business and Operations reports, resources are allocated for this purpose. For example, the College secured funding for a new Boarding House (BH) as the old BH was in disrepair and has recently allocated resources to repair its solar field. In other areas, student-identified facilities needs also become learning projects, such as the building of a new chicken coup and a deer fence. (III.B.2)

The College's physical resources are critical for institutional programs and services. The team confirmed that the College plans and evaluates its facilities and equipment on a regular basis to assure feasibility and effectiveness. Through reports made to the Board, the team observed that the College assesses facilities, equipment, land, hydroelectric production, solar energy production, and other assets on a regular basis. The College utilizes a Master Maintenance Calendar to assist with the evaluation of facilities and equipment. (III.B.3)

The team observed evidence that the College has informal, long-range capital plans that support institutional improvements. Costs to replace aging systems, such as the solar energy system and farm infrastructure replacement, are factored into long range planning and budgets. In the Trustee reports, there is discussion that recognizes the importance of budgeting for the total cost of ownership of new facilities and equipment, and the budget development process provides managers the opportunity to include long-range capital planning needs in the budget. During the site visit the team learned that the President is working with the Board to build budget line items for replacement of needed items that meet end of life and engaging in more strategic planning for sustainability. (III.B.4)

Conclusions:

Deep Springs College meets the Standard

III.C. Technology Resources

General Observations:

Deep Springs College demonstrates a commitment to providing technology services and support to all of its constituents through a process of planning and policy development that is consistent with its mission (which emphasizes isolation), adequate for the teaching and learning goals of the college and focused on quality improvement.

Findings and Evidence:

Deep Springs College provides phone services, internet, a library database subscription (JSTOR),

and an informational website. Services, while minimalist, are consistent with the mission of the college, which emphasizes isolation. They have secured an IT donation and utilized expert support to increase the stability and capacity of their network, and they demonstrate attention to supporting the secure, effective, communal use of their limited technology resources in the Deep Springs College Handbook. There is evidence of formal discussion of IT recommendations and technology planning in the Trustee Report notes. The college provides for basic security of the network through the use of appropriate network security measures. (IIIC.1)

Deep Springs College successfully plans for and updates its technological infrastructure to increase both capacity and quality of services. They have invested in redundant internet services (Starlink) in order to minimize sustained interruption of internet services as a result of inclement weather. They have expanded access to digital databases for the library. They plan for, and adequately update, both hardware and software based on student, faculty and staff needs. (IIIC.2)

Because of the unique challenges for internet connectivity in an area of the California with minimal coverage, Deep Springs College has worked with available funds (from an IT donation) to expand current internet access and to improve reliability of service. They have also included specific instruction for appropriate use of technology (in the Deep Springs College Handbook) to ensure that network capacity remains adequate for all users, security needs are taken into account, and evolving software and hardware needs can be communicated and considered as they arise. (IIIC.3)

Deep Springs College offers adequate instruction and support for the use of technology as a tool for all constituents at the college. The college has contracted an IT Administrator for remote assistance and consulting. Their Deep Springs College Handbook offers explicit instruction on appropriate use and for articulating technology needs as they may arise. The Handbook also provides information on how to access JSTOR. (IIIC.4)

Deep Springs College has policies and procedures that effectively guide technology use. The Deep Springs Handbook offers sections on effective strategies for preserving limited bandwidth, preserving information security on the network, use of email, use of the library database, and appropriate use of the telephone system. There is evidence of instruction and/or guidance on the use of these technologies. (IIIC.5)

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

III.D. Financial Resources

General Observations:

As the students, staff, faculty, and administrators are reliant upon their ability to be self-sufficient given the remote location of the College, the College is reliant upon its ability to be self-sufficient for financial resources and has to plan ahead for stability. Financial planning is critical to support academic, student service, ranch, and farm operations as and the mission. Financial resources include drawdowns from endowment funds, annual donations, ranch and farm sales, and other resources such as grants. The Trustees of Deep Springs have several standing committees that help to ensure resources are necessary to support the College's financial stability, they are allocated to support the mission, and are utilized with integrity. The College plans for short and long-term liabilities and is working to secure long-term financial solvency through the growth of the endowment fund.

Findings and Evidence:

The team confirmed that Deep Springs College strives to ensure financial resources are sufficient to support and sustain student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness. Through discussions in various reports to the Trustees from Safety and Budget & Operations, there is constant assessment of available financial resources versus needs, balanced with the pedagogy of the academic and labor pillars. To the extent they are available, the distribution of resources supports the development, maintenance, allocation and reallocation, and enhancement of programs and services. In several cases, Trustee reports mention the growing need for scheduled maintenance funds to support programs and safety, which the Development Committee is working to address through strategized fundraising efforts. With that being said, the College plans and manages its financial affairs with integrity and in a manner that ensures financial stability. (III.D.1)

The team confirmed that the College's mission and goals are the foundation for financial planning, and financial planning is integrated with and supports all institutional planning. As the team observed through the review of Trustee Reports, institutional planning for the labor and academic pillars, which are integral to the College mission, are dependent upon the effective planning of finances. The College is continually developing, through the Development Committee sound financial practices that support financial stability. For example, the Second Century campaign is intended to support financial stability. As has been evidenced in recent bi-annual Trustee Reports, the Budget and Operations Committee reviews budget and spending with narrative to mention highlights of revenues, expenditures, and budget adjustments. This supports the appropriate dissemination of financial information throughout the institution in a timely manner. Also, the Student Body elects two Student Trustees whose responsibilities include reporting to the Student Body on budget and operations matters. (III.D.2)

Through the review of Trustee Reports, and Budget Process Data, the team has observed instances of discussions in various committee reports that speak to financial planning and budget development. The Deep Springs Development is responsible for meeting the annual fund target and is working to formalize procedures and methods to improve future fundraising, The team confirmed that the College has a budget development process, and that all constituencies have appropriate opportunities to participate in the development of institutional plans and budgets, as is evidenced in the "How to Prepare a Budget at DS" document. For example, students have the ability to request discretionary budget, and as per the Deep Springs College Handbook, Faculty

have the opportunity to request funds for instructional planning and professional development. (III.D.3)

Budget expenditures are in line with fundraising projections and attempt to address all financial resource needs. Those in charge of fundraising have been successful when in planning ahead for specific fundraising needs such as the new Triplex and Boardinghouse. As is mentioned above the Development team is responsible for the development of financial resources, as well as building and maintaining partnerships with existing and future donors. The Trustees have acknowledged, through Trustee Board Reports, that there is a growing need for deferred maintenance and vehicle replacement and recent budget reports address this. Planning does reflect a realistic assessment of resources and expenditure requirements. (III.D.4)

The team has observed that the College's financial security relies upon annual giving, a drawdown from endowment funds, farm and ranch sales, bequests, and other giving. The team can confirm that the College widely disseminates dependable and timely information for sound financial decision making as the information critical for the sustainability of the College's programs. This is evidenced through Deep Springs Development team, Deep Springs Investment Committee, and Budget and Operations written and financial reports provided to the Trustees at the bi-annual meetings. These reports discuss resources, needs, and the responsible use of the limited resources to support the College. Recent audits haven't identified any issues with internal controls or financial integrity. The College recently replaced the outsourced bookkeeper due to errors, which also speaks to the College's commitment to financial integrity. (III.D.5)

The team has reviewed recent audits and can confirm that the auditors concluded that the financial statements fairly represented the financial position of the College. Based on this evidence, the team can confirm that financial documents have a high degree of credibility and accuracy. At the bi-annual Board of Trustee meetings, the budget and actuals are provided to the Board along with narrative to explain highlights of activities. According to meeting minutes, the Board approves the budget and actuals, indicating that there is a high degree of credibility and accuracy in the information. Through the review of the budget reports to the Board, it can be evidenced that financial documents and the budget reflect appropriate allocation and use of financial resources to support student learning programs and services. Some recent examples of allocations that support student learning and support services, in response to an expressed need, are the increased resources for student mental health and investments in IT. (III.D.6)

The team reviewed recent audits and Board of Trustee reports and didn't find any external audit findings for the College to respond to. If ever an audit of the College results in a finding, the Trustees of Deep Springs College Audit Committee has oversight of the audits and would be responsible for a comprehensive, timely, and appropriately communicated response. (III.D.7)

The team reviewed recent audits, Board Reports, and the provided sample Board evaluations. In the evidence section of the Standard, the College mentions that the College Audit and Budget and Operations Committees are evaluated as part of the Trustees self-evaluation process. (III.D.8)

The team reviewed Development team, Safety, Budget and Operations, and Deep Springs

Investment Committee reports to the Trustees in the Trustees College Reports. The team also reviewed the Investment Policy Statement. The team can confirm that the College monitors and manages cash and reserves to ensure there are sufficient resources to maintain stability, support strategies for risk management, and implement necessary contingency plans to meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences. Several reports included in the Trustees College Reports discuss the importance of risk management, safety, and unforeseen events, and how the budget and investment strategies aim to ensure appropriate reserves are in place. Also, in recent budget reports, the operating reserves have been increasing. (III.D.9)

The team observed evidence in the Investment Policy Statement, Trustees of Deep Springs Handbook, as well as Deep Springs Investment Committee and other committee reports to the Trustees that indicate the College practices effective oversight of finances, including management of grants, contractual relationships, auxiliary organizations or foundations, and institutional investments and assets. A significant portion of the College's operating revenue comes from an endowment drawdown, so the effective management of institutional investments is critical for the College to operate. Financial aid comes from internal sources and the College has had sufficient resources to provide tuition free education to enrolled students. The College has also allocated funds to assist those students who need additional aid when transferring to a four-year institution. (III.D.10)

The team observed discussions surrounding short term and long-term financial solvency in Development team, Deep Springs Investment Committee and President Reports that were provided in the Trustees Reports. The College's financial resources are sufficient in the short term, but the endowment upon which the College relies for a good portion of operational revenue has been declining. To ensure the level of financial resources is sufficient for short and long-term financial solvency the College has been focusing on strategies to grow the endowment, such as the Second Century Campaign. The Investment Policy Statement helps as a guide for the College to consider long-range financial priorities to assure financial stability when making short-range financial plans. The Telluride LLC Closeout process provides a good example of the College identifying, planning, and allocating resources for payment of liabilities and future obligations. (III.D.11)

The team reviewed the Deep Springs College Budget Process Data as well as Trustee Reports and can confirm that the College plans for and allocates resources for liabilities and future obligations including compensated absences and other employee related obligations. The annual budgets include appropriate salary and benefit amounts for the full year for all staff, faculty, and administrators. The Construction budget factors in future obligations to contractors for the projects. (III.D.12)

According to the College and the recent audit reports for the College, the College has no locally incurred debt. (III.D.13)

Financial resources for the College include investments, auxiliary activities, fund-raising efforts, and grants. The team has observed that the College has Standing Committees of the Trustees, such as the Deep Springs Investment and Budget and Operations Committees that are responsible

for ensuring financial resources used with integrity in a manner that is consistent with the intended purpose of the funding source. Through fundraising efforts, the College receives restricted and unrestricted donations. A recent example of a restricted donation were funds specifically for the purpose of providing financial aid to students transferring out. As could be evidenced in recent Trustee Reports, there is intentional discussion on the use of those funds for that specific purpose. (III.D.14)

This is not applicable to the College since the College does not participate in Title IV nor engage in any loan programs. (III.D.15)

The team was able to find and review two examples of contracts with external entities, one for the Telluride LLC Closeout and the other for the initial construction contractor Colombo. The contracts are overseen and approved by the Trustees of Deep Springs College who have the responsibility of ensuring that all agreements are consistent with the Mission and goals of the College and are governed by institutional policies. The team observed that the two examples include provisions that maintain the integrity of the institution and the quality of it's programs, services, and operations. (III.D.16)

Conclusions:

Deep Springs College meets the Standard.

Standard IV Leadership and Governance

IV.A. Decision-Making Roles & Processes

General Observations:

Deep Springs College effectively engages all constituent groups in promoting student success, ensuring institutional stability and integrity, as well as pursuing continuous improvement. Through the promotion of innovation, the clear articulation of policy and procedures regarding participation, and mission-driven attention to curriculum development and instructional programs, Deep Springs College ensures broad and meaningful participation of administrators, faculty, staff, and students in the decision-making process. These processes are clearly documented, and decisions are made broadly available to all constituencies. The team notes that Deep Springs College offers students the opportunity for leadership in decision-making through its self-governance pillar.

Findings and Evidence:

Deep Springs College promotes innovation in the pursuit of institutional excellence by creating formally acknowledged opportunities for sharing ideas and engaging in policy and procedure recommendations. Administrators and faculty have roles on key committees. The pillar of self-governance assures that students lead in decision-making on core committees and serve as voting members on the Board of Trustees. Regular staff meetings offer opportunities for innovation and initiative. During our visit we observed interactions between students and staff that crossed from sharing the discussions about the hiring of a Queer Studies professor and if they should teach the subject from Sociology or Humanities perspective and the differences in potential learning outcomes. From the labor pillar it was student initiative that led to addressing labor pillar needs in deer fencing and the construction of a new chicken coop which was presented to the staff and ultimately acting upon. (IV.A.1).

The team confirmed that the college has defined policy and procedures for establishing and executing administrator, staff, faculty and student roles in the decision-making process. The college's Corporate Bylaws detail the rights and purview of constituent groups in the governance process. Student body bylaws clearly indicate both rights and responsibilities for students regarding committee service. Trustee Bylaws clearly indicate member responsibilities. (IV.A.2).

The team verified that, in addition to the evidence provided above, Deep Springs College has a Faculty Committee with a well-defined role in the governance and curriculum process. In addition to the Trustee Bylaws, the administrator job descriptions also note the leadership roles of the administrators in the decision-making process. (IV.A.3)

While the Curriculum Committee at Deep Springs is a student-driven body, Deep Springs College demonstrates effective roles for administrators and faculty in making recommendations about curriculum and student learning programs. The Curriculum committee includes formal seats for the Dean and the (faculty) Humanities Chair. In addition, the college's Faculty Committee and the

Academic Policy Review Process (APRP) both have roles in making recommendations and reviewing academic policy recommendations. These decisions also include roles for the Dean, the President and the Trustees. (IV.A.4)

Deep Springs College demonstrates appropriate attention to ensuring relevant perspectives and timely decision making in its governance process. Each of the committees and the student labor positions is guided by “Passovers” which detail the key functions, timelines, and processes for the committee/position. These are reviewed by outgoing members and updated as necessary. In addition, the Trustees of Deep Springs Handbook outlines the members' responsibilities regarding oversight of policies, plans and implementations. (IV.A.5)

Deep Springs College’s governance and decision making is effectively guided by several key documents. The Deep Springs College Handbook, The Trustees College Handbook, and the Committee Passovers, all guide the governance process and are made widely available to all constituent groups. In addition, decisions and ongoing processes are shared with the college community via the Deep Springs College Newsletters. (IV.A.6)

Deep Springs College regularly engages in evaluation of leadership roles. A process for regular self-evaluation is also outlined in the Trustees of Deep Springs Handbook. The results of these evaluations are shared with relevant constituencies. (IV.A.7)

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

See Commendation 1.

IV.B. Chief Executive Officer

General Observations:

Governance at Deep Springs is truly unique based on the level at which students are involved in the process. During the site visit, the team affirmed the President’s role in the decision making and communication process.

Findings and Evidence:

The Deep Springs President’s responsibilities are defined by the job description of the role and communicates their responsibility for the Deep Springs’ mission. The CEO is held responsible by the board for institutional results and is granted authority for College oversight. (IV.B.1)

The President involves and engages the student body with very significant responsibility for administrative functions but is ultimately responsible for the structures, hiring, and the delegation of significant responsibility to other college officers including the faculty and staff. (IV.B.2).

The site visit affirmed that high-quality research and analysis of external and internal conditions, and that educational planning is integrated with resource planning and allocation to support student achievement and learning. Allocation of resources supports and improves learning and achievement. This was shown through strategic investments in the recruitment and retention of

staff and faculty. (IV.B.3)

The Deep Springs College CEO has the primary role in ensuring the college meets or exceeds Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission Policies, and works to ensure that all faculty, staff, and administrators are in compliance with these requirements. (IV.B.4)

The responsibilities of the CEO/President is commensurate with this standard where the president is expected to articulate and advance the aims of the college, and to protect its integrity and reputation. The president is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the board, and is responsible for seeing that trustee policies, decisions, and directives are implemented including control of budgets and expenditures. (IV.B.5)

The CEO of Deep Springs College regularly communicates with college constituencies through various publications including the Alumni Newsletter, Fundraising and Development events including gatherings, the alumni news section of the website, communications to the immediate Deep Springs College community, and letters to the Deep Springs College Student Body. (IV.B.6)

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

IV.C. Governing Board

General Observations:

The Deep Springs Trustees have overarching authority and responsibility for policies that assure academic quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs it serves and the financial stability of the Institution. It establishes policies consistent with the College's mission to ensure educational quality, legal matters and financial integrity and stability.

Findings and Evidence:

The Trustee Handbook describes the board's role and activities which included policies to assure the academic quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution (IV.C.1)

The Code of Ethics Policy states the college's commitment to a standard of the governing board acting as a collective entity and not promoting policies and procedures based on the interests of the self or the group. (IV.C.2)

The Trustees of Deep Springs College have stated in their handbook that there are annual reviews of the college's President as part of the evaluative process, and they are responsible for hiring the president. (IV.C.3)

The Trustees of Deep Springs College Code of Ethics Policy delineates what constitutes a conflict of interest and sets guidelines for ensuring that board members adhere to standards as an independent policy-making body not subject to conflicts or pressures. (IV.C.4)

Trustees provide fiduciary oversight and reviews and discuss quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them. (IV.C.5)

Deep Springs College ensures that the Trustees of Deep Springs College Bylaws specifying the board's structure and responsibilities are made available and accessible to the college community and constituencies by sharing the Trustees of Deep Springs College Handbook (IV.C.6)

As part of the comprehensive evaluative process, the Trustees of Deep Springs College have instituted regular self-evaluation of policies, bylaws, and general performance regarding the board and its fulfillment of oversight and administrative duties. Recommendations are made accordingly to optimize the policies and programs of the college as well as the performance of the board. (IV.C.7)

Trustees of Deep Springs College (TDS) review key indicators of student learning and achievement which includes transfer data and institutional plans for improving academic quality through the discussion of three pillars, facilities, and employee retention and recruitment. (IV.C.8)

The TDS and TDS Succession document references general non-Deep Springs specific board training on what every Deep Springs Trustee should know. There is an ongoing training program for board development and processes to onboard new Trustees. Board terms are staggered to provide continuity in board membership. (IV.C.9)

As part of the comprehensive evaluative process, the Trustees of Deep Springs College have instituted regular self-evaluation of policies, bylaws, and general performance regarding the board and its fulfillment of oversight and administrative duties. (IV.C.10)

The governing board upholds a code of ethics and conflict of interest policy, and individual board members adhere to the code (IV.C.11)

The TDS should be applauded for noting in their self-eval that at times the role of CEO and TDS has become blurry and reminding themselves of the responsibility and authority of the CEO to implement and administer board policies without board interference and be held accountable for the operation of the district/system or college, respectively. (IV.C.12)

The Trustees are informed about the Eligibility Requirements, the Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, and accreditation processes, and that the board participates in the evaluation of governing board roles and functions in the accreditation process. (IV.C.13)

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

Quality Focus Essay

As part of the Self-Study process, Deep Springs College has identified three action projects in its Quality Focused Essay:

1. Evaluation of the Farm and Ranch with respect to pedagogical value: The college plans to evaluate the pedagogical value of the Farm and Ranch alongside consideration of natural and physical resources, long-term strategic planning, and the Labor Program more broadly. The College hopes to enlist a group of students to assist in carrying out this research, possibly in conjunction with their work in the academic pillar.
2. Evaluation of diversity in admissions and hiring: Having made recent improvements in some areas, the College will now examine its relationship to diversity in the broader context of its history, resource allocation, and position in higher education. It aims to articulate in greater detail the purpose of diversity at Deep Springs, to identify objectives that the College should aim to achieve, and to identify how the College should go about realizing them.
3. Comprehensive evaluation of the college's resources with respect to current technology: Deep Springs maintains an extensive network of physical and digital infrastructure to support the education of students through academics, labor, and self-governance. Its review will not only include a detailed analysis of College infrastructure in the context of current and future needs, but extensive research into current and developing technologies.

The Peer Review Team reviewed the Quality Focus Essay and notes the following:

The three projects are consistent with the college mission and seem appropriate for the present needs of the College. The Peer Review Team also notes that the projects focus on evaluation and encourages the College to articulate how these evaluations will inform planning.

Evaluation of the Farm and Ranch: The team appreciated the central role the Farm and Ranch have played in the life of this college. The team encourages the college to continue to refine the specific evaluation questions and instruments for this project and to articulate the intended outcomes of this project.

Evaluation of diversity in admissions and hiring: The Peer Review Team encourages the college to consider how the changes in admissions and hiring are perhaps more focused on diversity and equality than equity. Making sure that the diversity of students and staff is increased is important. Making changes to the college to ensure success and full participation of all students and staff will move the college to working within an equity framework. The Peer Review Team notes that while this is a "plan to plan", the college has laid out a threefold aim that is arguably measurable.

Evaluation of technology resources: The Peer Review Team notes that this project relates well to Standard III.C. The Peer Review Team encourages the college to focus the definition of technology for this project since the definition of technology is quite broad and incorporates a consideration of safety for students and staff in the isolated context of Deep Springs. The Peer Review Team also encourages the college to narrow technology priorities and acknowledges limited personnel resources to complete this work.

Appendix A: Core Inquiries



ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR
COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

CORE INQUIRIES

Deep Springs College
HC72 Box 45001
Dyer, NV 89010

The Core Inquiries are based upon the findings of the peer review team that conducted Team ISER Review on October 19, 2023.

Virginia L. Guleff
Team Chair

Deep Springs

Peer Review Team Roster

Team ISER Review

October 19, 2023

Ms. Virginia Guleff, Team Chair Butte College Superintendent/President	Dr. Daren Otten, Vice Chair Copper Mountain College Superintendent/President
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Ms. Julia Morrison College of the Redwoods Vice President, Administrative Services	
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Summary of Team ISER Review

INSTITUTION: Deep Springs College

DATE OF TEAM ISER REVIEW: October 19, 2023

TEAM CHAIR: Virginia L. Guleff

A ten-member accreditation peer review team conducted Team ISER Review of Deep Springs College on October 19, 2023. The Team ISER Review is a one-day, off-site analysis of an institution's self-evaluation report. The peer review team received the college's institutional self-evaluation report (ISER) and related evidence several weeks prior to the Team ISER Review. Team members found the ISER to be a comprehensive, well written, document detailing the processes used by the College to address Eligibility Requirements, Commission Standards, and Commission Policies. The team confirmed that the ISER was developed through broad participation by the entire College community including faculty, staff, students, and administration. The College also prepared a Quality Focus Essay.

In preparation for the Team ISER Review, the team chair attended a team chair training workshop on August 1, 2023 and held a pre-review meeting with the college CEO on August 31, 2023. The entire peer review team received team training provided by staff from ACCJC on August 30, 2023. Prior to the Team ISER Review, team members completed their team assignments, identified areas for further clarification, and provided a list of requests for additional evidence to be considered during the Team ISER Review.

During the Team ISER Review, team members spent the morning discussing their initial observations and their preliminary review of the written materials and evidence provided by the College for the purpose of determining whether the College continues to meet Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and US Department of Education regulations. In the afternoon, the team further synthesized their findings to validate the excellent work of the college and identified standards the college meets, as well as developed Core Inquiries to be pursued during the Focused Site Visit, which will occur during the week of March 4, 2024.

Core Inquiries are a means for communicating potential areas of institutional noncompliance, improvement, or exemplary practice that arise during the Team ISER Review. They describe the areas of emphasis for the Focused Site Visit that the team will explore to further their analysis to determine whether standards are met and accordingly identify potential commendations or recommendations. The college should use the Core Inquiries and time leading up to the focused site visit as an opportunity to gather more evidence, to collate information, and to strengthen or develop processes in the continuous improvement cycle. In the course of the Focused Site Visit, the ACCJC staff liaison will review new or emerging issues which might arise out of the discussions on Core Inquiries.

Core Inquiries

Based on the team's analysis during the Team ISER Review, the team identified the following core inquiries that relate to potential areas of clarification, improvement, or commendation.

Core Inquiry 1:

The team would like more information on how the library is providing students with orientation and learning support for library research, how faculty and other human resources are engaged in maintaining the materials and equipment in the library, how evaluation of the library is used to ensure that student learning outcomes are supported, and how evaluation is used to improve library and learning support services.

Standards or Policies: Standard II.B.1, II.B.2 and II.B.3

Description:

- a. The team noticed that Deep Springs maintains a sizeable collection of volumes, subscribes to JSTOR and engaged a Community College librarian in an assessment of its library services. When additional evidence was requested to address Standard IIB, the College acknowledged that this evidence is lacking; however, the College communicated that they will develop a plan to address three goals in this area.
- b. In its response to the team's initial request for additional evidence, Deep Springs College acknowledged the need to adopt policies and practices and allocate resources to maintaining library services that are responsive to student needs and learning outcomes. The ISER did not provide evidence that students are oriented to library resources and research. While there was evidence that some evaluation of the library has been conducted, there was limited evidence that improvements were made based on the recommendations arising from the evaluations. Additionally, oversight of the library is not clear.

Topics of discussion during interviews:

- a. Orientation for students to library resources and library research.
- b. Oversight of the library to ensure student learning outcomes are met.
- c. Regular evaluation of library resources and services which lead to improvements.

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:

- a. Evidence of student orientation and/or support to using the library and learning support services to achieve learning outcomes and course objectives (could be activities in courses)
- b. Evidence of assigned oversight for maintaining and tracking the use of library resources.
- c. Evidence of improvements made because of evaluations of the library

Request for Observations/Interviews:

- a. Interviews of students about their use of the library in supporting their learning
- b. Interviews with faculty to understand how they engage with their students about the library and what instruction occurs in their classes around using library resources. Also, faculty could be asked about how they engage with the maintenance of materials in the library.
- c. Interviews with leadership to ask about their library improvement plans/progress to address the goals communicated by the college in the ISER and the Request for Additional Evidence.

Core Inquiry 2:

The team is interested in learning how Deep Springs assesses the effectiveness of student support services, including advising and counseling, for continuous improvement.

Standards or Policies: II.C.2, II.C.5**Description:**

- a. The team confirmed that Deep Springs College offers counseling/advising support services to support student success. Given the small size of the student body, the college provides one-on-one advising between the dean and individual students. The job description for the “Dean of the College” notes that the dean will “provide academic advising and student support” and “serve as Transfer Advisor.” Faculty also serve as informal advisors for students with respect to course selection and transfer. Additionally, the college re-affirmed the need to support strong mental health services.
- b. Deep Springs states that the college does not track student services learning outcomes. While the college maintains a number of student services including mental health services, library, and internet technology, it is unclear if assessment methods exist or how assessment methods determine the effectiveness of student support services. It is also unclear how assessment evaluation results are used to improve student support services.

Topics of discussion during interviews:

- a. How does Deep Springs assess the effectiveness of mental health services, library or other student support services?
- b. How does Deep Springs use evaluation data to improve student support services?

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:

- a. Assessment data of student support services

- b. Evidence that assessment data is used for program improvement.

Request for Observations/Interviews:

- a. President / Dean

Core Inquiry 3:

The team would like more information about the College's long-range planning processes and their support for continuous improvement of academic quality and allocation of resources.

Standards or Policies: I.B.9, III.B.4, IV.C.8

Description:

- a. The team reviewed long-term planning reports submitted in evidence, including the coeducation and infrastructure reports, trustee reports, pass-over committee documents, and the how-to-prepare-a-budget instructions. These provide evidence of short and long-term planning processes at the college, which align with the college's mission and rely heavily on dialogue and discussion. As currently submitted, each of these plans appears to occur in some degree of isolation, and the team would like information about how planning is integrated at the college and supports institutional improvement.
- b. Additional evidence provided by the college indicates awareness that long-term planning is a possible concern. The team would like to follow up with the college on any in-progress efforts to address this area.
- c. The team would like to better understand how long-range planning functions at Deep Springs College to address the needs for educational programs and services or human, physical, technology, and financial resources. Additionally, the team would like to better understand how long-range planning supports institutional improvement goals related to academic quality.

Topics of discussion during interviews:

- a. An explanation of the college's integrated planning processes
- b. A discussion of how planning supports resource allocation
- c. How long-range planning supports institutional improvement

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:

- a. Documentation of long-term planning for facilities
- b. Documentation of long-term educational planning (programs, services)
- c. Model and explanation showing how existing plans at the College are integrated to achieve long term goals

Request for Observations/Interviews:

- a. Interviews with CEO, CFO, Budget Manager, Director of Operations, Dean, Student Leaders

Core Inquiry 4:

The team was impressed by and would like more information about student involvement in carrying out the mission of the College through self-governance, leadership, and taking the initiative in program improvement.

Standards or Policies: I.A.1, I.A.3, IV.A.1

Description:

- a. The team verified that the college mission describes its unique student population and location, the degree offered, and the college's commitment to "leadership and enlightened service." Each of the three pillars (Academics, Labor, and Self-Governance) are referenced in the Mission Statement. The team reviewed evidence showing regular review of institutional goals for student learning in the reports documenting academic, self-governance, and labor goals. Academic policy review process materials confirm these materials are reviewed in alignment with the college mission. The team would like to confirm with student leaders their role in college governance and engage with students in further inquiry related to how self-governance and leadership contribute to their learning.
- b. The evidence provided affirms students are engaged as leaders in decision-making and in the operation of the college. The team would like to observe students in this work.
- c. The team found that students lead in decision-making on core committees and serve as voting members on the Board of Trustees. The team would like to learn more about the student experience surrounding service in key decision-making roles at the College.

Topics of discussion during interviews:

- a. Students' assessment of how their governance and college leadership roles contribute to the Mission of the college and their own learning.
- b. Students' assessment of how institutional leaders encourage them to take initiative in improving practices, programs, and services at the college.
- c. How student leadership and service in key decision-making roles contributes to the overall student learning experience at the College, including the pillars of academic, labor, and self-governance

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:

- a. See request for observations/ interviews below.

Request for Observations/Interviews:

- a. Interviews with student leaders
- b. Observation of a student committee meeting

Core Inquiry 5:

The team would like more information about how the College assesses the financial and internal control systems for validity and effectiveness and how the results are used for improvement.

Standards or Policies: III.D.8

Description:

- a. The team reviewed recent audits, Board Reports, and the provided sample Board evaluations. In the evidence section of the Standard, the College mentions that the College Audit and Budget and Operations Committees are evaluated as part of the Trustees self-evaluation process.
- b. After reviewing the provided evidence, it's still unclear how the College evaluates and assesses financial and internal control systems and how the results are used for improvement.

Topics of discussion during interviews:

- a. An explanation of how financial and internal control systems are evaluated and assessed for validity and effectiveness.
- b. A discussion of how the results of the assessment are used for improvement.

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:

- a. Documentation of assessment/evaluation of financial and internal control systems.
- b. Documentation of improvements that have been made as a result of the assessment.

Request for Observations/Interviews:

- a. Interviews with CEO and CFO.