

## **Evaluation Report**

Deep Springs College  
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A Confidential Report Prepared for  
The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited  
Deep Springs College from March 21 through March 24, 2011

Dr. Roger Wagner, Chair

**Deep Springs College  
Visiting Team Roster  
March 21-24, 2011**

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## Summary of the Evaluation Report

INSTITUTION: Deep Springs College  
DATE OF VISIT: March 21-24, 2011  
TEAM CHAIR: Dr. Roger Wagner, Superintendent/President  
Copper Mountain Community College District

An eight member accreditation team visited Deep Springs College in March for the purpose of evaluating how well the institution is achieving its stated purposes, analyzing how well the college is meeting the Commission Standards and providing recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) regarding the status of the college.

In preparation for the visit, team members attended an all-day training session on February 8, 2011, conducted by the ACCJC and studied commission materials prepared for visiting teams. Team members read carefully the college's self-study report, including the recommendations from the 2005 visiting team, and assessed evidence provided by the college on flash drives and printed material. Data was also reviewed on the college's website.

Prior to the visit, team members completed written evaluations of the self-study report and began identifying areas for further investigation. With the concurrence of the Commission and the College, the team's on-site visit was adjusted from the more traditional Tuesday through Thursday schedule to Monday afternoon to Wednesday. This adjustment was made due the size of the team, eight members, and the uniquely small size of the college's faculty, staff, student population, and programs.

The self-study was deemed to be adequate in addressing each of the standards and provided appropriate information for the team to begin its assessment. The college's staff was most accommodating during the visit and responded to team member's requests for additional documentation and/or follow-up interviews.

The team was housed in Bishop, CA, which was approximately one hour's drive from the College. Due to adverse road conditions on the day of the team's arrival the Deep Springs President arranged for two appropriately equipped Suburban's to meet the team in Big Pine, and drive the team through the mountain pass to the campus.

During the visit, the team met with all of the college's faculty and administration, most other college employees and students. The team chair along with three other team members met with a single Board member. A planned conference call with two other board members was not completed due to technical difficulties. The team attended a single open meeting to allow

for comment from any member of the campus or community. In addition team members attended or met with members of each of the colleges standing committees, as well as a weekly student public speaking event.

## **Major Findings and Recommendations of the 2011 Visiting Team**

### **Commendations:**

The Deep Springs College visiting team was impressed with a number of programs, activities, and services observed during the visit. In particular the team wishes to commend the college for:

1. The team commends Deep Springs College for a mission statement that not only defines but drives the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning.
2. The team commends Deep Springs College for having fully developed Student Learning Outcomes for its academic courses and program including assessment and analysis.
3. The team commends Deep Springs College for the manner in which it allows students to take "beneficial ownership" of the institution by assuming leadership roles in the college's decision-making processes. The rich and pervasive dialogue that characterizes all the College's decisions is a praiseworthy hallmark of this governing process.
4. The team commends Deep Springs College for its efforts toward increasing operational efficiencies through its application of alternative energy and partnership with Southern California Edison as well as its successful use of external funding to improve farm operations.
5. The team commends Deep Springs College for selecting full and part time faculty whose academic preparation and experiences contribute significantly to the success of its unique mission. The team further commends the college for actively involving all staff members in student learning.

**Recommendations:**

1. In order to improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that Deep Springs College integrate existing planning process and make clear to the college community the ways in which all planning processes are institutionalized. (Standards I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.6, II.A.2.a, III.A.2, III.B.2.b, III.D.3)
2. In order to improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that Deep Springs College expand and enhance its development and assessment of student learning outcomes, particularly to the two pillars of labor and self-governance. (Standards I.B, I.B.3, I.B.5, I.B.6)

## **Accreditation Evaluation Report for**

### **Deep Springs College**

#### **Introduction**

Deep Springs College is a private, not-for-profit, Liberal Arts College located in a remote high-desert valley in eastern California. It has a residential, all male student body and offers a single degree program.

The College was founded by industrialist L.L. Nunn in 1917. The mission and philosophy of the college remains largely unchanged from its 1917 origin. Its mission statement was drafted and approved by its Trustees in 1998 and reaffirmed in 2005 and 2010. Serving an average of 26 students at any given time it is structured around the three pillars of: academics, labor, and self-governance. All students receive a full scholarship, including room and board. Students abide by a self-imposed isolation policy which requires them to remain on campus during the seven week terms except for cases of emergencies and attending religious services.

## Responses to Recommendations of the Previous Evaluation Team

This visiting team examined the college's response to the following recommendations that were provided by the 2005 comprehensive evaluation team:

***Recommendation 1(Focus Item):*** *In order to increase institutional effectiveness and to assure the continued benefits of the Deep Springs education mission, the team recommends the college fully develop its strategic long-range planning processes, particularly in academic planning, but also for budgeting, staffing, facilities, library, and technology resources. [IB3, IB4, IB5, IB6, IB7]*

In response to the previous team's recommendation and the findings of the Focused Midterm Visit, the team finds that the college has fully developed its strategic planning process. The College has formalized and institutionalized its strategic long-range planning process. Specifically regarding academic planning, the college has addressed this with the development of the Goals of the Deep Springs Academic Program (GODSAP) as a metric for student learning outcomes, and a more formal evaluation process, the Academic Policy Review Process. While neither of these is labeled as "planning," program improvement is implied from the evaluative discussions. The College has fully addressed the recommendation and meets standards.

***Recommendation 2:*** *In order to meet the WASC standards for assessment, the college must incorporate a systematic analysis (program review) of internal processes to balance the workload of community members and to assess the learning outcomes achieved within the three programs known as the three pillars. [IB3, IB6, IIA2a, IIA2e]*

Deep Springs College has put into place a formal systematic program review process that provides an ongoing analysis of each of their three pillars (programs), academics, labor, and self-governance. The College has fully addressed the recommendation and meets standards.

***Recommendation 3 (Focus Item):*** *In order to meet the WASC/ACCJC standard for general education breadth, the college must ensure curriculum balance by orienting and acculturating faculty to oversee course development and program structure in collaboration with the students' curriculum committee. [IIA2a, IIA3a]*

The Deep Springs Handbook, Faculty-Specific Information, provides an orientation to the curriculum process at Deep Springs. The Dean and Curriculum Committee work with the Faculty Committee to acculturate faculty to the unique mission, and role of students in curriculum, course, and program development. The Faculty Committee works with and provides a representative body to the Curriculum Committee giving faculty a guiding role in curriculum issues. Central to the Deep Springs Mission is its student centered self-governance pillar. In keeping with the College's mission the college has found a balance between the self-governance pillar and faculty involvement with curriculum decision making. The College has fully addressed the recommendation and meets standards.

***Recommendation 4:*** *In order to meet WASC/ACCJC standards for diversity and increase institutional effectiveness, the team recommends the college re-define diversity within the context of the Deep Springs mission of service to humanity, incorporating obvious bilateral benefits to both traditional and diverse students, and developing effective strategies for implementation. This commitment would address students, and developing effective strategies for implementation. This commitment would address student and faculty recruitment, as well as academic program plans/assessments and college-wide dialogue. [IIB, IIIA4, and WASC/ACCJC “Policy Statement on Diversity (adopted January, 1994)]*

The college continues to place emphasis on marketing to and for a diverse faculty and student population. The students continue to be recruited from all walks of life including urban, rural, and metropolitan populations. The statistical presence of minority students varies from year to year and often comes from the presence of international students. The College has fully addressed the recommendation and meets standards.

***Recommendation 5:*** *In order to increase effectiveness and efficiency (while ensuring fairness, budgetary discipline, and planning,) the team recommends Deep Springs institute a process for budget requests and approval which would encourage all to submit timely, written requests to the budget committee for prioritizing on the basis of a pre-endorsed set of criteria. [IIID2]*

Deep Springs has instituted a budget request process which incorporates budget and planning. Each constituency or department on campus has the opportunity to submit a budget request or proposal for review and discussion. They are invited to the Budget and Operations Committee meetings to discuss their requests and offer explanation. The President, Vice President, and on academic matters the Dean, meet and discuss the priorities to establish the budget to present to the trustees. The trustees of Deep Springs approve the final budget allocations and make additional resources available where necessary. The College has fully addressed the recommendation and meets standard.

***Recommendation 6 (Focus Item):*** *In order to increase effectiveness and efficiency (building on the last six years’ efforts,) the team recommends the Trustees oversee an initiative to update or document policies, procedures, and plans of all bodies of the college, to ensure strong institutional memory and operational continuity. [IVA3, IVB1e, IVB1f]*

Deep Springs College utilizes “Passovers”, a written journal that documents past and current best practices and lessons learned, that provide continuity over time and they continue to maintain a central depository for their policies. The College has fully addressed the recommendation and meets standards.

## **Eligibility Requirements**

- 1. Authority:** The visiting team confirmed that Deep Springs College has authority to operate as a degree granting institution. Deep Springs College is a private two-year liberal arts college, incorporated as 501c3 in the State of California. It is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior College (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).
- 2. Mission:** The visiting team confirmed that Deep Spring's Mission Statement is clearly defined and published. Drafted in 1998, it was approved by the Trustees in January 2005. The Mission Statement was reviewed and approved by the Trustees again in October of 2010. The Mission Statement is published in the current Academic Catalog and available on the Deep Springs web-site.
- 3. Governing Board:** The visiting team confirmed that Deep Springs College is governed by a thirteen member board of trustees, including two student members.
- 4. Chief Executive Officer:** The visiting team confirmed the Deep Springs College has a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who is appointed by the governing board. The CEO is delegated the primary responsibility for the day-to-day running of the institution.
- 5. Administrative Capacity:** Due to the small size of the college, administrators hold multiple responsibilities. The visiting team confirmed that Deep Springs College has an administrative staff that supports the necessary services for the institution's size, mission, and purpose.
- 6. Operating Status:** The visiting team confirmed that students are enrolled and actively pursuing classes that can lead to a degree.
- 7. Degrees:** The visiting team confirmed that all of Deep Spring's students are enrolled in a degree program.
- 8. Educational Programs:** The visiting team confirmed that Deep Springs College's degree program is sufficient in content, length, and with the rigor and content that is congruent with its mission.
- 9. Academic Credit:** The visiting team confirmed that Deep Springs College awards academic credit based on generally accepted practices of higher education.
- 10. Student Learning Achievement:** The visiting team confirmed that Deep Springs College defines and publishes measurable objectives for all of its courses and programs. The college uses the metrics of the Goals of the Deep Springs Academic Program (GODSAP) to measure learning outcomes.

- 11. General Education:** The visiting team confirmed that Deep Springs College incorporates a substantial component of general education in its program. The courses include demonstrated competency in writing, computational skills, and other areas of knowledge, consistent with levels of quality and rigor appropriate to higher education.
- 12. Academic Freedom:** The visiting team confirmed that the college's statement of academic freedom demonstrates the college's commitment to intellectual freedom for both faculty and student.
- 13. Faculty:** The visiting team confirmed that the college has a core of qualified full-time faculty with full-time responsibilities. Faculty responsibilities are spelled out in personnel and academic policy.
- 14. Student Services:** The visiting team confirmed that Deep Springs College provides appropriate student services that support student learning. Support services programs are consistent with the institution's mission and are maintained to support student learning.
- 15. Admission:** The visiting team confirmed that Deep Springs College admissions practices are consistent with its mission and identifies qualifications for admissions.
- 16. Information Learning Resources:** The visiting team verified that Deep Springs College provides for sufficient information, learning resources, and services to support its mission and instructional programs.
- 17. Financial Resources:** The visiting team verified that Deep Springs College uses and plans for its financial resources so they adequately support its services and learning programs for the college. The college's endowment, annual fund raising, and auxiliary operations (farm and ranch) together form an adequate base for funding.
- 18. Financial Accountability:** The visiting team verified that Deep Springs College contracts with an independent certified public auditor. The audit is conducted in accordance with standards generally accepted in the United States. The audit(s) have resulted in no material findings.
- 19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation:** The visiting team verified that Deep Springs College has developed a planning and program review process that is transparent. The college community is extensively represented in this and all processes. Goals and learning outcome assessment are evident.
- 20. Public Information:** The visiting team verified that the Deep Springs College catalog contains precise, accurate, and current information in its printed and web-based catalog, to include:
  - Official name, address, telephone number(s), and web site URL
  - Mission

- Course, Program, and Degree Offerings
- Academic Calendar and Program Length
- Academic Freedom Statement
- Available Student Financial Aid
- Available Learning Resources
- Name and Degrees of Administrators and Faculty
- Names of Governing Board Members
- Requirements
- Admissions
- Student Fees
- Degree, Certificates, Graduation and Transfer
- Major Policies
- Academic Regulations
- Nondiscrimination
- Acceptance of Transfer Credits
- Grievance and Complaint Procedures
- Sexual Harassment Statement
- Refund of Fees

**21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission:** The visiting team verified that Deep Springs fulfills their obligation to the Accrediting Commission. The accreditation standards and recommendations from the Commission are adhered to.

## **STANDARD I**

### **Institutional Mission and Effectiveness**

#### ***Standard I.A.: Mission***

##### **General Observations**

The Mission of Deep Springs College is integral to every aspect of the educational environment the college provides. The Deep Springs Mission statement has remained relatively unchanged since the college's inception in 1917. Based on the writings of its founder L.L. Nunn, the mission statement establishes the educational priorities of the college, Leadership and Enlightenment, as well as the educational environment within which students will learn. The mission statement leaves little doubt to the higher education community as to the purpose and intent of the Deep Springs education. Whereas most two year colleges are moving in the direction of specific measurable achievements as signified by degrees, certificates, and transfer, Deep Springs holds to the basic tenet of education for education and the commitment of their students to "incur a lifelong obligation to improve the human condition. (I.A, I.A.1)

The programs and courses of the college, as well as the structure of the academic environment, adhere to the mission of the college. The college has remained steadfast to its original mission established in 1917 in the Constitution of Deep Springs and the Deed of Trust. The merger of labor, rigorous academics, and self-governance, which are central to the mission, continue to be a large part of the academic experience at Deep Springs and defines its character and the student population that choose this educational environment. Each student at the college is involved in committee work as a part of self-governance on one of the four standing student committees. Additionally students rotate through the various positions of the labor program. The unique educational environment and continued academic success of the Deep Springs students illustrates the college achievement of its outcomes. (I.A, I.A.1)

##### **Findings and Evidence**

The mission statement articulates the intended student population and the rigors they will encounter after gaining admission to the college. Deep Springs has remained committed to a small all male student body to ensure that they can and will achieve their mission. The mission statement, although not explicitly stated, describes the three pillars (academics, labor, and self-governance) which have remained central tenets to the educational principles of the college. (I.A.1)

Deep Springs College is a working ranch with cattle, dairy cows, pigs, chickens, sheep, and crop fields. Students are responsible for maintaining the ranch and are directly involved in every aspect of running the college, including maintenance, meals, sanitation and general upkeep of the facilities. Every student that was interviewed during the site visit clearly understood the labor program and their role in it. Self-governance is a central pillar of the

student experience at Deep Springs and is directly related to the academic outcomes of the institution.

The fact that the mission statement has remained relatively unchanged and that the college continues to offer a fully financially supported education provides clear evidence of the college's continued commitment to the content of the mission statement. Additionally, students are very aware of the mission and their responsibility in preserving and achieving the mission. (I.A.4)

Documentation was provided that the mission statement was officially drafted in 1998, based on the writings of the college's founder LL. Nunn, although it has been in practice far longer. It was reviewed in 2005 and re-adopted, unchanged, in its current format by the Board of Trustees that same year. (I.A.2, IA.3) The mission statement can be found in the academic catalog and the Board of Trustees Handbook.

### **Conclusion**

Deep Springs College is deeply committed to achieving its mission and uses all of its resources to fully meet all aspects of the mission statement. The institution uses a well documented, ongoing process for evaluating itself with respect to strategic planning. The institution is at the sustainable continuous quality improvement level of the Commission's Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness – Part II: Planning. The college meets the standard.

### **Recommendations:**

None.

### ***Standard I.B.: Improving Institutional Effectiveness***

#### **General Observations**

Deep Springs College engages in ongoing, collegial and self-reflective dialogue about every phase of student learning in each of the three pillars. The college mission is well-defined, clearly understood and carried out in the operation and evaluation of the college. The self study states that “informal venues for self-reflective dialogue range everywhere from discussions over the dinner table to seminar discussions in class. . .” Of particular note is the very strong role of students in campus decision-making through the self-governance pillar.

The college uses a formal committee structure where students engage in dialogue and make decisions in four key areas – student admissions, curriculum, communications/marketing, and review and readmission. Each of these committees has a major role in carrying out college goals and the improvement of institutional effectiveness, including assessment. The college has identified learning goals in a document titled *Goals of Deep Springs Academic Program (GODSAP)*. As stated in the self study, GODSAP is used both as a metric for measuring course effectiveness and the college's overall academic effectiveness. Academic

policies are reviewed annually for continued effectiveness through the Academic Policy Review Process (APRP). (I.B.5, I.B.7)

The self study reports that “decision-making bodies . . . provide ongoing critical dialogue and valuable input for strategic planning.” Communication at the college provides structured, regular opportunities for dialogue among all of the college constituents, and programs and practices are modified as a result of this dialogue and evaluation. The team reviewed committee meeting minutes, attended committee meetings, and conducted interviews with each of the colleges committees confirming that a broad-based approach is taken to insure regular, and ongoing dialogue exists at Deep Springs in support of its planning processes. (I.B.5, I.B.6)

Documented assessment results include a variety of measures of courses and programs. Faculty evaluates the effectiveness of each course in meeting the goals of GODSAP and their own effectiveness in teaching the course. Students also evaluate faculty performance in each course. Surveys of alumni and the admission of most students into well-respected transfer institutions validate the effectiveness of the overall college program.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The college is exemplary in its use of dialogue around issues of institutional effectiveness, and the mission is clearly central to all planning and decision-making. The self study states that a high level of self-reflective dialogue is integral to the Deep Springs experience, and this is validated through on-campus interviews and observations of the committee structure and committee minutes. The college values formal and informal dialogue, but the formal committee structure ensures that dialogue evaluates the degree to which the college adheres to the college mission and principles. (I.B.1, I.B.5)

The college evaluates effectiveness in many venues, including formal committee structures. The goals for course effectiveness are embodied in GODSAP and courses are measured against those goals every term. Other goals to improve effectiveness are approved by the Board of Trustees based on reviews prepared and presented by faculty, staff and students. Goals for the labor program and the self-governance program are widely understood within the entire community. (I.B.2)

The college has regular structures and processes to measure their progress toward stated goals. These processes occur within the committee structure and through bi-annual reports presented to the board. Examples include a recent major review of the labor program and the fund-raising campaign. Because of the long history and very narrow mission of Deep Springs they consider much of their planning to be “minor tweaking,” but it clearly involves assessment of programs, planning, resource allocation and implementation followed by reevaluation. The team found it difficult to locate documents that clearly summarized the planning goals and processes; instead they were found in committee minutes and board reports. For someone unfamiliar with the college, it would help if these goals and plans were summarized into a document or documents. The recent library report is a good example of a brief, clear summary that outlines immediate and longer term goals. Members of the college

community, however, seemed well-informed about goals and their evaluation. (I.B.3, I.B.6, I.B.7)

The planning process is clearly broad-based, involving administrators, students, faculty, and the ranch, farm, and kitchen staff in planning. The assessment results used by the college are primarily qualitative, appropriate to the size and mission. Extensive use of student and staff written evaluations and review of policy and processes provides assessment results to communicate matters of quality to the community, prospective students and the board. Surveys of alumni also are used to inform which programs at Deep Springs had a lasting impact on prior students. (I.B.4)

### **Conclusions**

Deep Springs has institutionalized systematic procedures for improving instructional programs, student support, the library and other learning support services. This is done on a regular basis through constant student feedback and student decision-making about programs and services, guided by faculty and staff according to their expertise. The institution uses a well documented, ongoing process for reviewing its programs. The institution is at the sustainable continuous quality improvement level of the Commission's Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness – Part I: Program Review. The college meets the standard.

### **Recommendations:**

See Recommendations 1 and 2.

## **STANDARD II**

### **Student Learning Programs and Services**

#### ***Standard II.A: Instructional Programs***

##### **General Observations**

The college has a long history of high quality programs inspired by the core mission and the three pillars of academics, labor and self government. It prides itself on the high academic quality of its entering students and the subsequent “historically high standards of rigor” for its instructional programs. Most of the curriculum would be considered advanced two year or even upper division in content. Since the last comprehensive visit the college has put in place a long-term evaluation and planning mechanism comprising “Goals of the Deep Springs Academic Program” (GODSAP) and “Academic Policy Review Process” (APRP).

##### **Findings and Evidence**

The team observed that certain sub-standards of Standard II do not apply to Deep Springs College and are identified in the self study. For example Standard II.A.1 addresses instructional programs “regardless of location or means of delivery”. All of Deep Springs’ courses are delivered in the traditional classroom on a single campus. The self study report along with the team’s review of documents, including completion, retention, and transfer data demonstrate a strong instructional program that supports the college’s unique mission. (II.A.1)

Deep Springs is a highly selective institution and its academic program and course offerings are designed to meet the needs of high achieving students. Because of the high standards of its entering student body as evidenced in their ACT, SAT and AP scores, the single academic program meets the needs of its student body. The Curriculum Committee along with the Faculty Committee work together to build and assess courses on a term to term basis. (II.A.1.a)

Due to the small size of the student body all classes are intense, seminar style discussions that allow for sustained interactions between student and faculty member. This is particularly appropriate for the mission and objectives of the college. (II.A.1.b)

For years, course evaluation and planning has taken place through ongoing informal discussions that in some sense involve the entire student body and the entire faculty in a level of scrutiny that greatly exceeds the norm. In response to previous accreditation comments, the college has instituted a more formal process that allows for ongoing tracking. This takes the shape of the “Goals of the Deep Springs Academic Program” (GODSAP) and “Academic Policy review Process” (APRP). At this point the new process has already been applied to the “labor” pillar of the instructional program; the “academic” pillar is under review this year; and the “governance” pillar is scheduled for review next year. While these metrics provide detailed analysis of individual courses and faculty, the most telling indicator of

success is still the astonishing track record of students successfully transferring to an array of prestigious institutions across the country. (II.A.1.c)

Again, the unique mission of Deep Springs College places parts of Standard II.2 outside of the college's mission. Developmental and pre-collegiate courses, continuing and community education, study abroad, and other programs are by design not part of the Deep Springs mission. However, the team found that the college does assure it maintains a quality academic program that is continually reviewed, adapted, and improved to meet the needs of its student body. (II.A.2)

Faculty are clearly involved in both formal and informal planning discussions with students and with the Curriculum Committee that examine individual courses in the light of student learning outcomes. There is an unusually high level of thoughtful dialog. This process effectively impacts short term course planning. But it seems to leave a gap regarding institutional memory and long term planning for program improvement. This is a role normally fulfilled by tenured faculty and it is therefore unclear how this function is fulfilled at the college since administration, faculty and students are all short-term. (II.A.2.a., II.A.2.b)

The depth and rigor of courses at the college are exemplary, with many courses being the equivalent of upper division material elsewhere. This is particularly facilitated by the small seminar and independent study approaches. The single program approach which is at the core of the college mission provides the breadth and rigor needed to support student learning. In areas where a student need is not available on campus, such as a specific mathematics course, creative individual arrangements such as online enrollment at U.C. Berkeley are utilized. (II.A.2.c)

Because of the small number of students, delivery methods are highly individual with small seminar and independent study approaches. Learning disabilities are accommodated on an individual basis. (II.A.2.d)

The newly instituted "Goals of the Deep Springs Academic Program" (GODSAP) and "Academic Policy review Process" (APRP) processes are designed to document the evaluation and improvement of courses and programs. (II.A.2.e and II.A.2.f)

The college's academic policy outlines the award of credit, including the number of hours required for lecture and lab, exclusive of reports and preparing for class and exams. The team observed selected classes and found them to meet as scheduled. The team found that many of the specialized courses are advanced, higher order courses, designed to meet the needs of its high achieving student body. There seems to be no problem transferring units to receiving institutions on a one-to-one basis that examines course outlines and content (II.A.2.h)

Very few students elect to receive an associate degree. An outline of requirements is available in academic policy and is also used to guide an appropriate course of study for students intending to transfer. (II.A.2.i)

The college adheres to the traditional liberal arts curriculum. Quantitative reasoning may be the most difficult area to provide since it has been difficult for the college to attract and retain long-term science and math faculty. This requirement has been met with the use of short-term faculty until this academic year when a long-term faculty position was hired to meet math and science needs of students. (II.A.3)

The college ensures that its curriculum covers the basic content and methodology of all major academic disciplines, while the rigor of its specialized courses encourages unusual depth of inquiry. Students are also unusually articulate in part because of the composition and public speaking requirements. The “service to humanity” component of the mission statement created by the college founder leads to a high degree of “ethical human being and effective citizen” skills. This area is reinforced by the “Labor” and “Governance” pillars of the academic program. The college associate degree is a traditional “liberal arts” focus with many of the classes being interdisciplinary. (II.A.3.a, II.A.3.b, II.A.3.c, II.A.4)

Although the students acquire vocational skills from the “Labor” pillar of the instructional program, the college does not offer vocational or occupational certificates or degrees. The college application process offers prospective students a clear understanding of the college’s unique location and program by requiring second round applicants to visit the college in person. Once in attendance, students participate in the design and selection of courses through the student-chaired Curriculum Committee. (II.A.5, II.A.6)

The ability to transfer units from the college is highly individualized and dependent on the cooperation of receiving institutions. In practice this seems to have worked well in the past and alumni surveys confirm general satisfaction in this area. While standardization of curriculum from term to term might prove beneficial to the transfer of credits for students, it would not be in line with the colleges stated mission. (II.A.6.a)

In a similar manner to other areas of the college operation, publications and communications are collectively reviewed by the Communications Committee. Materials are updated on a regular basis; including the college website. The College has board-adopted policies on academic freedom and academic honesty. The most unusual code of conduct requirement at the college is the Isolation Policy which prohibits members of the Deep Springs Student Body from leaving the campus during the regular academic term except for medical emergencies or observance of a weekly holy day. It is clearly articulated in the Ground Rules of the Student Body and included in the college handbook. (II.A.6.c, II.A.7.a, II.A.7.b)

## **Conclusion**

In general, the college has responded well to previous recommendations in Area IIA. The college community has invested considerable thought and energy into responding to the standards in general and the previous recommendations while taking into account the exceptionally unique nature of the college and its mission. Faculty are clearly involved in both formal and informal planning discussions with students and with the Curriculum Committee that examine individual courses in the light of student learning outcomes. There is an unusually high level of thoughtful dialog. This process effectively impacts short term

course planning. But it seems to leave a gap regarding institutional memory and long term planning for program improvement. This is a role normally fulfilled by tenured faculty and it is therefore unclear how this function is fulfilled at the college since administration, faculty and students are all short-term. The long term planning is addressed with GODSAP and works well for the college, documentation of planning is not centralized, and is contained in a number of meeting minutes and board reports. Greater use of the newly resurrected Faculty Committee may be an effective way to do this. The college has appropriately addressed learning outcomes and with continued work is positioned well to achieve the proficiency level of the Commission's Rubric for Evaluating the Institutional Effectiveness—Part III: Student Learning Outcomes by 2012. The college meets the standard.

### **Recommendations:**

See Recommendation 1.

### ***Standard II.B: Student Support Services***

#### **General Observations**

The institution recognizes the importance of providing student support services that promote access, student progress and learning, and successful completion of the core elements of the college, academics, student labor, and student governance.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

Deep Springs College recognizes that support services also includes the areas of health and safety, mental-health services, internet and technology resources, diversity initiatives, resources for students with learning disabilities, and library resources. The college produces several informational catalogs; Viewbook, Handbook for Students, Faculty, and Staff, Trustees of Deep Springs Handbook, and an Academic Catalog. These catalogs and handbooks provide detailed information about all facets of the institution. (II.B.1, II.B.2, 2.B.2.a, II.B.2.b, II.B.2.c, II.B.2.d)

Learning support needs of the student population are monitored, particularly in areas related to mental health. All students are assured equitable access to student support services that are appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable. (II.B.3.a)

The three pillars provide students with considerable personal responsibility in personal, academic, civic, and aesthetic development. (II.B.3.b)

The college provides a framework for counseling, guidance, and academic advising that is determined by the interactions between the Dean, long-term faculty, and the individual student. (II.B.3.c)

Student understanding and appreciation of the importance of diversity are manifested in several ways throughout the institution. The Diversity Committee was reconstituted to better

address diversity needs of the college; the small size of the college and its communal nature serves to promote and demand appreciation for the socioeconomic, cultural, religious, and racial composition of the members. (II.B.3.d)

Deep Springs College does not use standardized admissions and placement instruments. Confidential personnel records are locked in security cabinets, backup files for electronic files are stored on separate hard discs, and a safe-deposit vault in a local bank also houses the confidential files. (II.B.3.e, II.B.3.f)

An ongoing evaluation process at the college helps it provide adequate student support services in an environment where student needs are continually changing.

Providing adequate student support services are an ongoing evaluation process at the institution that appears to be directly or indirectly related to the changing nature of the student population. The team found that the self identified the three most immediate needs, medical care, mental-health services, and support for students with learning disabilities currently being addressed by the institution. (II.B.4)

## **Conclusions**

As reported in the Self Study (2010), the college provided evidence that the institution recognizes the importance of making available and distributing detailed information about Deep Springs, not only to its alumni, trustees, and financial supporters, but also to interested applicants, and all current student, faculty, and staff. The team reviewed documentation which demonstrates that the institution has effectively integrated student support services as an integral part of successful student learning. The college meets the standard.

## **Recommendations:**

None.

## ***Standard II.C: Library and Learning Support Services***

### **General observations**

The library at Deep Springs is an attractive, welcoming facility located centrally in the main building on campus. The collection includes approximately 24,000 volumes, including books from the founder's collection. There is an archives collection, a comfortable reading room, and a small computer lab. The facility is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week for student access. The college has made a recent commitment to additional staffing, employing a half-time professional librarian to oversee the library operation. The college recently completed a library report that outlines priorities and activities for the near future. (II.C.1.a, II.C.1.b, II.C.2)

### **Findings and Evidence**

The collection at Deep Springs, while small, appears to be sufficient in depth, breadth and currency for the size of institution and the nature of the curriculum. The collection is

supplemented by access to a database for journal articles and other generally available sources of information on the web, such as Google Scholar. Each semester faculty identifies selected textbooks and other books that support their classes. These texts are put on reserve in the library, and at the end of the course are added to the collection. The college has recently increased the budget for library collections. (II.C.1.a)

The lack of access to DSL for Internet service limits bandwidth to such an extent that Internet access for research is slow. However, given the college's emphasis on study from primary texts, the limitation may have less impact here than it would at most other institutions. The computer lab is very small, but the need for this lab has changed over time. Most students now have their own laptops and can access the internet through wireless and Ethernet ports. The librarian and dean provide instruction for students who need assistance using the library or developing information competency. The team was provided a copy of a recently conducted internal library (assessment) report that questions whether incoming students could benefit from a more formal library orientation. The team agrees that a more formalized library orientation may be beneficial. (II.C.1.b)

The prior librarian completed a library report during the 2009-10 year intended to serve as a reference or benchmark for the newly hired librarian. The report outlines completed activities and recommendations for future library projects. Included in these recommendations are correcting cataloging discrepancies, reclassifying some books, developing a library mission statement to distinguish between being a "living library" that compliments coursework or a "museum of curios" that illustrates the college's history. One priority of the library at this time is the completion of a culling project to delete unused items from the collection. The report also identifies the need to have a clear policy on donations.

Maintenance and security of the collection is appropriate to the size and isolation of the community. The library is a communal space and is clean and well-maintained. When necessary, local libraries provide interlibrary loan privileges, and faculty may obtain borrowing cards for the University of California libraries. Students have access to the library and materials at all times, day and night. (II.C.1.c, II.C.1.d, II.C.1.e)

## **Conclusions**

The library, while small, is sufficient in depth, breadth and currency for the size of the college and its curriculum. Professional librarians and faculty members have provided direction on the acquisition and maintenance of the collection. Students are instructed in the use of the library, and access to the library and internet are available at all times. A recent library report clearly identifies priorities for future projects and improvements in the area. This report should be institutionalized and become part of the colleges long range plan. The college meets the standards.

## **Recommendations:**

None.

## **STANDARD III Resources**

### ***Standard III.A: Human Resources***

#### **General Observations**

Each standard component of the self study report is accompanied with a description, analysis, planning agenda, and evidence. Since the Midterm Report of 2008 personnel changes have occurred in the areas of administration, faculty, and staff. In addition, staff has attended WASC workshops to improve their understanding of the standards and accreditation requirements. A review of faculty credentials underscores the institution's efforts to bring outstanding faculty to the campus for either short or long-term assignments.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

Deep Springs College is committed to employing qualified personnel to support student learning and student services as a means to comply with the mission of the college, enhance its overall institutional effectiveness, and to demonstrate its on-going efforts to promote diversity among its personnel. Written evaluations of personnel are conducted systematically, and written policies regarding ethical behavior of staff and the equitable treatment of staff are stated clearly. Measuring student progress and student learning outcomes is tied to The Goals of the Deep Springs Academic Program (GODSAP) metric in two critical areas, faculty self evaluation and the effectiveness of individual courses in achieving student learning outcomes. (III.A.1.a, III.A.1.b, III.A.1.c, III.A.1.d)

Deep Springs College manages to maintain a sufficient number of qualified full time faculty, staff, and administrators who possess appropriate levels of preparation and experience to ensure the core mission and purpose of the college are met. The uniqueness of the college's geographic setting, small student class size, student labor requirement, and level of student governance, when combined with the academic program, adds another dimension to the necessary qualifications required of personnel. (III.A.2)

Personnel policies and procedures regarding ethical behavior, sexual harassment, drug and alcohol, smoking, and grievances, are made available in the College Handbook. Policies and procedures ensuring fairness in all employment procedures of the institution are in place. (III.A.3.a)

The College ensures the safety, security, and confidentiality of personnel records; electronic files are password protected. Individual personnel records are accessible to each employee. (III.A.3.b)

Deep Springs College addresses issues related to equity and diversity through the Diversity Committee that reviews and creates guidelines for recruiting and hiring personnel, particularly members of underrepresented groups. The Curriculum Committee solicits applications from diverse cultures to fill both short and long- term faculty positions; progress

in the area of diversity is regularly assessed in employment and in the student body; and the college supports and respects the cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds of its students, staff, and faculty. (III.A.4.a, III.A.4.b, III.A.4.c)

Personnel at the college are provided opportunities for professional development that are consistent with, and support the mission of the institution and its stated goals for student learning outcomes (GODSAP). Professional development activities are held biannually for the entire faculty and staff, to discuss the college's mission, and individual roles and responsibilities. Periodic retreats are also held to discuss topics pertinent to the college. On-going formal and informal activities also serve to orient new members of the institution. Workshops, retreats, and other college activities are evaluated through on-going discussions between faculty, staff, and administration as a means to regularly assess the benefits of the activities or to plan for future activities. This feedback, however, appears to result more from the close knit interaction of faculty and staff in a variety of settings; classroom, ranch grounds, and cafeteria. (III.A.5.a, III.A.5.b)

Allocations and planning for human resources at Deep Springs are systematically assessed in conjunction with the financial resources of the college. Personnel decisions in the areas of short and long-term commitments, continuing education programs, faculty and staff development activities, are determined by the college's long-term plans and mission. (III.A.6)

## **Conclusions**

The Standard is met. As reported in the Self Study (2010), Deep Springs College has demonstrated that they have implemented changes to address recommendations from previous visits. Throughout the Standard, these changes have occurred in the areas of planning, developing written policies, systematic assessment and evaluation, more effectively integrating human resources with student learning outcomes and the mission of the institution, and utilizing committees to review and improve diversity within the institution. The college has done tremendous work on its planning processes, and this work is documented in several locations. The documents should be centralized with faculty, staff, and students clearly recognizing its planning process. The college meets the standard.

## **Recommendations:**

See Recommendation 1.

## ***Standard III.B: Physical Resources***

### **General Observations**

Deep Springs College's physical resources are quite unique and amazing. The grounds are absolutely beautiful and the pride that the students and staff take in their campus is wonderful. The college is located on a 90,000 acre ranch. Alfalfa is the main crop that helps to feed the livestock which consists of horses, cattle, dairy cows and sheep and is a cash crop

for the college as well. The buildings on the campus are quite old, but several of them have gone through extensive renovations in the last 10 to 13 years. Deep Springs College has, and continues to, request donations to assist in the maintenance and construction of buildings to ensure that they stay safe. Student and staff laborers are assigned to make improvements when possible.

Because of Deep Springs' remoteness, safety and emergency preparedness is of utmost priority. Teams of students as well as staff are trained accordingly to handle a variety of potential situations. With the nearest town being almost an hour away, it is imperative that the college be able to react to emergencies when necessary.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The magnitude and complexity of operating a college with academic facilities as well as an operating farm and ranch is remarkable. In general, the campus appears to have sufficient physical resources necessary for academics, dorms, housing, and operations. The age of the facilities presents its challenges, but based on reports from the ranch manager, the farm manager, and the facilities manager, they understand the need for a calendar which would outline improvements necessary to ensure longevity of the facilities and equipment. A capital replacement plan is in place which identifies "minor" capital needs between \$1,000 - \$10,000 and "major" which is identified as greater than \$10,000. The college engages the necessary parties in conversation to address priorities. Like many institutions, the needs far out weigh the available funds. (III.B.1.a, III.B.1.b, III.B.2.a)

Deep Springs College understands its uniqueness and has taken steps to ensure that staff and students are properly trained in case of emergencies -- both medical and natural disasters. Their emergency plan addresses emergency contacts, necessary phone numbers, safety data information related to chemicals stored at the college as well as animal dangers related to being in the desert. In addition, two students are elected to be trained as EMT's to serve emergency needs at Deep Springs. A fire engine was donated by the local fire department to allow Deep Springs' staff to respond immediately to any localized fire. Deep Springs has established an annual maintenance schedule to clean filters, condensers, water systems, etc. These maintenance items will also help reduce the number of potential problems. (III.B.1.b)

The college has significant planning documents that show that the college uses master planning to develop the facilities plans, including planning, for both new and replacement equipment, and buildings. The college is actively addressing facility needs, and uses planning to insure that that facility resource needs are allocated based on the results of institutional program reviews. The college's most recent facilities project was the outcome of the Labor Pillar review. The outcome was the allocation of resources to construct a hay barn to allow for storage of farms harvest so it can be stored until prices are at their peak. The college regularly assesses the use of its physical resources with the outcome being the list of projects to be funded. (III.B.2).

## **Conclusions**

Deep Springs College understands the complexity of their facilities and grounds and takes steps to cost effectively resolve issues by utilizing existing supplies and staff/student labor. The student labor is an integral component of the Deep Springs experience and assists the college in getting projects completed. The ranch, farm, and maintenance managers train new students every semester in their given specialty and the students and staff takes pride in their accomplishments. The economy has reduced the return on investments for the college which has created difficulty in allocating the appropriate funds to the operations of the college. The ranch, farm, and maintenance teams have prepared plans that show options for improving cash flow and the ability to increase the efficiencies of running their operations. The college does a wonderful job of maintaining the facilities and creating an experience for the students that they will remember. The college meets the standard.

## **Recommendations:**

See Recommendation 1.

## ***Standard III.C: Technology Resources***

### **General Observations**

Technology at Deep Springs College is not as extensive as other institutions of higher learning because of their commitment to isolation and seminar-based instruction. Technology available to the college is limited based on its location in a remote valley. Wired high speed internet is not feasible so the college utilizes satellite broadband services provided by Broad Sky Networks. This allows the college to receive Internet required for library databases, research and faculty needs. Technology in the classroom and in support of each of the Three Pillars meets the needs of the institution and is assessed as part of the review process for each Pillar. (C.1, C.1.a, C.1.b, C.1.c, C.1.d, C.2)

### **Findings and Evidence**

Technology is provided to both students and staff/faculty. The college operates two parallel systems; one for students and one for staff/faculty. There is limited Internet access for students in their dorms; however more extensive Internet is provided in the library, reading room, library study desks, the computer lab, the student office-man desk, the Communications Committee office and the Curriculum/Applications Committee Office. The bandwidth provided to students is limited to discourage streaming video, but still allows students the use of the Internet necessary to complete assignments. The Library provides resources through JStor. JStor provides a comprehensive online list of journals to the students to help them with their research. Deep Springs has also upgraded the phone system for staff and faculty to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). This new system is located in four locations on campus and is a FM radio-based phone system. This change to VoIP also created a small amount of savings for the college. (III.C.1.a, III.C.1.c, III.C.1.d)

Deep Springs utilizes students to maintain the technology system. Two students are charged with monitoring the system and reporting any concerns to the student body. Alumni and staff at the college also serve as resources for technology repairs. The college has recently contacted a former alumnus to help them reconstruct their website. In this proposal, the alumni would provide, free of charge, a redesign of the Deep Springs website as well as an expansion of the Alumni directory. In providing this service, the alumni will also work with the student body to ensure cross training to allow for continued success. The budget for technology has increased over the past few years with the understanding that needs are changing. The college is anticipating their needs and has projected an increase in their costs out through 2015/16. The need and use of technology at Deep Springs is unique. (III.C.1.b)

## **Conclusion**

Overall, technology availability is somewhat limited at Deep Springs because of their location. The seminar-based curriculum has reduced the need for technology to some extent. Deep Springs does not want to expand their technological capacity, but rather maintain the levels they currently provide. In order to do that, the college will need to analyze its infrastructure and equipment and its useful life and anticipate replacement costs. The college meets the standard.

## **Recommendations:**

None.

## ***Standard III.D: Financial Resources***

### **General Observations**

Deep Springs has struggled with financial resources in prior years, as reported in previous team reports. With the college relying so much on contributions, the economy has made it difficult to provide consistency of revenues. There seems to be strong support from donors that believe in the college's mission. Deep Springs understands the importance of fundraising and has included that in the Vice President's job duties. The budget planning process, as with any process, continues to evolve and process improvements are implemented as they are identified.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Deep Springs has a strong belief in its mission and conducts business in a manner to protect those ideals. The belief that students should not have to pay tuition is understood and accepted. In an effort to support this effort, the college has included fundraising as part of the Vice President's job. Given the current market, the college continues to be engaged in discussions to grow the revenue stream to secure proper funding to manage the institution.

The Ranch Manager, Farm Manager and Maintenance Manager have all established operational plans which may enhance the revenue stream from these operations. The college

has also engaged all departments and constituency groups to propose budget requirements to provide long term planning. Each of the operations has submitted a short term and a long term plan to the Vice President for review. Even if all budget requests cannot be funded in a given year, it allows the college to plan accordingly. The college uses an ongoing process to develop improvements in their planning to evaluate for effectiveness, assess, and incorporate recommended changes. According to the 2010 annual report, the college's operation revenue was just enough to cover the operational expenses for the college. The college maintains a small operational reserve for unforeseen needs, but has in unrestricted funds, twice its annual operating budget. If necessary, the trustees of Deep Springs can also approve a greater draw from the investments for emergency purposes. (III.D.1.a, III.D.1.b, III.D.1.c, III.D.1.d, III.D.2.b, III.D.2.c, III.D.2.d, III.D.2.g, III.d.3)

The financial audits presented appear to be clean. There were some adjusting entries, but overall, there appears to be no material findings by the external auditors. Deep Springs does not offer financial aid based on the mission that student tuition will be paid for by the college. The college operates as a 501(c) 3 non-profit. The non-profit operation is where all donations are tracked and accounted for. Endowed funds are monitored for assurance that they are spent in compliance with the donors' request. The college uses QuickBooks software as their financial management system. The college staff does weekly backups and provides the President and Vice President a copy. In addition, a copy of the backup is provided to an offsite accountant to ensure redundancy. To ensure transparency and to allow administrators and managers the ability to view their current financial status, a copy of the budget, the percentage spent to date and the balance is posted on a weekly basis in the office for everyone to view. (III.D.2.a, III.D.2.b, III.D.2.d, III.D.2.e)

The only liability that the college currently has is related to the Telluride agreement. Telluride, a trust based in a residential house at Cornell University, and Deep Springs are the two remaining schools started by the institutions founder, L.L. Nunn. In 2019, the college has to decide whether they will buy Telluride out. If they decide to do so, they will have an additional 8 years to complete the payment. The anticipated cost will be \$2.25 million. The college is working diligently to ensure that they have funds set aside for this arrangement. In addition, in 2005, Deep Springs embarked on the Centennial Campaign which established a goal of raising \$15 million dollars by 2012. To date, the college has raised approximately \$13 million. (III.D.2.f)

## **Conclusions**

Deep Springs has made great strides towards meeting previous concerns presented and the team concludes that the institution has fully addressed the previous recommendation. It is difficult to manage budgets when so much of it is dependent on the performance of the market. The college works diligently with the trustees to review budgets openly to ensure that the financial condition of Deep Springs is understood. Deep Springs' commitment to fundraising and the sound base of donors sets a strong foundation for building on these endeavors. Their accounting processes are sound and appropriate oversight is provided. Checks and balances are in place to ensure financial integrity. The College clearly makes its budget and budget process transparent by publically posting its budget reports. The process

of seeking and gaining external grant funds, which is a core component of its budget, should be clearly identified as being part of budget planning process. The college meets the standard.

**Recommendations:**

See Recommendation 1.

## STANDARD IV Leadership and Governance

### *IV.A: Decision Making Roles and Processes*

#### **General Observations**

Deep Springs College is highly driven by its mission, and nowhere is that more evident than in its leadership and governance activities. Because all community members share the goal of “creating a self-sustaining community that educates young men for lives of service,” all community members can and do take leadership roles, depending on the issue under consideration. According to the mission statement, “strenuous effort, *self-governance*, and selfless service are expected of everyone.” Governance at Deep Springs is largely student-driven, with guidance and advice provided by administrators, faculty, and staff, and with final decision-making authority resting with the Board of Trustees and a President, who is responsible for ensuring that board policies and the mission of the college are realized. Deep Springs students are considered the beneficial owners of the college during their enrollment and are given responsibilities for almost all parts of the college’s operations, particularly the academic and labor programs. The mission statement further describes its students as taking “year-round responsibility for a largely self-sustaining community, ranch, and farm” while taking courses in a “two-year liberal arts honors program.” In addition to being students who take classes, Deep Springs students also assume what would at other colleges be administrative and support staff tasks in the functioning of the college and its accompanying programs. (IV.A.1)

Students take an active and considerable role in their self-governance. The environment at Deep Springs is rich with opportunities for the 26 students—13 first-year and 13 second-year—to share in leadership opportunities. All students are considered members of the student body, which meets weekly; the college has community meetings that involve everyone; and faculty and administrators (who also teach classes) sit on a faculty committee where faculty issues are discussed. The Board of Trustees meets twice a year on the campus, and its meetings involve considerable dialogue with the entire Deep Springs community. More importantly, however, the small size of Deep Springs and the commitment all community members share makes dialogue among all community members possible and necessary for the college to function as its mission statement intends. (IV.A.3)

#### **Findings and Evidence**

The Student Body By-Laws delineate the student roles in governance. All students at Deep Springs are expected to serve on one of four standing committees, each of which is also chaired by a student. The Curriculum Committee hires and evaluates faculty, and selects courses from among those proposed by faculty. The Applications Committee recruits and selects the incoming class of students. The Review Committee evaluates student performance and recommends whether students will be invited back for a second year at Deep Springs. It also evaluates support staff in their roles as educators in the college’s labor program. The Communications Committee guides the college’s public relations, maintaining

the school's website and preparing publications that are used for fundraising and student recruiting. (IV.A.2)

In addition to this committee work, students also assume various leadership positions on campus. Two students sit as voting members of the Board of Trustees, one as the Academic Affairs Trustee and the other as the Budget and Operations Trustee. An elected Labor Commissioner assigns ranch and farm jobs to all students. Two students are trained as EMT's to handle emergency medical situations, two students serve as firemen. These examples are replicated throughout the operations of the college and its labor program. (IV.A.2.a)

Faculty and administrators assume advisory roles in this structure of student self-governance and play an important role in guiding the process and results of student-led decision-making. Their guiding role in matters of curriculum and other issues normally assumed to be the province of faculty decision-making is a much more indirect one at Deep Springs than at other colleges. A memo to the campus from the college president, written on November 11, 2008, and revised on February 16, 2011, delineates the structures by which faculty exercise this indirect influence on curriculum.

- The curricular plan (a product of the faculty's judgment) which ensures distribution of course offerings each year across major divisions of the disciplines.
- The faculty-mandated requirements for the Associate of Arts degree.
- The participation of the Dean and another long-term faculty member on the Curriculum Committee.
- A yearly calendar of formal Faculty Committee feedback to the student body about curriculum structure and course selections.
- The fact that in both practice and formal procedure, the Curriculum Committee makes hiring and curricular recommendations to the President, who is empowered by the board to accept or reject them.
- The fact that ongoing curricular structure and planning is reported twice a year to the board's Academic Affairs subcommittee (always chaired by an academic) for oversight review. (IV.A.2.b)

Faculty also sit on a college standing committee, the Faculty Committee, which advises the president and students about college decisions. The president, in addition to his role as Chief Executive Officer, also plays a key role in fund raising and communication with the world external to Deep Springs. (IV.A.2.a, IV.A.2.b)

The Board of Trustees sees its principal roles as overseeing the college's academic program as well as the college's budget and operations. It operates with five standing committees to accomplish these goals: Succession and Agenda, Deep Springs Fundraising, Academic Affairs, Budget & Operations, and Safety. At its meetings, it receives extensive and regular reports from student committee chairs, student trustees, administrative officers, and ranch staff about all operations of the College. These reports are often followed by extensive discussion of the issues raised in some of the reports. Frequently, improvements in the college's operations result from the discussions that ensue. (IV.A.3)

Governance at Deep Springs is firmly rooted in dialogue. Minutes of meetings reflect active and considerable discussion about a variety of subjects relevant to students' education and the college's continued operation under the guiding principles established by founder L.L. Nunn. As an example of this kind of dialogue, the Student Body By-Laws delineate the following requirement:

“The Student Body president must bring discussions which address each of the following topics during Term II. He will frame these discussions in a way that is relevant to events current within the Student Body, and conducive to an open expression of opinions and a productive exchange of ideas.

- i. Academics
- ii. Labor
- iii. Self-Governance
- iv. Isolation
- v. Technology
- vi. Purpose
- vii. Coeducation”

Another example of the rich evaluative dialogue that characterizes Deep Springs College can be found in notes from the Board of Trustees meeting on October 10-12, 2008. At its community meeting, an event which accompanies every board meeting, the board conducted an open discussion of the value of the college's labor program. The next program scheduled for a similar program review and discussion at a Board of Trustees meeting is the college's academic program. These discussions, with their implicit evaluative goals, reinforce the role that constant dialogue and evaluation of the college's foundation principles play in maintaining the institution's quality. (IV.A.3)

The college also demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies, particularly the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). Its recent focused report demonstrated good faith efforts to resolve recommendations made by the previous visiting team and its preparation for the current team's visit demonstrated a similar good faith effort to prepare for the current team's visit. (IV.A.4.)

The constant dialogue and commitment to improving all processes at Deep Springs is a regular occurrence. As a result the entire college community is engaged in about everything that transpires. The team was impressed by the constant and evaluative nature of dialogue at Deep Springs College, which examines all of the college's processes and subjects them to analysis, and when necessary, improvement. (IV.A.5)

## **Conclusions**

Deep Springs College provides a notable example of a college where an environment of empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence exists and where staff, faculty, administrators, and students, no matter what their official titles, can take the initiative to improve the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved. When these

initiatives have college-wide implications—and at Deep Springs, most of them do because of its small size—participative processes are used to assure effective discussion, planning, and implementation.

The college demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies as demonstrated by continued and ongoing financial support from foundations and corporations. The broad based inclusion of all employees, students, and trustees, in the development of the self-study further demonstrates the institution’s commitment to a participatory governance process. The college has demonstrated it takes seriously Commission recommendations and responds quickly and appropriately.

The college exceeds the Accreditation Commission’s standards in governance, largely because of the rich and pervasive dialogue about the college’s mission, guiding pillars or principles, and operations that characterize weekly life at Deep Springs. Its small size enables it to involve all constituencies—students, faculty, administrators, and support staff—in that dialogue. The college meets the standard.

**Recommendations:**

None.

***IV.B: Board and Administrative Organizations***

**General Observations**

The Deep Springs Board of Trustees is committed to the role of providing leadership to the individuals and constituencies of the college. The board and the college recognize the role of the trustees for setting policies that support student learning and the achievement of the college’s mission. The board delegates full responsibility and authority for the implementation of board policies and the operational functions of the college to the president.

The Deep Springs Board of Trustees is comprised of thirteen members, one member is always the current president of the Telluride Association and two are students at the college. In most instances, student trustees have the same voting rights as non-student trustees except in those areas defined by the bylaws of the Board of Trustees Article V section 5.03. Student Trustees are involved in financial decisions that relate to the allocation of resources to conduct the educational work of the college. Bylaws specifying board size, duties, responsibilities, structure and operating procedures are developed and available in the Trustee Handbook. The board has developed and adopted a policy for the evaluation of the governance structure. The breadth of knowledge brought by the board members is impressive.

**Findings and Evidence**

On November 30, 2010 the Board of Trustees adopted a policy that established and describes the committee structure of the board. There are five committees: Safety, Succession and

Agenda, Fund Raising, Budget and Operations, and Academic Affairs. All of these committees have been in existence longer than the policy and have charter statements outlined in the procedures that signifies their earlier establishment and responsibilities.

The culture of Deeps Springs College is of deep self-reflection and evaluation by one's peers. The board and the college president are involved in this process as well. The entire college engages in an open dialogue designed to encourage broad based participation and honesty in an evaluative process. Through interviews with members of the Board of Trustees it was verified that the trustees have put in place a process to self-evaluate and evaluate the board as a whole. Current practice employs an evaluation process that results from an internal review by the board committee for Succession and Agenda that is presented to the full Board.

The Board Trustees adopted a Code of Ethics in 1997 and revised them in 1998. The Board Code of Ethics aligns with the mission of the college and includes procedures for dealing with any violations of the code by board members.

The Board of Trustees, according to the college's organizational chart and Article V of the Trustee Handbook, is the overall governing body for the college. Trustees do not need to reside in the state of California and the overall board membership is limited by the 49% rule. No more that 49% of the board members may be "interested" persons. Interested person refers to any one that has received compensation from the college in the previous twelve months or is a relative of someone who received compensation from the college. Board members are elected by a majority vote of the current board and are recruited for service by recommendations from current board members or other interested persons. Trustees are elected to four-year terms and the terms are staggered to maintain continuity on the Board. The Student Trustees are appointed by the student body of Deep Springs.

The college itself is designated as a corporation and has articles of incorporation on record. The incorporation is as a nonprofit public benefit with the sole intention of educating students. Students are considered the primary beneficiary of the corporation. Additionally the board has established and published bylaws documenting their responsibilities, succession plan, meetings, and voting requirements. The board has established five standing committees in which to conduct the majority of its oversight and management of the college: Safety, Succession and Agenda, Fund Raising, Budget and Operations, and Academic Affairs.

There are five board officers: Chairman of the Board, President, Vice President or Presidents, Secretary, and Chief Financial Officer. The bylaws permit multiple Vice Presidents and assistant secretaries. The bylaws do not prohibit overlap in positions except that neither the secretary nor the Chief Financial Officer may serve concurrently as the President or Chairman of the Board, and the Chairman cannot concurrently serve as President.

A code of ethics was established on October 4, 1997 and revised in April of 1998. The consequences for unethical behavior and repeated unethical behavior are outlined in the Board of Trustees Code of Ethics. The self-study indicates that the board was provided regular updates on accreditation activities. A recently revised document (fall 2010)

developed by the board outlined and defined the responsibility and authority of the college president.

Recently the board has taken steps to document past practices into policies and procedures. The general GODSAP model is used to develop and revise college policy. The unique mission and educational environment of Deep Springs requires the board to be very sensitive to the development of college policies. A balance between outside influences and the exclusive educational environment of Deep Springs brings special challenges and opportunities. It is evident in the coherent educational environment that the college provides that the board has been able to minimize outside influences and preserve the unique character and quality of the college.

Particular to this college as outlined in the “Deed of Trust” and the college mission is the need for student body self governance. Students in general have substantial involvement over broad areas of the college and this is understood to be central to fulfilling the college’s mission. Thus although the Deep Springs Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for establishing policies that ensure quality, integrity, and effectiveness of student learning, the students themselves are central and responsible as well to meeting this standard. Although the board has ultimate authority, students are actively involved in every decision-making body at the college. The board is responsible for and to all legal matters brought before and to the college.

The Policy on the President’s duties adopted by the Board of Trustees on November 30, 2010 designates the president as the leader of the college and is expected to articulate and advance the aims of the college. The policy states that the president is appointed and serves at the pleasure of the board and is responsible for seeing that board policy, decisions and directives are implemented. The policy designates the president as the person responsible for promoting student leadership, external communications, evaluation of faculty and staff, academic programs and policies, and the college’s labor program.

The isolation and small size of Deep Springs, in effect, limits the communities served by the institution, but the labor and revenue generating portions of the college requires the president to negotiate with the local businesses and community members. The Policy on the President’s duties assigns the responsibility of external communication to the president as well as the responsibility of fundraising for the college.

The Board of Trustees has engaged in the process of evaluation of college practices and documenting them into college policies. Additionally the board has approved two statements defining Academic Freedom and Academic Honesty. Most of the documented policies are fairly recent and were formalized to comply with accreditation standards. Further discussions with board members confirmed this. Board members acknowledged that they found the process for formalizing and documenting policies valuable. The college has many practices in place that have been “passed-over”(a local process that documents past and current best practices and lessons learned), and are clearly derived from the college mission and the “Gray” book (Constitution of Deep Springs and the Deed of Trust), but in order to maintain the continuity and integrity of the college it is necessary that the board continue to establish and document policies and procedures beyond compliance to the accreditation

standards. Evidence substantiates that the board is on a regular basis reviewing the college's practices. The student college handbook lists the Academic Policies and Procedures pertaining to students. It also lists more general policies and procedures regarding student conduct and activities outside of the classroom. A separate publication, the Bylaws of the Deep Springs Student Body, is far more developed and prescriptive than the bylaws of the Board of Trustees. (IV.B.1)

The Policy on the President's duties adopted November 30, 2010 outlines the role and duties the president is responsible for at the college. It also charges the president to include in every aspect of governance, where legally possible, to include students in decision-making. This is in accordance with the college's mission. The president is also designated with the task of fundraising for the college. The policy allows for delegation of administrative functions to other staff members but states that the president is solely responsible to the board for the administrative functions of the college. Although a recently revised document it is again an instance where the board formalized past practice into a document. (IV.B.2)

### **Conclusion**

The Board has taken significant steps to address the need for formal documentation of policies and procedures. To ensure continuity within the college and to provide clear guidance for the students' self-governance pillar, the college would benefit from continued discussions and formalization of policies and bylaws that will ensure the future of the institution. Although the college engages in intense and deliberate dialogues, the formalization and documentation of the results of these dialogues has not yet been systematically documented. The college meets the standard.

### **Recommendations:**

None