

## **THE DISTRICT/COLLEGE RELATIONSHIP**

### **History and Centralized Functions**

The relationship between the nine LACCD colleges and the District Office is by nature both complex and continuously evolving. During the District's early years, the operations of the District Office were highly centralized, with the central office or district-wide organizations controlling nearly all critical college decisions and processes related to finance and budget, capital projects, hiring, payroll, contracts, and curriculum. Following the Board's decision to reform and restructure the district in 2000, the colleges were given more autonomy and authority for local decision making. This was done to increase college capacity for strategic leadership, to streamline administrative processes, to encourage innovation across the district, and to make college decision makers more accountable to the local communities they serve.

Since that time, the role of the District Office has shifted from one of "command and control" to one that might best be described as "coordination & service." While the District Office once directed all major college processes, today District administrators and staff work collaboratively with the colleges to achieve a mutually-defined, mutually-supportive mission. As a result, college and District personnel tend to collaborate closely on almost every process. For example, while the District as a whole mounts major bond programs and maintains close oversight of bond projects, the colleges establish and maintain their own facilities master plans, bond project priorities, and facilities user groups. Similarly, while the colleges today are solely responsible for identifying new faculty positions and for their own faculty hiring processes, the District continues to monitor compliance with state hiring mandates and to verify candidate qualifications.

This "hybrid" approach to the distribution of organizational responsibilities can be seen in almost every aspect of district/college function—from the setting of FTES and budget targets to the mutually reinforcing activities of district- and college-level student success and planning committees. However, the District Office does take the lead in decision making when it is clear that centralized direction will lead to economies of scale or when seamless coordination of activities is required for reasons of legal compliance or fiscal responsibility. Such areas of activity include but are not limited to:

- The Board of Trustees and Board Operations
- The Personnel Commission
- The Office of General Counsel
- District-wide bond programs
- Internal audit and accounting
- District-wide Information Technology Systems
- Attendance accounting and student information reporting
- The coordination of district-wide grants
- Collective bargaining
- Negotiation of health benefits
- Long-term financial planning
- Compliance with mandated reporting requirements

## **The Roles and Responsibilities of the District**

Within this mutually-defined, collaborative relationship, the District Office and district-wide governance and coordinating committees fulfill the following functions:

1. To provide vision and leadership for the strategic institutional development and long-term financial stability of the district and district colleges;
2. To provide a district-wide framework for institutional self assessment, accountability, and continuous organizational improvement;
3. To assure compliance with state and federal laws and mandates through the implementation of Board Rules, Chancellor's Directives, Administrative Regulations, and other adopted procedures;
4. To provide essential administrative support services in areas related to educational programs, student services, business and financial services, human resources, payroll and benefits reporting, and district-wide bond and capital construction programs;
5. To facilitate coordination of college activities and the sharing of best practices across the district, when appropriate;
6. To identify and implement district-wide collaborative projects and joint services that result in resource development, and increased efficiencies and economies of scale;
7. To represent the district and district colleges to external stakeholders and constituencies.

## **The Roles and Responsibilities of the Colleges**

Within this mutually reinforcing relationship, the colleges fulfill the following functions:

1. To provide effective educational programs and student support services that lead to verifiable student learning outcomes and that meet the varied needs of local communities;
2. To provide current and prospective students with clear information about college and career pathways, campus resources, course offerings, degree/certificate options, and financial aid through effective counseling services, marketing, and community outreach;
3. To comply with all accreditation eligibility requirements and standards;
4. To maintain effective partnership with K-12 and 4-year partner institutions, including maintenance of articulation and transfer agreements;
5. To plan and manage operational budgets effectively and meet annual budget targets;
6. To create, implement, and assess the effectiveness of all college planning efforts, including those related to educational, facilities, student services, information technology master plans and program review;
7. To oversee the implementation of college bond and capital construction programs;
8. To provide effective human resources services, intra-organizational communications, and professional development, and training opportunities for all college employees;
9. To maintain positive and productive relationships with local business, civic, and community organizations via advisory groups and participation in local associations;
10. To provide students and staff with a safe, clean, welcoming, and culturally responsive campus environment.