

## **PEER REVIEW TEAM REPORT**

American Samoa Community College  
P. O. Box 2609  
Pago Pago, AS 96799

This report represents the findings of the Peer Review Team that conducted a virtual visit to American Samoa Community College from September 27-September 30, 2021. The Commission acted on the accredited status of the institution during its January 2022 meeting and this team report must be reviewed in conjunction with the Commission's Action letter.

Mary A. Y. Okada, Ed.D.  
Team Chair

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Comprehensive Peer Review Visit  
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## Summary of Peer Review Process

INSTITUTION: American Samoa Community College

DATES OF VISIT: September 27-30, 2021

TEAM CHAIR: Dr. Mary A.Y. Okada

An eleven-member accreditation team conducted a virtual visit to American Samoa Community College on September 27-30, 2021 for the purpose of determining whether the College continues to meet Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and USDE regulations.

ACCJC's decision to conduct virtual visits for the Spring 2021 comprehensive reviews was based upon state mandated health guidelines, and the Commission's authority to implement flexibilities to accreditation processes and practices afforded by the federal government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the U.S. Department of Education's March 17, 2020 guidance, as well as all updates, permitted accreditors to perform virtual site visits for institutions as long as the accreditor follows up with an onsite visit in a reasonable amount of time to meet the statutory and regulatory requirements (though not necessarily a full peer-review site visit).

Consistent with on-site visits, and in accordance with the Guide for Conducting Virtual Visits: An Addendum for Peer Review Team Chairs, Team Members, and Colleges that ACCJC provided to team chairs, peer reviewers, and colleges being reviewed, the virtual peer review team visit to American Samoa Community College relied on an engaged and interactive format, conducting multiple interviews with college representatives, participating in team meetings to discuss findings, and conducting the required campus forums. The team evaluated how well the College is achieving its stated purposes, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement.

In preparation for the visit, the team chair attended via Zoom a team chair training workshop on August 4, 2021 and held a pre-visit meeting with the college CEO on August 19, 2021. During this virtual pre-visit, the team chair met with campus leadership and key personnel involved in the self-evaluation preparation process. The entire peer review team received team training provided by staff from ACCJC via Zoom on September 1, 2021.

The peer review team received the college's self-evaluation document (ISER) and related evidence several weeks prior to the team's virtual college visit. 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 team found that the College provided a thoughtful ISER containing several self-identified action plans for institutional improvement. The College also prepared a Quality Focus Essay.

Prior to the virtual visit, team members completed their team assignments, identified areas for further investigation, and provided a list of interview requests. During the visit, on September 29, 2021, team members spent time discussing their initial observations and their preliminary review of the written materials and evidence provided by the College. The college kicked off the virtual visit by attending the opening ceremony hosted by American Samoa Community College which included a traditional welcoming of the team members. During the visit, team members met with faculty, administrators, classified staff and students in formal meetings, group interviews and individual interviews. Team members met with five trustees from the College. The team held two open forums, which were well-attended, and provided the College community and others to share their thoughts with members of the evaluation team. The team thanks the College staff for coordinating and hosting the virtual visit meetings and interviews, and ensuring a smooth process which held high standards for the integrity of the peer review process.

## **Major Findings and Recommendations of the Peer Review Team Report**

### **Team Commendation**

Commendation 1: The College is commended for its commitment to its Mission and the alignment with institutional core values of respect for tradition and culture by embracing and sustaining their heritage, traditions, language, and through intentional integration of cultural practices into curriculum and services that models and reinforces time-honored rituals. (I.A.1, I.A.3, II.A.7)

### **Team Recommendations**

#### **Recommendations to Meet Standards:**

None

#### **Recommendations to Improve Quality:**

Recommendation 1: In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the College strengthen its existing process of the disaggregation of learning outcomes and achievement for subpopulations of students. (I.B.6)

Recommendation 2: In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the College strengthen its process in using assessment data to continuously improve student support programs and services. (II.C.2)

Recommendation 3: In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the College update the provisions for securing and backing up of all student records. (II.C.8)

## **Introduction**

American Samoa, a territory of the United States since 1900, lies 2,500 miles southwest of Hawaii and 1,800 miles northeast of New Zealand. American Samoa consists of seven islands (Tutuila, Aunu'u, Ofu, Olosega, Ta'u, Swains, and Rose Atoll). The campus is located on the island of Tutuila, the largest of American Samoa's seven islands of Mapusaga about nine miles west of Pago Pago.

American Samoa Community College was established in 1970 as part of the American Samoa Department of Education and for more than 50 years was the sole provider of postsecondary education in the Territory. It offers two-year associate degrees, vocational programs, and a Bachelor of Education, as well as Samoan and Pacific Studies, and Adult Education. As of Spring 2021, the college enrollment was at 1020 students.

In 1974, the American Samoa Government purchased the land and building facilities from a private high school. In 1979, the college received funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration for the construction of new buildings for instruction, science laboratories, and student support services. In 2004, a new Learning Resource Library was completed, followed by the renovations of additional classrooms, lecture hall, teacher education offices and classrooms, and a nursing building in 2009. Using American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) funding, all classrooms, science and computer labs were upgraded. In 2018, the College dedicated the Multipurpose Center which houses the majority of student services.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the college shifted courses to the online platform to ensure the safety of the campus community. Initially, they did not accept any new students, only continuing students from the Spring 2020 semester. The college experienced a small increase in enrollment. Additionally, the college supported the territory's vaccination efforts by providing administrative leave to employees to receive their vaccination.

American Samoa has been vigilant in their efforts to safeguard their residents. The borders have been closed for many months, although some repatriation flights have allowed residents to return home. As of the date of the visit, there were no known cases of COVID-19 in American Samoa.

During the visit, the team noted the expedient responses to team members' requests and the plethora of information that was available to the team to validated their processes.

# **Eligibility Requirements**

## **1. Authority**

The team confirms that American Samoa Community College is authorized to operate as a post-secondary, degree granting institution based on continuous accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. ACCJC is recognized by the United States Department of Education and granted authority through the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

## **2. Operational Status**

The team confirmed that American Samoa Community College is operational and provides educational programs to more than 1855 students for the academic year 2019-2020, in credit and non-credit programs and courses.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

## **3. Degrees**

The team confirmed the vast majority of the courses offered at American Samoa Community College lead to a degree, certificate, or transfer.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

## **4. Chief Executive Officer**

The team confirmed the Board of Higher Education appointed the President of American Samoa Community College in December 2016. She is qualified for the position and has full-time responsibility for the executive direction of the College.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

## **5. Financial Accountability**

The evaluation team confirmed American Samoa Community College undergoes an external financial audit by an independent and qualified audit firm annually. The College is Title IV eligible and maintains compliance with federal requirements. The team also confirmed that the audit reports are provided to the Board of Higher Education, President, and external government entities.

## **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 an Peer Review Team Visit and Third Party Comment**

**Evaluation Items:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comment in advance of a comprehensive evaluation visit.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution cooperates with the evaluation team in any necessary follow-up related to the third-party comment.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission <i>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):**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative:**

The team confirmed the College solicited third-party comments in advance of the team visit. American Samoa Community College published the process for third-party comments on its website. The College did not receive any third-party comments.

## **Standards and Performance with Respect to Student Achievement**

### **Evaluation Items:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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):**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

### **Narrative:**

The College has defined and established institutional set standards for student achievement that include: course completion, certificates, degrees, job placement, transfers, and graduation rates.

**Credits, Program Length, and Tuition**

**Evaluation Items:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tuition is consistent across degree programs (or there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition). (Standard I.C.2)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission <i>Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits</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):**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative:**

American Samoa Community College awards academic credits based on the standards of practice in higher education on credit hours, program lengths, course development, and tuition.

Enrollment fees and tuition per credit hour are published in the College Catalog, including enrollment fees and tuition for special programs and tuition for non-residents and international students.

## **Transfer Policies**

### **Evaluation Items:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Transfer policies are appropriately disclosed to students and to the public. (Standard II.A.10)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to accept credits for transfer. (Standard II.A.10)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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)(ii).]

### **Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

### **Narrative:**

The College provided evidence of policies related to the transfer of credits that meet the basic requirements. Information is disseminated to students and the public via the College website and catalog.

**Distance Education and Correspondence Education**

**Evaluation Items:**

<b>For Distance Education:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The institution demonstrates regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The institution demonstrates comparable learning support services and student support services for distance education students. (Standards II.B.1, II.C.1)
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.
<b>For Correspondence Education:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The institution demonstrates comparable learning support services and student support services for correspondence education students. (Standards II.B.1, II.C.1)
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.
<b>Overall:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The technology infrastructure is sufficient to maintain and sustain the distance education and correspondence education offerings. (Standard III.C.1)
<input type="checkbox"/>	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):**

<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the Institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The college does not offer Distance Education or Correspondence Education.

**Narrative:**

N/A

## **Student Complaints**

### **Evaluation Items:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The student complaint files for the previous seven years (since the last comprehensive evaluation) are available; the files demonstrate accurate implementation of the complaint policies and procedures.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The team analysis of the student complaint files identifies any issues that may be indicative of the institution's noncompliance with any Accreditation Standards.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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):**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

### **Narrative:**

The college has policies and procedures for handling and addressing student complaints.

On the main College website, the "About ASCC" tab appropriately provides information on accreditation. The accreditation status of the College is provided on the College website.

## **Institutional Disclosure and Advertising and Recruitment Materials**

### **Evaluation Items:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The institution complies with the Commission <i>Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Policy on Representation of Accredited Status</i> .
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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):**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

### **Narrative:**

The college provides accurate and current information about its programs, locations, and policies in the College catalog and website. Under the "About ASCC" tab on the College website, historical information on the accreditation status is provided.

**Title IV Compliance**

**Evaluation Items:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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 USDE. (Standard III.D.15)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If applicable, the institution has addressed any issues raised by the USDE 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)
<input type="checkbox"/>	If applicable, the institution’s student loan default rates are within the acceptable range defined by the USDE. Remedial efforts have been undertaken when default rates near or meet a level outside the acceptable range. (Standard III.D.15)
<input type="checkbox"/>	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)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative:**

The College has addressed the audit findings related to the Title IV programs. The College does not administer student loans.

## **Standard I**

### **Mission, Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness**

#### **I.A. Mission**

##### General Observations:

American Samoa Community College's mission statement can be found on the College's website and catalog. The College demonstrates a commitment to a mission that fosters student learning and achievement as well as student success in career pathways, certification, and workforce training. The College displays a strong emphasis on institutional core values, particularly respect for tradition and culture, as the foundation for student learning. The College has the necessary resources to fulfill the mission, and policies and structures are in place to assess how effectively the College is accomplishing its mission. The mission is central to all College planning policies and documents, and the College has institutional set standards on course success, persistence, transfer, degree completion, and workforce transition.

##### Findings and Evidence:

The mission and vision statements clearly describe the institution's educational purpose, intended student population, the types of degrees and credentials, and the importance of the College's place in Samoa and the Pacific. The mission describes the importance of Samoan Culture as essential to the College mission. The College lists the following priorities as essential to mission achievement: human and natural resources, Samoan culture, workforce entry and transfer to institutions of higher education. These priorities have the acronym S.T.A.R. and are found in the mission and College planning documents. The Bachelor's in Education Program was established to meet the professional development needs of pre-service and in-service teachers to effectively teach in American Samoa. As part of meeting the mission, the College has Institutional Learning Outcomes that commits students to being effective communicators, quantitative and critical thinkers, and ethical global citizens. The mission also establishes five College Core Values committing the College to student-centeredness, respect for diversity, collaboration, respect for tradition and culture, and lifelong learning. In alignment with the Mission and Vision of ASCC, the team observed that Samoan culture is highly valued, prioritized, and foundational for student learning. Native language and time-honored traditions are demonstrated and integrated throughout all aspects of the college curriculum, practices and core values. (I.A.1)

The College established Institutional Set Standards in 2013 and regularly collects data on achievement of these standards and makes this data widely available in program review, the Student Learning Outcomes and Student Achievement Manual, and institutional effectiveness reports. Evaluation of this data supports improvement to institutional practices to effectively accomplish their mission. The latest data sets specifically measure College progress on workforce hiring and transfer rates as well as achievement on standards for course and degree

completion. The College also reviews and amends these standards on a regular basis, including baccalaureate program data.

American Samoa Community College's Board of Higher Education established *Board Policy 100* stipulating that the Board review and approve the mission as well as committing Board members to regularly reviewing and measuring progress on achievement of the mission.

The College's 2021-2026 Institutional Strategic Plan stipulates that College stakeholders review the mission every two years and that all College Program and Service mission statements incorporate the College mission.

American Samoa Community College's Board of Higher Education established *Board Policy 1000* requiring the College to "implement assessment and review processes that authentically measure the work of the institution toward achieving its mission." (I.A.2)

The mission is integral to the College's 2021-2026 Institutional Strategic Plan (ISP). The ISP identifies four Academic Strategic Focus Areas that link directly with the S.T.A.R. priorities in the College mission. Each Academic Strategic Focus Area lists goals, objectives, and implementation procedures and identifies specific areas at the College responsible for achieving them. The areas identified as responsible represent a thorough cross section of the College.

The College President created the Participatory Governance Structural Manual (PGSM) to clarify leadership roles for all college leadership constituencies in measuring success on achievement of the mission. The College's main governance and planning bodies are the President's Advisory Council, Accreditation Steering Committee, and the Institutional Planning Executive Core Committee, which are responsible for aligning institutional goals, planning, and resource allocation with the College mission. Throughout this governance process, baccalaureate program personnel engage in ongoing discussions. In 2021, an Institutional Set Standard Committee was formed for the regular collection and communication of student achievement data. The 2019-2020 Fact Book provides specific information on the College's progress on achieving institutional set standards that link to the mission. The team verified through interviews and evidence provided during the visit that data analysis is central to directing institutional priorities and in helping the College accomplish its mission. (I.A.3)

The College mission is published on the College website and catalog as well as planning and assessment documents. *Board Policy 1000* requires the Board to review and approve the mission and to measure progress on achievement of the mission. The team verified through interviews and evidence provided during the visit that the mission statement is regularly reviewed on a 2-year cycle along with the College Catalog and that the Board reviews any proposed change to the mission statement. (I.A.4)

### Conclusion:

The College meets the Standard.

Team Commendation 1: The College is commended for its commitment to its Mission and the alignment with institutional core values of respect for tradition and culture by embracing and sustaining their heritage, traditions, language, and through intentional integration of cultural practices into curriculum and services that models and reinforces time-honored rituals. (I.A.1, I.A.3, II.A.7)

## **I.B. Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness**

### General Observations:

American Samoa Community College established policies and procedures to ensure sustained, substantial, and collegial dialog on student outcomes, academic quality and institutional effectiveness through its governance groups. Learning outcomes are defined and assessed institutionally and regularly. The College uses assessment and performance data in its strategic planning process that integrates planning, program review, and resource allocation. Institutional Set Standards (ISS) are set with targets and stretch goals which are regularly reviewed to ensure continuous improvement. Program reviews, ISSs, and assessment data are published in the College's website for shared understanding of how the College is achieving its mission. The College disaggregates data for subpopulations of its students in reports and dashboards published by the Institutional Effectiveness office. However, the team noted that strengthening practices for analyzing and using disaggregated data would deepen its understanding of its student subpopulations.

### Findings and Evidence:

American Samoa Community College demonstrates sustained, substantive, and collegial dialog through its governance groups, operational groups, and task force groups as described in its Participatory Governance Structure manual. The Academic Assessment Committee monitors the dialogue on student outcomes, academic quality, and institutional effectiveness while the Core Curriculum Committee facilitates the discussion on the College's Institution Set Standards on student learning and achievement. Interviews with different groups show that faculty and staff are committed to the college dialog in fulfillment of the college mission. Through additional evidence provided, the Team found that processes are in place to ensure equitable services are delivered to the student population. (I.B.1)

American Samoa Community College defines student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional level. Additional evidence provided and based on interviews conducted show that the College assesses all courses and programs of the college through its "Closing the Loop" processes showing a committed drive for the continuous improvement of student learning and achievement. The Assessment Committee develops a two-year comprehensive plan for assessing course learning outcomes that includes the timeline, assessment instruments, staff development, and a process for self-reflection on the assessments prescribed. The College uses an online assessment platform to collect and compile learning outcomes data. Assessment is guided by Board Policy 1004 Comprehensive Program Review and Assessment and more specifically by

the Student Learning Outcome and Student Achievement Manual. As a result of its Institutional Set Standards review in fall 2017, ASCC established the Institutional Researcher in Assessment position to address gaps in the institutional outcomes assessment process. Course and program learning outcomes for the Bachelor of Elementary Education are properly defined and assessed similarly through the college assessment processes.

Outcomes for learning support services are defined by the units themselves. Assessment is reported in the unit's monthly reports, with feedback provided by the unit's immediate supervisor, as well as in the annual program review and annual budget planning and resources allocation process. The outcomes are mapped to the Institutional Strategic Plan goals ensuring that units focus on fulfilling the college mission. (I.B.2)

Institution set-standards (ISS) with achievement targets and stretch goals are established for the six focus areas of the "pathway to student success" model reflecting the College's commitment to its mission and core value of student-centeredness. The Core Curriculum Committee facilitates the assessment and discussion of the ISS while the Institution-Set Standards Committee and Institutional Effectiveness office report, monitor, and publish ISS data in the IDS Toolkit, the annual factbook, and on the college website. The College has completed two review cycles of its ISS. Results of the ISS review led to participatory governance changes, improvement in target rates, and establishment of stretch goals in pursuit of continuous improvement. ISS specifically for the Bachelor of Elementary Education program is defined and included in the ISS review process which resulted in the increase in achievement targets and stretch goals for degrees awarded. (I.B.3)

The team verified through interviews and additional evidence provided that the College uses assessment data in its curriculum improvement and strategic planning process, specifically emphasized during the resource-allocation process. Programs and divisions propose plans for funding supported by outcome data and justified on how it supports the College mission. The ISS on student achievement is regularly evaluated and promote curricular change in the institution. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and participatory governance groups use assessment data to continuously improve student learning and student achievement. (I.B.4)

ASCC assesses the accomplishment of its mission through program review processes and its attainment of institution set standards on student learning outcomes and student achievement. Through interviews, the team verified that the program review process provides an institutional formal structure for faculty and staff members to give feedback to the College. With the college-wide feedback, the program review is the College's process for evaluating academic programs, units, and divisions' effectiveness towards their respective outcomes and mission. With outcomes and activities mapped to the 2021-2026 Institutional Strategic Plan College Priorities and further aligned with the S.T.A.R goals of the mission, the College established a process for assessing the accomplishment of its mission. While the College uses surveys to collect feedback from stakeholders in the program review process, the team verified that the program review process can be strengthened by the use of quantitative data. (I.B.5)

The College disaggregates student learning outcomes by course competencies defined by the academic program. Assessment reports show how the analysis of the disaggregated assessment

data by course competency led to recommendations addressing performance gaps. Institution Set Standards for student achievement are disaggregated by gender, age, and ethnicity. The team found additional evidence showing the college's effort to expand the capability of the Institutional Effectiveness office to anticipate the need for richer data sets for analysis. However, the team verified that the college can deepen its use of data for decision making by strengthening its process for analyzing and using disaggregated data to better understand learning and achievement outcomes for its subpopulations of students. (I.B.6)

ASCC evaluates its policies and practices through Board Policy 1003 wherein college regulations or procedures may be revised as deemed necessary by the President. Though the policy did not state the regularity of institutional policy reviews, the team verified through interviews and additional evidence provided specifically in the Board minutes that ASCC has revised and updated policies and procedures on governance, student outcomes and student achievement, program reviews, and resource management. The program review process through the Outcome Planning and Resource Allocation form allows program and division heads to recommend changes to improve Board or Administrative Governance policies in support of academic quality and accomplishment of its mission. The Bachelor of Elementary Education program contributes in the policy and review process through program review and program faculty and administrator's participation in the governance group dialogs. (I.B.7)

Results of program reviews, assessments, and institution set standards are broadly communicated internally through reports, emails, and presentations during annual convocations and faculty orientation. Externally, the results are shared through the college website. Recently, the College included students in the College emails to ensure that all stakeholders have a shared understanding of the College's strengths and weaknesses. (I.B.8)

American Samoa Community College's strategic planning process integrates planning, program review and resource allocation that is linked to its mission and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness and academic quality. The Institutional Strategic Planning Executive Core Committee (IPECC) leads the planning process and the review of its strategic plans while the Resource Committee, an operational group, ensures that resource planning is linked to the Institutional Strategic Plan through the development and review of its Comprehensive Maintenance Plan. The Institutional Strategic Plan includes a timeline that identifies the prioritized goals for a given year. The goals are mapped to the mission's STAR outcomes and are further described with performance indicators, expected outcomes, and accountable divisions. The accountable divisions report on the expected outcomes and achievement targets in their program reviews. (I.B.9)

#### Conclusion:

The College meets the Standard.

#### Recommendation for Improvement:

Recommendation 1: In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the College strengthen its existing process of the disaggregation of learning outcomes and achievement for subpopulations of students. (I.B.6)

## **I.C. Institutional Integrity**

### General Observations:

American Samoa Community College has in place policies, processes and procedures to ensure integrity, accuracy, clarity, transparency, and honesty in its relationships with college constituents and the community. The institution complies with policies to ensure its commitment to high quality education and continuous improvement of its mission. ASCC provides current and accurate information to stakeholders about programs, classes, costs, and policies.

### Findings and Evidence:

ASCC provides current and accurate information to stakeholders. The President and Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) ensure that information is accurate and consistent prior to public release. The team confirmed that academic and student policies, procedures, and publications are reviewed regularly following a two-year catalog review cycle, which starts with a review of program learning outcomes data. The review of the Bachelor of Education program funnels through the Core Curriculum and General Curriculum committees' review, similar to the two-year academic programs. The institution provides up to date and comprehensive information about its ACCJC accreditation status through its website. (I.C.1)

The College publishes an annual catalog in print and online. The team confirmed the catalog undergoes biennial review, which is approved by broad constituent representation. Approved addendum(s) to the catalog is available at the Office of Academic Affairs and on the College's website. Information provided includes requirements and major policies affecting students. (I.C.2)

The Student Achievement Manual outlines the process by which departments should collect and evaluate student assessment and achievement data. This information is made public on the college website via factbooks and factsheets. Aggregated student achievement data and the status of institutional set standards are reported in the ASCC fact book published annually from the IE website. Information for the Baccalaureate degree is also discussed in the fact sheets. (I.C.3)

As evidenced in the College Catalog, ASCC clearly describes their degrees and certificates in terms of their purpose, content, course requirements, and SLOs. This includes requirements for Associate Degrees as well as the Bachelor of Education Degree. The catalog also contains course sequencing for their degree and certificates. (I.C.4)

The Public Information Release (PIR) review process is used by the College to assure that information released to the media or community is accurate and credible. The President, appropriate Vice President, and the Director of Institutional Effectiveness are responsible for reviewing all publications before release. The Board completed its full review of the ASCC Policy Governance Manual during its annual retreat in Fall 2020. Policies and procedures are undergoing ongoing review as part of the process of consolidating them into a cohesive location. (I.C.5)

ASCC clearly outlines the Total Cost of Attendance to students in the catalog and Financial Aid Handbook. They also provide a Net Price Calculator to help students better estimate individual costs. A Public Hearing is required for any change to Tuition and Fees. (I.C.6)

ASCC has governing board policies on academic freedom (5002) posted in the governance manual. ASCC has a policy (5300) on Student Academic Conduct and Governance posted in the College Catalog. The policy on academic freedom is also in the catalog. Student Conduct is covered in the Student Government Association Student Handbook. (I.C.7)

The college catalog includes a thorough discussion of student rights and responsibilities, clearly outlining prohibited behaviors and consequences for those behaviors, including those that violate academic honesty and integrity. A grievance procedure is described with details on how a student may appeal. The Student Handbook addresses student conduct, academic dishonesty, and consequences for dishonesty. Syllabi include a statement on academic honesty and integrity. There is a brief mention of student conduct in the Policy Governance Manual. The catalog features a statement on academic freedom and it addresses the responsibility of faculty to ensure their instruction does not include controversial matters extraneous to the subject. The Policy Governance Manual has statements regarding faculty academic integrity and academic freedom. ASCC has a personnel manual linked from its main website. The team found, through an interview with Human Resources, that the manual has been under review and will be updated soon. During this transition period the college has depended on the Board of Education Policy Governance Manual, chapter 4, for personnel policy publication. The policies apply to all employees and clearly establishes procedures to handle inappropriate employee behavior. (I.C.8)

The catalog has a detailed discussion advising faculty on distinguishing between personal conviction and professionally accepted views grounded in the discipline. This topic is addressed more briefly in the Policy Governance Manual. (I.C.9)

The ASCC provides clear codes of conduct for students, faculty, and employees in its catalog, Policy Governance Manual, and Personnel Manual. The college does not seek to instill specific beliefs or world views; thus, it is not required to describe such views in its catalog and handbooks. (I.C.10)

The college does not operate in foreign locations. (I.C.11)

The college addresses the eligibility requirements and standards in the ISER. The home page has a letter from the president notifying the college of the team visit, a link to ACCJC updates, a link to the ACCJC Third Party Comment form, and the visiting team's bios. Its accreditation website

is one click away from the home page and indicates that it is complying with the commission's requirements to report to the commission and publicly disclose all aspects, including communications, of its accreditation status and progress. The website provides an online archive of all its annual reports and updates from the commission. Portions of its accreditation information are translated into Samoan. It complies with Commission requests and policies. (I.C.12)

Evidence is provided in the ISER of current MOUs with external organizations and reports on educational projects to partner organizations. The catalog lists 4-year institutions with which the college has articulation agreements. The college does not have state-level or national accreditors, e.g. *The Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP)*. The College in its ASCC's Accreditation webpage ensures all reports and documents addressing Accreditation standards are updated for the public's information. (I.C.13)

The college is committed to providing a mission-aligned educational program that supports gainful employment, career development, and transfer. It includes policies and procedures to ensure this program meets its goal through robust assessment. The Board of Education Policy Governance Manual indicates that the Chair of the Board is elected by the members of the Board. Policies 2001 Board of Education Code of Ethics and 2002 Board of Education Code of Conduct outline procedures by which the CEO/President and Chair/Chairperson of the Board are to address violations. Policy 2006 addresses Board Business and outlines financial procedures that reinforce ethical behavior. The Board conducts an annual self-evaluation. An orientation for new members covers ethics and the legal and fiscal oversight responsibilities of the Board. As a public college, ASCC does not have external investors or generate financial returns for a parent organization. The team found the college to be committed to high-quality education. The mission and values outline a clear dedication to student's education and the community. (I.C.14)

### Conclusion:

The College meets the Standard.

## Standard II

### Student Learning Programs and Support Services

#### II.A. Instructional Programs

##### General Observations:

ASCC offers one bachelor's degree program, 28 Associates degrees and 22 certificates of proficiency. The instructional modality was exclusively in-person pre-Covid-19 and shifted to some virtual instruction during Covid-19 in accordance with flexibility afforded by the Department of Education through the end of Fall 2020. The college has developed learning outcomes at multiple levels (course, program, institutional) and these are regularly evaluated in addition to course curriculum. Samoan culture is also integrated into curriculum development. Program level review is conducted via what is referred to as a Divisional Assessment. Practice manuals are comprehensive and provide clear guidance on protocols and procedures.

##### Findings and Evidence:

The College's fields of study are clearly outlined in the course catalog. The catalog lists the various certificates and degrees as well as transfer agreements with other institutions. Programs offered, including the Bachelors of Education, align to the mission of preparing students to achieve their educational goals through transfer to institutions of higher learning, successful entry into the workforce, research and extension in human and natural resources, and awareness of Samoan culture and the Pacific. The Bachelors of Education meets this mission by accommodating the needs of in-service teachers. (II.A.1)

The evidence reviewed by the team indicates the processes in place for evaluation of course syllabi by all faculty and whether syllabi meet institutional guidelines as well as course curriculum and the venue for evaluating them. Proposed changes are initiated by faculty and submitted to the college curriculum committee for review to ensure curriculum currency, improving on teaching and learning strategies, and promoting student success. Divisional Assessment tool is a comprehensive document that evaluates multiple performance metrics ranging from staffing, budget to equipment and technology. (II.A.2)

The College has demonstrated a commitment to drafting learning outcomes at various levels-course, program, institutional. All of these are mapped to each other and clearly spelled out in course syllabi. Learning outcomes assessments are organized on the Assessment Performance Report. Learning outcomes for the BA program are evaluated and reported on page 70 of the Assessment Performance Report. (II.A.3)

The College offers a set of pre-college courses in English, Math, and Nurse's Aide. The courses are clearly presented in the catalog and numbered differently from college-level classes. (II.A.4)

Unit requirements for degrees are consistent with what is expected in this Standard. Based on sample schedules presented to the team, course sequencing and time to completion are appropriate. Estimated time to completion for an Associate degree is two years (60 units) and an additional two years will be needed for the completion of the bachelor's degree in elementary education (an additional 60 units). (II.A.5)

Evidence is presented that indicates the courses required for a particular degree or certificate. This evidence can be found in the course catalog which is referenced. Course schedules presented to the team indicate that it is possible to complete the requirements of the Associate degrees and Bachelor's degrees in the estimated time frames (two years and four years, respectively). (II.A.6)

The course delivery methods are clearly outlined in the course syllabi. Multiple teaching methodologies are listed as options including lectures, student presentations, group discussions, fieldwork, etc. The College provides tutorial and counseling services. In addition, the College has long-term plans to expand the offering of courses in their Teacher Education Program via distance education to support the needs of students from the neighboring islands, as outlined in their Quality Focus Essay. On opening day, in preparation for the shared work, a student-orchestrated, grounding ceremony welcomed the Team. The Team observed student engagement and robust participation through displays of time-honored, rich cultural practices captured through dance and song. Native language was infused into the administration's opening speeches. Pride of heritage continues to be evident as a core tenet across all aspects of the College culture, observed through the intentional integration of language into the College catalogues and specific coursework that focuses on Samoan history. (II.A.7)

The team verified that none of ASCC's programs/departments use common assessment tools. (II.A.8)

College courses currently offered have learning outcomes aligned to program and department degrees and certificates. The criteria for attainment of degrees are detailed in the General Graduation Requirements and are consistent with the accepted norms for higher education. The Academic Assessment Performance Report provides examples of how Student Learning Outcomes Assessments and assignments are linked. These examples are also consistent with the baccalaureate program. (II.A.9)

Transfer of credit policies are located in the college catalog with the criteria clearly stated. There is a certification process that includes approval and submission of transcripts. The College Handbook details articulation agreements with off-island colleges. Memorandums of agreements ensure general education courses are accepted by other institutions. Examples of transfer MOUs were verified by the Team. Policies for transfer into the baccalaureate program are detailed in the College Handbook. The College is expanding its articulation agreements with off-island colleges to better meet the needs of students. (II.A.10)

Student Learning Outcomes are appropriate to the program level and are integrated into all of their programs. Additionally, the General Education program is organized around five domains of learning: communication, information technology, critical thinking, global awareness and

cultural competence and personal development and responsibility. The Team found examples in the Academic Assessment Performance Report that confirmed integration of Student Learning Outcomes and how they are used for student achievement. Student Learning Outcomes are also consistent with expectations for baccalaureate level work. (II.A.11)

The institution's General Education philosophy is located in the College catalog and outlines what skills and abilities students are responsible for upon graduation. The Team found examples of course outlines that included GE learning outcomes. A minimum of one hundred twenty (120) credits is required for a Bachelor of Education in Elementary Education Degree. Students seeking a Bachelor of Education in Elementary Education Degree are required to have completed an associate degree or equivalent to 60+ credits, 12-24 program requirements, 13 General Education required credits, Program Field Experiences (14 credits) and 29 required credits for Program Content and Methods courses. (II.A.12)

The Associate of Science or Associate of Arts degrees complete program requirements in addition to GE to fulfill a minimum of 60 credits. Degree pathways and criteria for completion are located in the GE Catalog. The Baccalaureate Program features a focused study in Elementary Education. Degree programs include focused study in at least one area of inquiry. (II.A.13)

New criteria were developed to categorize the CTE programs specializing in the skilled trades. The most notable programs are Nursing and Teacher Education. The team found Memorandums of Understanding in the Teacher Education and Bachelors Education Programs and Nursing. During the group forum, staff and students mentioned the internships that were available. The SLO Achievement Manual with CTE courses lists: agriculture, natural resources, business, communications and marketing with clear pathways, degree requirements, Student Learning and Institutional Outcomes and data on persistence. There is an advisory council for CTE composed of community members. (II.A.14)

Elimination or changes to course requirements are communicated via the College catalog. To minimize disruption, a Course Substitution Policy guides students through next steps when a program is eliminated or changed. (II.A.15)

The Team verified a process for regular evaluation of courses that includes: Annual Program Review, divisional surveys and a two-year cycle of review by the Core and Curriculum Committees. The Institutional Program Review and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness use data to drive decision making in program and course improvement. (II.A.16)

### Conclusion:

The College meets the Standard.

## **II.B. Library and Learning Support Services**

### General Observations:

The college supports student learning and achievement that are sufficient in quantity, currency, depth, and variety to support its educational programs. This includes library services, tutoring, and computer lab services.

### Findings and Evidence:

The library search page on ASCC's home page leads to a page of ASCC and community information resources. A link to the library's home page provides access to both ASCC library's online resources and the online catalogs of three institutions of higher education outside of American Samoa. The same summary of library resources is found in the college catalog. There are interlibrary loan agreements with these three institutions. A library handbook, which is in the process of being revised, is on the library website to orient students to library services and gives tips on searching. The handbook lists hours of operation. Hours of operation are also disseminated through paper notices and emails to all departments on campus.

Tutoring services and computer lab services are described one click away from the college's website home page and in the catalog.

The college provides a two-story building for academic support. The library houses 40,000 volumes including subscription to 90 periodicals and some online databases. The team determined that the new library director, promoted from the position of cataloguer as of January 2021, will begin planning a systematic weed of the physical collection. There is off-campus remote access to databases and online catalogs. There are study areas and computers in the building and a tutoring directory to tutoring services on campus. The library building has a Teaching Education Resource Center (TERC) that is now public for all student use. The library schedules after hours throughout the school year in response to student needs. The team confirmed that the library takes data from its student surveys, its faculty surveys, staff surveys, and program data from Institutional Effectiveness to plan improvements in its services and resources.

The team confirmed, with the director, that the library supports the BA in Education program. The EBSCO database supports the latest research in education providing access to ERIC and Professional Development Collection. The Teaching Educational Resource Center is dedicated to materials in education.

According to the DOSS SOP, all students are required to register to be assessed for tutoring services. Student satisfaction surveys are conducted to assess tutoring services. (II.B.1)

Credentialed librarians guide resource selection for the library. The now-vacant library cataloguer position is being recruited so that there will be two certified librarians on staff. Student feedback and faculty feedback help the library make collection decisions. Recently the

library was re-organized to add Academic Affairs along with Student Services to its reporting structure. The team confirmed that this has improved collaboration with instructional programs. A lead tutor, staff, and instructional faculty provide tutoring services. Tutoring services work collaboratively with faculty to ensure tutoring has the resources to support student learning and achievement. The team confirmed that the college provides training and is considering a tutoring certification program. Tutoring reviews annual data generated by Institutional Effectiveness to make decisions about improvements. Examples of improvements provided to the team include the building of the new student services building, bringing all services under one roof. They are also hiring a new Student Services Learning Support manager and a disability coordinator. Computer lab usage is monitored and assessed by the library. The college uses distributed computing labs to make computing accessible to students.

The college ensures that library and other learning support services are overseen and provided by professionals. The institution selects and maintains equipment and materials to support student learning and achievement. (II.B.2)

The College collects detailed data on library services and, as shown in the Division of Student Services April 2021 Report and the Student Services Monthly February 2021 Report, it tracks outstanding issues that need to be addressed to sustain services for students. The library collects data program-affiliation and topical interest information from students and shares that information with student services and academic affairs for planning purposes. There is an annual library user survey for students and a survey for faculty. The library program has an annual review and monthly reports. Tutoring has semester evaluation surveys. This data is used for planning, budgeting, and improvement

The Division of Student Services 2020-2022 SOP Manual defines services and procedures by which library services and student services are to be provided. The College evaluates library and other learning support services to ensure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. These evaluations are conducted using student and faculty surveys and are reported as part of the monthly reports and program review. The monthly report addresses how these assessments connect to Outcomes. An additional strategy that might be employed is to directly assess the effectiveness of library services (such as the sessions with students on search strategies and evaluating information) in helping students learn skills that support the attainment of General Education learning outcomes. (II.B.3)

The library has developed collaborative connections with community resources in American Samoa and academic libraries outside of American Samoa. It maintains interlibrary loan programs with University of Guam Library, the College of Micronesia-FSM Library, and the University of Hawaii at Manoa Library. The team learned that the interlibrary loan programs tend to be used by faculty, whereas the resources offered by the American Samoa Library Consortium are used mostly by the students. The team confirmed that the library keeps records of vendor contracts and inter-library memoranda of understanding. The director confirmed that these contracts and agreements have effectively supported the college's needs. (II.B.4)

### Conclusion:

The College meets the Standard.

## **II.C. Student Support Services**

### General Observations:

The American Samoa Community College offers a number of student support services and demonstrates its commitment to serving students. The institution emphasizes continuous improvement through the program review process, assessment, and student perspective. The College's support services attempt to align their mission to the institutional mission and efforts are highlighted through a monthly "outcome" report. Students, through interviews during the visit, seem to be engaged with the College's processes, and acknowledge communication from the institution related to updates and services.

The College provides Consumer information to students in the catalog and acknowledges the importance of support services requirements under ACCJC Standards.

### Findings and Evidence:

The Team was able to verify that the institution had processes in place to regularly evaluate the quality of student support services. Such evaluations are conducted through a Program Review process as well as student satisfaction surveys to include student perspectives in such evaluations. While the College does not have distance learning courses, it provided online tools to ensure students receive critical services during the remote delivery of instruction during the Pandemic. (II.C.1)

The team was able to verify that the College does have a Program Review process in place for program evaluation. The College has established outcomes that are aligned with the institutional mission. There is evidence in the ISER that suggests the college assesses the utilization of its student support services and makes program improvements based on that analysis. However, the college can strengthen its practice by more consistently "closing the loop" and broadening the types of data it uses as it evaluates student support programs and services. (II.C.2).

The institution does not have distance education, but has made an effort in providing equitable access during the Pandemic to students during the remote delivery of instruction. The team noted that the QFE includes plans for enhancing online services as it works towards implementation of a DE program. (II.C.3)

The College does not have any athletics programs. In reviewing the information provided and through an interview with Associated Students leadership, the team established verification that the College provides students with appropriate extra-curricular activities with sound educational

outcomes and standards. The process is student driven and evaluated through the College and funding is met through student fees (II.C.4).

The institution offers a counseling program for students and has in place an academic advising program to ensure students are familiar with education plans and graduation requirements. The team, through interviews, was also informed that the College improved the availability of counseling sessions by providing that service during registration in order to capture a larger student population to receive academic advising. (II.C.5)

The College has in-place policies related to admission and follows its established policies. The institution clarifies degree and transfer requirements through counseling and advising. In addition, the College provides consumer information in its catalog which describes graduation requirements. (II.C.6)

The team verified via interviews and evidence submitted that the institution follows its policies related to admission and evaluates placement practices and conducts validation of such instruments and placement levels. The team identified that such dialogues are apparent to examine the validity and placements of tests. (II.C.7)

The team was able to gather evidence that the institution adheres to record keeping standards and provides communication to students and staff regarding FERPA. However, the College did not have back-up data for student records who attended the institution prior to 1998 before the implementation of the new system. While original grade reports are kept in paper files in a secure and fireproof cabinet, the team recommends that the institution update its back-up procedures to ensure secure back-up of these older records. (II.C.8)

#### Conclusion:

The college meets the Standard.

#### Recommendations to improve quality:

Recommendation 2: In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the College strengthen its process in using assessment data to continuously improve student support programs and services. (II.C.2)

Recommendation 3: In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the College update the provisions for securing and backing up of all student records. (II.C.8)

## Standard III

### Resources

#### III.A. Human Resources

##### General Observations:

American Samoa Community College has policies and procedures that outline the processes for recruitment, including qualifications for hiring faculty, staff, and administrators as specified in the Governance Policy Manual, specifically Policy 4001 Personnel Administration, Policy 4003.1 General Requirements of Recruitment and Placement, Policy 4005.1 Employee Recruitment and Hiring, and Policy 4006 Academic and Professional Credentials for Faculty.

##### Findings and Evidence:

The Human Resource office coordinates the recruitment of faculty, staff, and administrators in accordance with ASCC policies, state, and federal regulations. This includes the development of the job announcement, the screening of applicants and convening of the interview panel, and performing background checks to validate the candidate's application, including applicants for the baccalaureate degree. Background checks include degree verification from a U.S. accredited or equivalent institution and the certification of official transcripts and letters of reference. Applicants that present degrees from non-U.S. accredited institutions are verified by a third-party evaluator to ensure equivalency. New employees are required to provide a medical and security background clearance prior to employment. (III.A.1)

The minimum degree requirement for faculty is a master's degree in the content area or a related field, with at least 15 credits in the content discipline. However, career technical areas allow for a combination of a degree in the field of study, certification, or licensure and work experience. For the Bachelor's Degree, faculty are expected to also have five years of teaching experience commensurate with the added rigor expected of baccalaureate education. All faculty job specifications include the development, implementation, and assessment of student learning outcomes (SLOs) for courses. In addition, faculty are required to utilize the results of data to improve student learning and participate in program review and college committees. (III.A.2)

Administrators and professional staff must meet the minimum qualifications set by the College. All appointments and promotions follow a merit process and competitive examinations, where applicable. (III.A.3)

Faculty, administrators and other employees have degrees from U.S. accrediting agencies or equivalencies for non-U.S. institutions that are verified by a third-party evaluator. Minimum qualifications and experience for all positions are set by the college. For academic programs, the minimum qualifications are a Master's Degree; in some CTE programs where a Master's is not relevant, a Bachelor's Degree or appropriate vocational certificate are required. For the

Bachelor's Degree, faculty are expected to have five years of teaching experience, as well. The team confirmed that minimum qualifications are determined as part of the annual position review in collaboration with the Dean of Academic Affairs and the appropriate discipline faculty and with other hiring departments for non-academic hires. (III.A.4)

The College performs evaluations for all employees annually. Faculty are evaluated based on four components: responsibility to instruction, students, institution and community, and professional development. The evaluation instrument includes SLO assessment and participation in institutional committees. Staff are evaluated based on four criteria: skills and job knowledge, teamwork and interpersonal skills, communication skills and attitude, and personal qualities and dependability; Administrators are evaluated based on leadership responsibilities, management of personnel and customer service, professional development, communication and teamwork, and professional responsibilities. (III.A.5)

N/A (The Commission deleted this standard). (III.A.6)

The College maintains a sufficient number of faculty to teach in all programs related to the College mission, including programs at the baccalaureate, collegiate, vocational, and developmental levels. Additional faculty needs are identified in annual Program Reviews and are connected to enrollment changes, institutional priorities, and the Strategic Plan. An additional faculty position in the baccalaureate program was approved by the President in the 2022 Outcome Plan. Faculty responsibilities include teaching, assessment of student learning outcomes, participating in department meetings and divisional program review, and discussions around curriculum. (III.A.7)

The College has in place policies related to the employment, orientation, oversight, evaluation, and professional development of part-time faculty. The HR Office manages the recruitment and hiring process upon recommendation from the department. At the beginning of each semester, the department chairperson conducts training on student learning outcomes assessment for all new faculty in accordance with Policy 5102. Policy 4300 outlines the procedure for faculty performance evaluation. (III.A.8)

Appropriate staff need is determined through the annual Outcome Plan and the Institutional Strategic Plan. All staff are recruited and hired according to processes published in policy and are evaluated annually to ensure the alignment of qualifications to the needs of the divisions. The team found in its review of the organizational chart a significant number of vacant positions; this is partly due to a hiring freeze from 2016 when financial resources were dwindling and student enrollment was declining. Combined with the territorial lockdown during the pandemic, most non-academic hires were put on hold, though the team confirmed that academic hires were still prioritized during this period. The College President has lifted the moratorium on hiring and increased government funding will allow for many vacant positions to be filled. In discussion with College personnel, the College believes it has sufficient staffing to meet the needs of students. (III.A.9)

Administrative leadership positions are identified in the Participatory Governance Structural Manual; this manual outlines the structural and functional responsibilities of those positions. The

College identifies the Executive Leadership Team, along with the President, as the two vice presidents and the Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness. Policy 4008 describes the qualifications for various staff appointment types. (III.A.10)

The College's Board of Higher Education reviews and approves all College policies, such as those included in the Governance Policy Manual. These policies are published on the College website and in the catalog and are available in the President's Office and the library for public access. Training on any policy is provided by the Human Resources upon request. (III.A.11)

The College supports its diverse personnel through ongoing professional development as well as special training upon request. Employees are eligible to take courses at the College or engage in professional development off-island through budgeted training opportunities. The President hosts annual leadership training for administrators. Employment equity records are assessed by the HR Officer. The team validated that employee demographics align with the Mission of the College in terms of national origin: a large percentage of staff are native to the island. An area of concern for the College relates to the percentage of staff who are nearing retirement. Hiring priorities moving forward will focus on attracting early career professionals. (III.A.12)

The College publishes a code of ethics under the designation Code of Conduct in Policy 4203. Core values expressed in the College's Vision Statement include commitments to Student Centeredness, Respect for Diversity, Collaboration and Teamwork, Respect for Tradition and Culture, and Lifelong Learning. Policy 4203.A. describes the actions taken for employee infractions, and Policy 4301 goes into further detail on Disciplinary Actions. (III.A.13)

The College provides opportunities for professional development based on recommendations stemming from program reviews and annual outcome planning. At each Fall's faculty orientation, attention is paid to workshops on accreditation and governance. Faculty are required to attend convocation at the beginning of each semester. At the outset of the pandemic, when classes were shut down, College faculty and staff were trained in Moodle to facilitate the transition to online learning. (III.A.14)

Policy 4205 Employee Privacy Rule pertains to the security and confidentiality of employee records, while Policies 4205.1 and 4205.2, along with Policy 4305.4 relate to collecting and retaining personnel files. Each policy follows the law related to privacy and security of information. Employees have access to their personnel files and can request copies since the original files cannot leave the Human Resources Office. (III.A.15)

### Conclusion:

The College meets the Standard.

### **III.B. Physical Resources**

#### General Observations:

The College is committed to ensuring safe and sufficient physical resources. The team verified that the college has in place workflows and reports to assure access, safety, security, and a healthful learning and working environment. The Total Cost of Ownership and Comprehensive Maintenance Plan (TCOCMP) details facility inventory and contains a broad range of reports. The College states that the Physical Facilities and Maintenance officer assesses new, renovated and relocation projects. A comprehensive Facilities Maintenance Plan located in the TCOCMP details a five-year projection for upgrades and is aligned with the College's mission.

#### Findings and Evidence:

The College did submit evidence confirming processes in place for staff and faculty that includes a system for reporting safety issues on the campus. These processes also include a maintenance request protocol for ordering and the submission of Job Order Forms; a Maintenance and a Job Order Flowchart outlines the stages of the work in progress. To further assure the safety of facilities, a Security Daily Report is used and organized by the department. A comprehensive Campus Safety Manual and Evacuation Plan are available for students and staff. The Team verified that there is a process for reporting unsafe incidents available for students.

Several processes ensure that sufficient physical resources are available for the college. Academic Affairs has a process to determine the adequacy of classrooms and physical resources. The TCOCMP is comprehensive and provides an assessment of the college's resources and associated costs. The TCOMP is integrated with the Institutional College's Strategic Plan for long-term projections and maintenance needs.

The outcomes of the Physical Facilities and Maintenance SOP aligned with this standard. Maintenance request protocols are clear and include final follow-up with the requestor and inspection by the supervisor. Supervisors attend weekly briefings and submit bi-weekly reports. (III.B.1)

The team confirmed that maintenance and upgrades are ongoing. The College defines a multipronged approach of Institutional Assessment, Program Review, Strategic Planning and the TCOCMP for planning and prioritization to meet the needs of the college. The Facilities Plan is aligned with the College's Strategic Plan. Processes are in place for facilities replacement and maintenance and are codified in the various practice manuals. Data is used to project upcoming facilities needs and a collaborative process allows the community and the government to provide input. (III.B.2)

The College's TCOCMP summarizes plans for acquiring, building, maintaining, upgrading, and replacing its physical resources. The Physical Facilities Management Administrative Standard Operating Procedures Manual (PFM), dated 2018, provides clear outcomes. The PFM shows the

job request workflow ending in a check with the original requestor for resolution of the problem. Bi-weekly reports are issued on the status of work.

ASCC ties physical resource planning to its Institutional Strategic Plan (ISP) and administrative divisional units with decision responsibilities regarding resources. The Resource Management Committee, assembled in 2015 by the VP of Administration and Finance, works on the 2021-2026 TCOCMP which incorporates total cost of ownership and projected costs for goals set by the ISP. The committee includes the Finance Officer, Information Officer, Human Resources Officer, Physical Facilities and Maintenance Officer, Procurement Officer, Bookstore Officer, and Security Officer. The plan analyzes institutional goals and lays out the roles various units are to play. The plan includes the 5-year facilities maintenance plan, resulting from a 2020 assessment of buildings and a 2020 assessment of 2015-2020 Comprehensive Maintenance Plan. The plan also addresses air conditioning, system and technology infrastructure, automobile services, utilities, and personnel. The Comprehensive Maintenance Plan Assessment Template Facilities Maintenance Plan 2015-2020, with assessments conducted in 2020, gives a thorough assessment of the status of facilities, air conditioning, and technology. The institution regularly assesses the use of its facilities and uses the results to improve facilities and equipment.

Currently the College is not providing distance education, however it has had to upgrade its IT facilities with federal COVID-19 funding to support emergency distance education instruction, as indicated in the TCOCMP. The team confirmed that investments were made in fiber optic drops, the implementation of Moodle, and the rewriting of job descriptions.

To ensure the efficacy of facilities and equipment, evaluation occurs annually, quarterly and monthly. The team confirmed that assessments occur in Finance, Procurement, Academic Affairs, Library and Job Order in summary reports. Resource allocation prioritizes instruction and health and safety. The Baccalaureate program is assessed by the same process as the facilities and classrooms. Program Review is used to prioritize needs. (III.B.3)

In order to prepare for the capability of long-term planning, the College has implemented a facilities fee of \$5.00 per credit. The team confirmed that the administrative services team is working to expand and strengthen its IT infrastructure to prepare for more online services and the online classes proposed by the Quality Focus Essay. (III.B.4.)

### Conclusion:

The College meets the Standard.

## **III.C. Technology Resources**

### General Observations:

American Samoa Community College (ASCC) receives technology support and services from the Management Information Systems (MIS) Division. The MIS Division is the central division

providing all technological services for the institution through coordination with other divisions to plan for and deliver hardware, software, support and training to meet ASCC's needs. ASCC's enterprise resource planning (ERP) system consists of Ellucian's Colleague for operational needs, Anthology's Compliance Assist for assessment needs, and Remote Learner's Moodle for learning management needs.

#### Findings and Evidence:

ASCC monitors its technology needs in a number of ways, including: recommendations from program reviews, input from departments, and reviews of work activities. Basic hardware and software are in place for institutional support and academic programs. Technology services and support are adequate for the baccalaureate program. Funding for technology upgrades have been through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF). The divisional budget proposals require justification based on institutional priorities for technology purchases identified in the Institutional Strategic Plan (ISP). The ISP provides short and long-term technology guidance and incorporates the college mission, goals, and programmatic needs. (III.C.1; III.C.2)

ASCC maintains appropriate firewalls, anti-virus software, and other measures to assist in maintaining safety and security. Systems are in place that require unique usernames and passwords to access ASCC's network. Backups are completed on a regular basis using institutional file servers and network access storage units. Power backup generators provide system availability during electrical outages. (III.C.3)

Technology training and support for ASCC's staff and students are provided largely on an as needed basis, that is identified by self-assessment or work-order requests in the case of staff, or as a result of assessment, or other means for students. The MIS Division provides both periodic and on-demand training. Online training resources are made available on ASCC's website. (III.C.4)

Decisions regarding technology are made by various bodies within ASCC that depend on the specifics of the type of decision and the operational or educational impact. ASCC has an Acceptable Usage Policy to guide the appropriate use of technology. The Board of Higher Education approved and implemented MIS policy statements categorized into three-sections that support information access, conduct, protection, and management of technology for programs and services. (III.C.5)

#### Conclusion:

The college meets the Standard.

### **III.D. Financial Resources**

#### General Observations:

American Samoa College uses its financial resources appropriately in planning, allocating and monitoring what is required to meet the identified academic and basic needs of students, and to meet its mission. Its planning and allocation processes are well documented and thorough. They are evaluated on a regular cycle, updated, and approved by the college leadership.

American Samoa College employs institutional program reviews, assessments of their strategic plan: mission, goals, objectives, and outcomes to ensure that their resource allocation processes align with their institutional planning processes. They employ rigorous budget monitoring processes with continual review by their Finance Division and feedback from the leadership team.

The College has systems in place to maintain stability and plan for the short and long term future. They utilize monthly expenditure reports to monitor revenue streams and expense trends. It does not participate in the Federal Student Loan Program.

#### Findings and Evidence:

American Samoa College's FY2018 Outcome Plans and Resource Allocation Manual details its process for developing plans in alignment with its educational mission through its 2015-20 Strategic Plan. Every academic and student support program has a detailed plan with goals, objectives and activities defined, along with justification for the requested resource allocation, along with the specified amount. Detailed expected outcome measures are developed for every academic and student support program.

Additionally, there are regular budget training sessions for staff and faculty (Budget Call) to orient and train them in the planning and resource allocation process from assessment of mission through program review, budget submission and dissemination. An annual assessment of the efficacy of budget allocations is also apparent through their training sessions. The team confirmed through interviews that the funding supports the Bachelor's program as well. (III.D.1)

American Samoa College's Annual Budget Call is but one of the processes used to align its planning needs, goals and objectives with the allocation of resources. There is regular formal as well as informal means of communicating budget priorities among the campus leadership and clear documentation of consensus on direction. The 2018 Outcome Plans and Resource Allocation, Outcome Planning document contains detailed analysis of the linkages among the college's strategic plan, mission, goals, goals, objectives, and outcomes. (III.D.2, III.D.3)

American Samoa College has put into place cost cutting measures, received additional revenue through HEERF and instituted a planned tuition increase to counteract the decrease in revenue from the government. These combined measures have stabilized cash flow for the near future as evidenced by the Daily Cash Position Report and the Cash Flow Projection Summary Report.

The Team has noted that while the current cash position is positive, it was preceded by three months of cash deficits, and does not extend beyond September 2021. The Daily Cash Position Report is dated January 2020 and is not current. (III.D.4)

The evidence supports a robust planning and monitoring process with continual review and consultation among various entities to ensure the accuracy and integrity of their financial reporting systems. Their audits indicate that they are in compliance with all standards in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB), and Public Law 22-30. (III.D.6)

American Samoa College's annual audits indicate findings that the institution must provide corrective action plans in a timely manner. The external auditors issue a MCL to inform management of recommendations pertaining to financial operation that requires immediate response. The College received several findings over the past two years. These findings were addressed and resolved by the fiscal management in a timely manner. The ASCC's audit findings and the corrective action plans are shared with the Leadership Team and the Board of Higher Education. (III.D.7)

Both the 2019 and 2020 audits found the College's financial internal controls to be sufficient to produce confidence in the integrity of their financial statements and representations. Findings and material weaknesses have been remedied through corrective action plans, and resulted in unmodified opinions by their auditors. (III.D.8)

The institution maintained a reserve cash flow level in excess of the federal requirement of \$415,875. It continually monitors cash flow to ensure the level does not fall below the federally approved threshold. (III.D.9)

Through its audits by various federal agencies, American Samoa College has demonstrated transparency and the accuracy of its financial data. The College has written policy and procedure manuals that it follows, training programs that it administers, and review protocols that it performs to ensure fiscal integrity and sufficient internal financial controls and management. (III.D.10)

American Samoa College through planning and resource allocation, monitoring, and evaluation processes maintains a robust system for oversight and management of its financial assets. IT has put in place a Total Cost of Ownership financial model to ensure plans for the future costs of facilities and other capital assets. It's Finance Division provides routine and detailed information through its on-line budget software to the campus leadership and other constituencies that ensure an open and fluid communication model. (III.D.11)

The College does not participate in any post-employment benefits and does not have any long-term debts, such as general obligation bonds or certificates of participation. (III.D.12, III.D.13)

The results of past audits demonstrate transparency and the sufficiency of internal controls to ensure fiscal integrity. The College follows all tenets of GAAP and GASB in its financial reporting and various policy and procedure manuals that the College produces. (III.D.14)

American Samoa College does not participate in the Federal Student Loan Program (III.D.15)

American Samoa College followed appropriate contracting procedures and procurement rules in executing two recently concluded contracts. It currently has no external contracts. (III.D.16)

Conclusion:

The College meets the Standard.

## Standard IV

### Leadership and Governance

#### IV.A. Decision-Making Roles & Processes

##### General Observations:

American Samoa Community College has Board Policies and Administrative Procedures in place that establish administrator, faculty, staff, and student participation in decision making processes. The Participatory Governance Structural Manual delineates the roles of faculty, staff, students, and administration in these processes. The College's main participatory governance groups are the Executive Leadership Group, President's Advisory Council, Accreditation Steering Committee, the Institutional Planning Executive Core Committee, along with the Faculty Senate and Student Government Association. Board Policy 3021 Communication Protocols require that all College decisions are in alignment with Board-approved organizational charts.

The Faculty Senate is the College's main governance body for faculty on academic and professional matters. The Student Government Association elects a President and a student member of the Board. Communication of leadership committees is distributed via email and important planning documents are available on the College website.

##### Findings and Evidence:

The American Samoa Community College Organizational Chart and Board Policy 3021 Communication Protocols establish how decisions are made and communicated at the college. Board Policy 3021 requires the College decisions come about by following the Board approved 2018 main College organizational chart and organizational charts for respective divisions and programs. The Participatory Governance Structural Manual (PGSM) commits the College to principles of participatory governance as well as clearly defining roles and responsibilities of constituent groups including recommendations for institutional planning. The PGSM also establishes core values for participatory governance including a "focus on proactive and innovative initiatives for student success." The 2021-2026 Institutional Strategic Plan lists several innovative objectives such as creating an Alumni Volunteer Center, an Education Opportunity Center, offering an online Samoan Language Course, and constructing a Samoan Village, among others. The team verified through interviews and evidence provided during the visit that the College welcomes innovation. (IV.A.1)

The Policy Governance Structural Manual (PGSM) establishes and describes the procedures authorizing the Faculty Senate, Professional Staff, and students to participate in decision-making processes of the College. The College's main participatory governance groups are the Executive Leadership Team, President's Advisory Council, Accreditation Steering Committee, the Institutional Planning Executive Core Committee as well as the Faculty Senate and Student

Government Association. Board Policy 1003.1- College Regulations/Procedures stipulates that "College regulations shall be proposed by any employee of ASCC and submitted to their supervisor to be reviewed."

Board Policy 2003 Eligibility and Requirements of a Board Membership requires one spot on the board be filled with a student selected by students at the College. The Student Government Association has a President and officers elected by the student body. The President meets regularly with the Student Government Association. The team verified through interviews and evidence provided during the visit that the College seeks input from students, responds to student concerns, and values student views in areas where they have a direct and reasonable interest. (IV.A.2)

The Policy Governance Structural Manual (PGSM) establishes that administrators and faculty have substantive and clearly defined roles in institutional governance as well as exercise substantial voices in policies, planning, and budget. Board Policy 1001 Governance and Organization Structure requires that governance roles including department and division charts be clearly defined and published including management structure and functional responsibilities of employees. In particular, the Institutional Planning Executive Core Committee includes faculty and administrators and makes recommendations to the President on strategic priorities based on data from program review. The College budgeting process includes Budgeting Calls where campus constituencies can exercise a voice in proposed budgets. (IV.A.3)

The Policy Governance and Structural Manual (PGSM) establishes substantive and clearly defined roles in clear structures for recommendations about curriculum. The Core Curriculum Committee is composed of faculty and academic administrators and reviews General Education and Program Requirements and issues recommendations on curriculum and academic policy to the larger general curriculum committee. The General Curriculum Committee (GCC) is composed of faculty and academic administrators and reviews and approves new or revised courses as well as program revisions. The GCC also assesses and recommends improvements on academic policies at the College. Board Policy 3018 Support Services requires that the College "shall establish services that will effectively provide for a successful operation in all aspects of its organization." The Dean of Student Services is a member of the College's Leadership Team, General Curriculum Committee, and Core Curriculum Committee. The team confirmed that faculty and administrators involved in the baccalaureate program are responsible for making recommendations to appropriate governance bodies on matters related to curriculum, student learning programs, and services. (IV.A.4)

American Samoa Community College's system of Board and institutional governance ensures that all relevant perspectives contribute to the making of decisions at the College. College decisions involving planning, policies and curricular change involve those with appropriate expertise and responsibility. College planning documents and program reviews indicate participation of campus constituencies on matters related to decision making. The team verified through interviews that the College President strives to construct a campus dialogue balancing cultural traditions emphasizing protocol with an atmosphere where participatory decision making is robust. Interviews with faculty and staff demonstrate the need for such dialogue to be ongoing and that the College could benefit from ensuring that all constituencies are engaged

systematically in identifying strategies for continuous improvement. Furthermore, open communication across the campus is essential so that participatory decision making remains consistent and inclusive. (IV.A.5)

Board Policy 3021 Communication Protocols establish that College communication will follow approved organizational and department charts to facilitate effective management and respectful communication. The College maintains that minutes are regularly provided to members of leadership committees, and Deans, Directors, and Officers disseminate information from leadership committees and groups to faculty and staff. Minutes of Division and Department meetings are taken and distributed to Division and Department members. Compliance Assist houses memorandums and documents, and all College documents including annual reports, fact books, and fact sheets are either distributed or available on the College website. Board Policy 1002 College Organizational Charts requires that all organizational charts be published on the College website. (IV.A.6)

The College evaluates governance and decision-making at the Board level and at the level of division and program review. The Board uses its annual retreat for systematic review of board policies. After Board evaluation, for example, the College appointed an Institutional Effectiveness Officer and a Student Support and Learning Services Manager. In 2019, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness surveyed College constituencies and determined that 77% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the College's organizational structure and decision-making processes are clear and consistent. 65% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that administration provides effective leadership and management at all levels of the College. 77% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that faculty leadership ensures academic quality. (IV.A.7)

#### Conclusion:

The College meets the Standard.

### **IV.B. Chief Executive Officer**

#### General Observations:

The President of the College is the chief executive officer and has the primary responsibility for the quality of the institution. The President effectively leads the College while appropriately delegating authority to administrators with expertise in their respective areas.

#### Findings and Evidence:

Board Policy 3000 - Delegation to the President, outlines the authority and overall operations of the college to the President. The President provides leadership and oversight in the operations of the college including institutional planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness. Policy 1001 – College Organizational

Structure reflects the decision-making processes for the college. This structure is supported through an organizational chart that delineates the lines of communication protocols, areas of responsibility, and general duties of employees. The Participatory Governance Structural Manual describes the principles of participatory governance and the structure for making decisions at the college, in addition to roles and responsibilities of each constituent group for participation in the implementation, assessment, and evaluation of institutional effectiveness for continuous improvement. (IV.B.1, IV.B.2)

The team found that the President is engaged in ongoing discussions with her team in the review and assessment of tasks to ensure continuous improvement of operations, achievement of student learning through established institutional performance standards, and the allocation of resources. (IV.B.3)

The President has the primary leadership role for accreditation as contained in Policy 3010.1. This policy outlines that the President shall ensure the College complies with the accreditation process and standards of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges and other College programs that seek special accreditation. The President appoints an Accreditation Liaison Officer and an Assistant Accreditation Liaison Officer to assist with accreditation matters. (IV.B.4)

The team confirmed that the College has several policies that ensure the President provides the guidance and support to adhere to statutes, regulations, and governing board policies in implementing institutional practices consistent with the mission of the College, including budget oversight and management. The President works with the Vice President of Administration to ensure compliance with federal and local laws relating to the College's finances. (IV.B.5)

The President communicates with various stakeholder groups and the communities served by the institution, through quarterly and annual reports, participation on Boards and Commissions, and attendance at meetings, assemblies, and training with college constituents. Through this engagement, the President advocates for the College. (IV.B.6)

#### Conclusion:

The College meets the Standard.

### **IV.C. Governing Board**

#### General Observations:

The College has clear policies related to each of the Standards, and policy manuals related to Board responsibilities are up-to-date and reviewed regularly. The Board receives regular updates from the President to keep them informed and to aid in decision-making.

## Findings and Evidence:

The College has a governing board whose role in decision-making is to determine policies and serve as the fiduciary body of the institution. These responsibilities are enumerated in the Policy Governance Manual, supported by the College's Mission and Values statements and its Institutional Strategic Plan. The Board is updated regularly by the College President regarding the College's progress toward its goals and adherence to its Mission. The President provides a monthly financial report, updating the Board on expenditures from the President's discretionary fund. Annual fiscal reports submitted to the ACCJC are first reviewed by the Board before submission. (IV.C.1.)

A number of Board policies outline the authority of individual Board members and their responsibility to act with a unified voice and only in their official capacity. Board agendas are distributed ahead of Board meetings in order for collective decision-making to occur. A Board Code of Ethics reinforces the responsibility of Board members to work together in a spirit of cooperation and to make decisions based on facts rather than personal biases. (IV.C.2.)

The responsibility of the Board for selecting and evaluating the College President is outlined in the Governance Policy Manual as well as in Public Law 22-30. Policies related to evaluation of the President include an annual review; the team confirmed through minutes of the 2020 Board Retreat that the President is formally evaluated every two years as part of the contract renewal process. Additionally, the Board reviews performance expectations with the President every six months. (IV.C.3.)

The Board is an independent body with membership that reflects the diversity of the territory. Six members are nominated by the Governor and approved by the legislature, and a seventh (ex-officio) member is the Director of the American Samoa Department of Education. The final voting member of the Board is elected by the student body. Board members participate in College activities such as graduation and opening assembly and in Legislative hearings, particularly as related to the College budget. (IV.C.4.)

The Board establishes policies consistent with the College mission, as evidenced by the commitment to Policy 1004 on program review and assessment of College instructional and student programs. The Board approved the 2021-2026 Institutional Strategic Plan and re-ordered the four strategic goals to create the acronym "STAR." The Board monitors progress toward strategic goals through quarterly and annual reports and regular fiscal reports. The fiduciary responsibility of the Board is heightened by the fact that the College receives direct funding from the local government. The College has been working to separate out procedures from policies for purposes of clarity. (IV.C.5.)

The College's Policy Governance Manual, which was fully reviewed and updated from 2018-2020, includes bylaws designating the size and overall composition of the governing board. The Board's size is established in Public Law 22-30 and described in Board Policy 2003. Board duties are contained in Board Policy 2004.A. and 2004.B., with specific authority of Board Committees highlighted in Policy 2004.1, authority for Board Members in Policy 2004.2 and of the Chair in Policy 2004.3. Authority for the establishment of College policies is described in

Policy 2005. The College has comprehensive policies, and at its most recent retreat, the Board worked to separate policies from procedures based on a recommendation from their last accreditation visit. Procedures are being moved to a Rules & Regulations Manual. (IV.C.6.)

Policy 2005.A. on “Policy initiation, Development and Review” states that the Board shall review policies as necessary. The College notes that the Board, at its 2022 Retreat, began discussions of a cycle of review. The College states that the most review of Policies allows the Board to separate policy statements from procedural language. The team confirmed that the Board has decided to review policies on an annual basis during their retreat. (IV.C.7.)

The Board reviews key indicators of student learning and achievement through presentations by the President and Leadership Team. Specific indicators reviewed by the Board are documented in the College’s SLO and Student Achievement Manual. The Board also reviews all external reports, including ACCJC annual reports and college factbook reports. During the visit, the team confirmed through interviews and additional evidence that the Board is provided regular updates on institution set standards. In addition, a review of the Board minutes demonstrates the detailed presentation on current data and historical data for comparison. (IV.C.8.)

The Board undergoes an annual retreat to address the orientation of new members and ongoing training of the entire Board. Board members are encouraged to take the ACCJC Accreditation 101 online certification course, and many have attended the ACCJC Partners in Excellence Conference. The Board receives regular updates from the College President and other administrators to help them make decisions. Policy 2003.1 states the terms of Board members and indicates that election is staggered to ensure continuity for a portion of the Board at all times. The team confirmed that in the current Board composition, the members have staggered terms. Newly appointed Board members are pending an official appointment document from the legislature. (IV.C.9.)

The process for Board self-evaluation is described in Policy 2002.4 and in more detail in 2007.1. The Policy outlines an annual process for self-evaluation that involves setting goals and strategies for improving Board performance. The policy indicates that the evaluation instrument and accompanying survey will incorporate criteria related to policy review and updates, Governance responsibilities, and Board effectiveness. The team validated the Board self-evaluation tool and a 5-year (2015-2018) review of the results. On 10/4/2018, the BHE reviewed the evaluation for 2019. (IV.C.10.)

Board Policy 2002 relates to a code of conduct and Policy 2002.1 outlines how the Board deals with violations of the law, code of ethics, or conduct. Policy 2003.6 discusses the process for discipline (using the term “censor” instead of “censure”) and removal of a Board member for cause. Conflicts of interest, including fiduciary or familial connections to the College, are described in Policy 2002.2 A. and B. (IV.C.11.)

The Board delegates responsibility for the operation of the College to the College President in Policies 3000, 3001, and 3001.2. Policy 3010 sets expectations for regular reports from the President, including internal (institutional data collection, community surveys, placement data,

financial) and external (audits, licensing examination results, accreditation) reports outlined in Policy 3002.1. (IV.C.12.)

The team found that the Board is informed of Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and the College's accreditation status and processes through the Annual Retreat and special meetings. Additionally, members of the Board attended the 2019 ACCJC Partners in Excellence Conference and met with the ACCJC Vice President as part of the commission's training on preparation of the ISER. Finally, the Board approves reports that go to the commission regarding the College's accreditation status and progress toward meeting goals. (IV.C.13.)

Conclusion:

The College meets the Standard.

#### **IV.D. Multi-College Districts or Systems**

American Samoa Community College is not part of a multi-college district or system.

## **Quality Focus Essay**

Through the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report process, the American Samoa Community College identified a project to meet the needs of the students and community for the Quality Focus Essay (QFE). The QFE outlines the courses the college will offer via Distance Learning to support the college's Teacher Education Program, in partnership with American Samoa Department of Education (ASDOE).

The QFE project supports the development of five (5) courses to be offered via Distance Education for the ASDOE Teacher Certification program. By offering these courses via distance education, the college will accommodate the need of in-service teachers that reside in neighboring islands. The courses include: ED 150: Introduction to Teaching; ED 280: Introduction to Multicultural Education; ED 300 Foundations of Education, ED 301: Educational Psychology, and ED 305: Foundations of Curriculum and Instruction.

The college provided a plan that outlines the actions that have already been taken to launch this project in the Fall 2021 semester, timeline for completion, and pathways for certification.

The team recognizes the College's effort to respond to the needs of the community during this COVID-19 pandemic, by providing alternatives for instructional delivery. The progress of the QFE project will lay the groundwork for future expansion for the college to offer distance education programs.