

Recommendation 7:

“In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the Governing Board adhere to its appropriate role. The Board must allow the Chancellor to take full responsibility and authority for the areas assigned to District oversight (IV.B.1, IV.B.1.a, IV.B.1.e, IV.B.1.j).”

I. Introduction

When the visiting Team conducted its review of the Peralta Community College District in Spring 2015, there appeared to be a Chancellor and the Governing Board disagreement over the Board’s role, vis-à-vis the Chancellor’s role, pertaining to various governance matters, to include the hiring of District administrators, as well as other personnel concerns. While Peralta’s Board Policy 2200 [DR7.1] defines Board duties and responsibilities, some Team interviews at the District and Colleges suggested that members of the Governing Board had engaged in activities that did not always conform to the Trustees’ explicit roles. It appeared that there needed to be a clearer understanding of the Trustees’--as well as the Chancellor’s--governance roles.

II. Selection of a New Chancellor

When the Chancellor announced his retirement in January 2015, the Governing Board initiated a recruitment for a new Chancellor; a key consideration was that the Contract would include provisions for the new Chancellor to assume more demonstrable responsibility and authority for the areas assigned to District oversight, thereby allowing for the Board to adhere more effectively to its appropriate role. The Governing Board then worked with a search consultant to begin the recruitment process and at the February 24, 2015 Special Workshop of the Governing Board, the Trustees discussed a District Survey which had solicited feedback from the community identifying desirable characteristics for the next Chancellor [DR7.2]. This information included an emphasis on Board/Chancellor roles, and was used to develop the new Chancellor’s job description. When the new Chancellor was selected, the Contract provisions clarified

Chancellor/Board roles [DR7.3]. The new Chancellor assumed his position on July 1, 2015.

In his August 2015 Flex Address to all PCCD constituents, the Chancellor introduced what he called “The New Peralta Way,” an initiative intended to reform Peralta’s leadership through the strengthening of competence, passion, integrity, and intimacy—a leadership focused on enhancing student success. He stated: “We must commit to support an impeccable and dedicated Governing Board practicing trusteeship at its best...I am pleased to say it seems that we are working well from the same vibe.” At the Flex event, the Board President spoke of the confidence the Board has in its choice of the new Chancellor [DR7.4].

III. Renewed Collaboration between the Governing Board and the Chancellor in Setting Goals:

In September 2015, the Chancellor arranged a “Team Building” Retreat for the Governing Board. The purpose of the Retreat was to discuss the establishment of a new set of goals based on a foundation of trust and mutual support between Board and Chancellor [DR7.5]. At the Retreat, a performance evaluation process was created that included the formation of formal goals, expected outcomes, and timelines. The Governing Board and the Chancellor agreed that evaluations of both parties would be conducted in Summer 2016.

At the December 8, 2015 Board meeting, the Governing Board and the Chancellor formally adopted goals to support the effective operation of the District to ensure that their respective roles would be adhered to. These goals included:

1. Resolve District deficiencies affecting Colleges’ Accreditation status specified in Recommendation Seven.

2. Explore the role of Trustees in student achievement and closing the student achievement gap.
3. Review and approval of the College's work in strengthening the financial structure of the District.
4. Review and sanction the technology evaluation and resulting action.
5. Review and accept the plan for improvement of Student Services.
6. Review and accept the Student governance review.

[DR7.6].

With the establishment of written goals to improve the respective performances of the Chancellor and the Governing Board, additional protocols were developed for sharpening clear communication between all parties based on a "no surprises" principle. Included in these protocols was the stipulation that the Chancellor writes a weekly report (C-GRAM) to keep the Governing Board informed of important District activities. This weekly communication vehicle diminishes the potential for unwelcome surprises and misunderstandings and helps to continue to build trust between the Chancellor and the Board. [DR7.7]. Furthermore, the Chancellor, the Governing Board President and Vice President, Legal Counsel, and the Chief of Staff meet one week prior to each regularly scheduled Board meeting, to ensure that all parties are fully aware of the business being presented at the Board. Finally, a weekly agenda review of the Chancellor's activities invites Board members' input and participation, thereby ensuring that the Board is fully informed of issues arising at the District level. In addition, the Chief of Staff supports the Chancellor in following up on outstanding items to ensure issues are addressed in a timely manner.

IV. More Effective Handling of Citizens' Complaints

It should be noted that a particular difficulty regarding Board/Chancellor relations ensued when some community constituents, apparently frustrated over perceived College administrative inaction on certain issues, began to appeal directly to Trustees for redress. And with the advent of electronic communications, public access to individual Board

members was only facilitated, threatening not only Board unity, but causing potential friction in Board/Chancellor functions.

In response to the perceived Board “extra-curricular” issue above, the new Chancellor has pledged that all public issues will be satisfactorily attended to so that constituents will not have to appeal to individual Trustees; most importantly, it is understood that each Trustee who is privately contacted on any issue will refer those individual issues first to the Chancellor’s Office and/or the Chancellor’s Chief of Staff.

V. Building Leadership Through Self-Assessment

In December 2015, the Chancellor arranged for a joint retreat with the Governing Board, high level administrators, and student leaders to formally introduce his ideas to strengthen leadership. At this retreat, the participants were introduced to an improved leadership model—“the New Peralta Way”—to enhance educational governance. This leadership model embraced these values: competence, passion, integrity, intimacy, and democracy [DR7.8]. Participants engaged in a self- assessment of leadership competency and created an individual action plan committed to cultivate leadership skill [DR7.9].

In July 2016, another Board of Governor’s Retreat was held. At this retreat, the Governing Board discussed PCCD priorities such as the newly instituted efforts to refurbish IT Services, Enrollment Management Planning, a review of newly revised Master Plans for all Colleges, an Accreditation Progress Report, and an update on Financial Planning. Additionally, the Governing Board and PCCD Leadership, along with the Chancellor, engaged in the exchange of ideas led by a facilitator, to build on Trustee and Chancellor complementary goals and to evaluate their progress to date

[DR7.10]. Following the July Governing Board Retreat, the Chancellor sent a Survey to the Trustees to evaluate the July Retreat. The Retreat facilitator reported:

“Board clearly recognizes the progress that the Chancellor has made and respects and supports his goals and objectives for the District under his leadership. The results of the self-evaluation of the Board--a good practice for all Boards to engage with--demonstrates that there is strong agreement on the Board that they are working well with one another and with Chancellor Laguerre and that there is consistent and constructive communication and coordination between the Chancellor and the Board. The Board feels appropriately engaged and supported and has a good working relationship with the Chancellor and his team” [DR7.11].

Prior to the July Retreat, the Governing Board and the Chancellor had evaluated the mutual goals that had been established in December 2015. The summary revealed that Board/Chancellor relations had definitely improved and that clearer avenues of communication are being established and respected [DR7.12].

Another Board Retreat is planned for October 2016. At this Retreat, the Governing Board, PCCD leadership, and the Chancellor will continue to build on their efforts to work collaboratively and to examine PCCD’s desire to improve student success.

VI. Regular Review of All Board Policies and Procedures

Board policies are reviewed and vetted through PBC and the Chancellor’s Cabinet. To facilitate policy and procedure revisions, the District has given reassigned time to a faculty member over the past few years to create and/or revise Board policies and procedures. The faculty member reviews the Community College League of California (CCLC) updates. After policies are adopted, a PCCD announcement is electronically sent to all Peralta stakeholders so that everyone is aware of new policies [DR7.13].

At the time of the ACCJC Team visit, members of the Team noted that they could not locate a formal schedule for an ongoing, regular review of all Board policies and administrative regulations. In the past, PCCD has reviewed Board policies and administrative procedures, as needed, but beginning in Fall 2016, the District will publicize a calendar to ensure that all Governing Board policies are, in fact, scheduled for review and to ensure that the Colleges participate more routinely in expressing policy and procedure needs. The new schedule includes a timeline for reviewing all existing policies and continued attention to the CCLC policy review calendar, thereby ensuring that PCCD policies remain current.

The draft review schedule for 2016-2018 addresses a comprehensive review of policies. In Fall 2016, Board Policy series 1000, 2000, and 3000 are slated for review. The renewed focus on policy review is in keeping with the 2015-2016 Strategic objective: “D.2: Institutional Leadership and Governance: Evaluate and update policies and administrative procedures, the PCCD organizational structure, and functional responsibilities within the District.”

One policy that pertains to Recommendation 7, is Board Policy 2715, Code of Ethics, which was revised in April 2015 [DR7.14]. The Governing Board and the new Chancellor will review BP 2715 in Fall 2016 semester pending CCLC’s recommended revisions, as both acknowledge that adhering to the Board’s Code of Ethics adds clarity and expectations for effective trusteeship. Furthermore, the Governing Board will engage in a Code of Ethics training session in Fall 2016 lead by Legal Counsel.

On August 17, 2016, the Chancellor addressed the PCCD community at Flex and reiterated that “many aspects of the District, including the Governing Board, are functioning well.” The emphasis on his newly launched PCCD Leadership Academy will

further substantiate the goal to create a “New Peralta Way,” and to continue to build the strong working relationship between the Board, the Chancellor, and PCCD [DR7.15].

VII. Conclusion

Recommendation 7 addressed a perceived governance issue that existed at the time of the former Team visit, one that has now been resolved with the hiring of a new Chancellor and the emergence of a more effective working relationship between Board and Chancellor, along with the adoption of more intensive leadership training. The Governing Board and the Chancellor have addressed Recommendation 7 by adhering to their clarified respective roles and Standards (IV.B.1, IV.B.1.a, IV.B.1.e, IV.B.1.j) have been met.

With the arrival of a new Chancellor, the Peralta Community College District evinces a continued sense of optimism regarding Board/Chancellor leadership effectiveness based on:

1. The bona fides of the New Chancellor.
2. A renewed determination to focus on the good of the whole and not be caught up in the clamoring of special interests.
3. The agreement of a “no surprise” approach to Board and Chancellor relationships.
4. The adherence to Board policies, e.g., BP 2430 (Delegation of Authority to the Chancellor); BP 2715 (Code of Ethics and Standards and Practices); and BP 2200 (Board Duties and Responsibilities), policies that specify the collaborative relationship between Board and Chancellor.
5. The ongoing evaluation of the Governing Board and the Chancellor with the aim of clarifying roles and setting forth collaborative strategies to enhance the overall effectiveness of the District.
6. The Governing Board’s support of the shift to a “New Peralta Way” for the PCCD community. This “New Peralta Way” rests on a renewed commitment of the

Governing Board and the Chancellor to provide more effective and accountable educational leadership for the District.

7. Broad inclusion of the College leadership in ongoing assessment and improvement of the PCCD and enhancement of student success.

RECOMMENDATION 7: DISTRICT RESPONSES	
Evidence	Title of Evidence Document
DR7.1	PCCD BP 2200 - Board Duties and Responsibilities
DR7.2	Development of Chancellor Profile Part I, Feb. 24, 2015, Governing Board meeting
DR7.3	Excerpt from 2015 Chancellor's Contract, page 8
DR7.4	Chancellor's 2015 Fall Flex Address
DR7.5	Board of Trustees Retreat Agenda, Building a New Team, Sept. 22, 2015
DR7.6	Governing Board Goals, 2015-2016: Dec. 8, 2015 Board meeting
DR7.7	July 3, 2016 C-GRAM
DR7.8	New Peralta Way Leadership Retreat Agenda, Dec. 13, 2015
DR7.9	New Peralta Way Leadership Action Plan
DR7.10	Governing Board Retreat Agenda, July 12, 2016
DR7.11	Peralta Board Report July 2016 from Facilitator
DR7.12	Board Retreat July 12, 2016 Survey Responses
DR7.13	Example Policy Update Announcement
DR7.14	PCCD BP 2715 Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice
DR7.15	Chancellor's Flex Speech, Aug. 17, 2016