Alamo Colleges District Services
Award Level

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes strengths and opportunities for improvement for Alamo Colleges District Services (ACDS) as a result of assessment against the 2011 Texas Award for Performance Excellence criteria. ACDS scored in band 2 in the Consensus review of written applications. An organization scoring in band 2 typically demonstrates the beginning of a systematic approach responsive to the basic purposes of the Items, but major gaps exist in approach and deployment in some Categories. The organization is in the early stages of obtaining results stemming from approaches.

a. The most important strengths or outstanding practices (of potential value to other organizations) are:

PROCESS STRENGTHS

• ACDS’s PVC (senior leadership team) utilized a collaborative method to establish its mission, vision, and values. The MVV are reviewed annually during the SPP by the PVC with the BoT. MVV are communicated, deployed, and reinforced by several methods, as shown in Figure 1.1-1, and integrated with SPP, training, performance evaluations, and key processes. This approach has generated overall acceptance of the MVV throughout the organization and provides the foundation for achieving long- and short-term goals.

• ACDS has a well-defined and implemented Strategic Development Process that includes all divisions within the organization. It includes an annual review of the MVV, SWOT analysis, environmental scan, analysis of internal and external trends and identification of priorities. It also includes the evaluation and revision of Core Competencies, Strategic Challenges and Strategic Advantages. Key Performance Indicators (KPI) are established during this Process. The leadership prioritizes strategic actions, and a budget is developed to ensure effective allocation of people and resources. The output from this Process drives the strategic planning for the divisions and is included in individual performance goals and evaluation. The Strategic Development Process is evaluated and improved each year prior to beginning the next cycle.

• ACDS has developed five long-term (three year) over-arching strategic objectives (“goals”) that balance short- and longer-term challenges and are supported by specific strategies (“initiatives”) from strategic planning. These objectives provide a clear direction to the District and five colleges, as well as employees, students, organizations and businesses, and the entire community.

• ACDS has identified and developed key Work Systems and related Work Processes, including Key Performance Indicators. By developing a systematic approach to key Work Systems and Work Processes, deploying these approaches, regularly measuring results, integrating the learning, the organization can accelerate its Performance Excellence Journey.

ACDS has established various communication methodologies to reach its workforce, customers, other stakeholders and the community. Each of these is tailored to the needs and preferences of the specific group, with a strong emphasis on personal and phone contact. By focusing on both one-way and two-way communication on a regular basis, the organization can listen and learn from its entire stakeholder base.
b. The most significant concerns, weaknesses, or vulnerabilities are:

**PROCESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- Although ACDS (in Figure 6.1-2) lists Key Work Systems and Key Work Processes, the document does not reflect a systematic approach to many key processes including leadership; identifying needs for performance improvement; determining customer satisfaction; managing complaints; identifying, managing and changing capability and capacity needs; determining workforce engagement and satisfaction; and others. Without a systematic approach, the organization may not be able to fully achieve its vision and mission.

- It is not clear how the Strategic Plan and other outputs from the Strategic Development process are deployed to the entire organization, as well as to other stakeholders, suppliers, partners, and collaborators. Without a clear understanding of the direction, goals and initiatives that are developed in this process, it may be difficult to gain the full engagement of all people and groups that are important to the success of ACDS.

- There is little or no evidence of a systematic approach to learning and innovation from process improvements. There also appears to be a lack of a systematic approach to using data that are gathered to identify and innovate programs, offerings or services. Without systematically using data, implementing improvement efforts and measuring results, it will be difficult for ACDS to evaluate its progress and to achieve its mission.

- There is little evidence of integration of key processes. As ACDS's approaches, deployment and learning mature, the organization will most likely strengthen the linkages among processes.

- At several places in the document, ACDS states that its role as an internal service provider means it has no competitors and that the organization does not need to anticipate future customer groups or segments. This concept can be shortsighted. Many outside companies who provide the same services are eager to gain a foothold into the organization. Outside providers may approach groups that the organization does not currently service or present proposals that support the value of outsourcing. Without continually identifying new customers, markets and services, ACDS may stagnate and diminish its perceived value with current and prospective customers and markets.
c. Considering ACDS’s key factors, the most significant strengths, vulnerabilities, and/or gaps (data, comparisons, linkages) found in Category 7 are:

RESULTS STRENGTHS

- ACDS has favorable trends in the percentage of students receiving financial aid during the time period 2007 to 2009. Overall and across each college the number of recipients increased by approximately 5% (Figure 7.1-3). Additionally, the average amount of financial aid per student has increased by $1,000 over the five year period 2006 to 2010 (Figure 7.1-4). Providing increased financial assistance to support higher education supports the core competency and mission of empowering students to succeed.

- ACDS demonstrates results of relationship building with a 168.5% increase in Donations (Figure 7.2-3) from 2007 to 2009. ACDS links this increase to mechanisms in place to build relationship with stakeholders, including current and potential donors. With severe cutbacks in state appropriations, the increase in donations provides a source of income that is necessary for success and sustainability (7.2a(2)).

- ACDS has good performance levels and compares favorably on average class size and faculty to student ratio. For example, average class size in 2009 for Alamo Colleges was approximately 23, which is within the limits for the public benchmark of a very large community college (Figure 7.1-6). The faculty to student ratio is 23:1 compared to 27:1 at a competitive community college system (Figure 7.1-7).

- In many of the results charts, the ACDS shows favorable trends. It is important for ACDS to review trends to determine how the organization is progressing toward long-term goals, improving over time and planning for change.

RESULTS OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Many of the measures presented do not relate to the Criteria, do not answer the request, or focus on only one area of the organization. In most Areas, ACDS only includes a few results. Without measuring and evaluating results, the organization may not fully understand where it is currently and where it is heading.

- Although ACDS identified 29 competitors and identifies comparative data sources, the results contain few comparisons with competitors and other organizations providing similar programs, offerings and services. Without comparative data, it is difficult to assess how well the organization is performing compared to the best in the nation.

- Although ACDS states that it segments data for the workforce, customers and other stakeholders, little or no segmentation is shown in the charts in Category 7. Without the ability to report and analyze results by segment, the organization may not be able to identify areas of success or concern.

- Key measures on key work process performance are not provided for most of the processes and measures outlined in Figure 2.2-3, 2010 Strategy Alignment Matrix, and Figure 6.1-2, Key Work Systems Matrix and Sample of Work Processes. Without complete and accurate measures and outcomes for Strategic Goals, Key Work Systems and Key Processes, an organization may be placing its success and sustainability at risk.
DETAILS OF STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Category 1  Leadership

1.1  Senior Leadership

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 50-65 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

- ACDS’s PVC (senior leadership team) utilized a collaborative method to establish its mission, vision, and values which were deployed to the District and colleges. The MVV are reviewed annually during the SPP by the PVC with the BoT. MVV are communicated, deployed, and reinforced by methods shown in Figure 1.1-1 and integrated with SPP, training, performance evaluations, and key processes.

  A collaborative effort was designed to represent a stronger focus on student success and driving change to be more effective. Furthermore, an approach is taken to set direction to ensure stakeholders know, understand and follow the MVV which aligns to a core value.

- Actions, policies, and decisions of the senior leadership promote and create an organizational environment where legal and ethical behavior supports the applicant's value of "Integrity." All employees and senior leadership participate in the ethics program which is administered online annually. Furthermore, the ethics handbook is reviewed by senior leadership, as well as the development of organizational policy.

  Additionally, ACDS makes available an ethics hotline to employees for reporting purposes. They also utilize the Office of Legal Affairs to ensure legal and ethical behavior.

  Efforts related to ethics training, activities, and reports are found in Figure 7.6-4.

- The organization creates a focus on action by setting goals for performance to the strategic plan by defining measures and targets (Figure 4.1-1), aligning actions with strategic planning, evaluating metrics on a monthly basis and aligning operations with ethical and legal guidelines. Measures include operational efficiency, effectiveness, and customer/student/stakeholder satisfaction.

- ACDS's values of "Integrity" and "Community" encourage one- and two-way communication at various levels of the organization, including key decisions and employee recognition and rewards. Figure 1.1-3 demonstrates communication methods, frequency, and engagement with the workforce. ACDS also uses cycles of improvement to modify the approaches and address identified gaps.
• Senior leaders have established multiple approaches in order to create a sustainable organization. Approaches include the creation of a performance improvement environment, accomplishment of mission and strategic direction, innovation, role model effective leadership, organizational agility, organizational learning, workforce learning, development and/or enhancement of personal leadership skills (Figure 1.1-2).

In light of current state budget cuts, ACDS developed and agreed upon ideas for significant cost reduction during strategic planning to help build longer-term financial sustainability.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

• Although ACDS provides lists of actions and activities that senior leaders personally take or direct, there is little evidence of a systematic approach to leadership. This includes the lack of a systematic approach to setting direction, deploying the MVV, improving/learning and integrating the MVV to the workforce, customers, and stakeholders, as well as creating or balancing value for stakeholders.

Without a systematic approach, Alamo Colleges may not be able to fully achieve its vision of "Alamo Colleges will be the best in the nation" or its mission of "empowering our diverse communities for success."

• Although ACDS mentions a few instances in which it made performance improvements and lists a Performance Improvement Environment as one of the Leadership Approaches to Create a Environment of Organizational Sustainability (Figure 1.1-2), it shows no systematic approach to identifying improvement needs to the Leadership System, making improvements and achieving organizational learning from these improvements. Although ACDS discusses the FOCUS PDCA Methodology in Category 6, there is little indication that this methodology has been systematically applied to any aspects of leadership including setting direction, deploying and integrating the MVV, promoting a legal and ethical environment, creating a sustainable organization, communicating with the workforce, suppliers, partners and collaborators, or creating an environment of organizational sustainability. Without this systematic approach to performance improvement and learning, the applicant may not be prepared to meet the challenges listed in P2.b.

• ACDS cannot perform succession planning directly per state policy. Evidence that training has occurred (Figure 2.2-3) is present; however, it is unclear how effective the training is or how many internal positions filled based on growth.

Although senior leaders encourage future potential leaders through coaching and paying for attendance at seminars and conferences, an approach for each senior leader to develop his/her own personal leadership skills does not appear to exist.
1.2 Governance and Social Responsibilities

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 30-45 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

- ACDS has multiple processes in place to achieve the following aspects of the Governance System: Accountability for Management's Actions, Fiscal Accountability, Transparency in Operations and Disclosure, External and Internal Audit Independence, and Protection of Stakeholder Interests. Figure 1.2-1 outlines the Key Aspect, Key Measures and Processes. These processes contribute to the ongoing success and positive reputation of the organization by helping to ensure attainment of strategic goals, control financials, promote transparency and ethical behavior, ensure compliance, address student and employee grievances, encourage management by fact (success metrics) and promote fairness and ethical behavior in supplier selection and relationships.

Furthermore, Figures 7.6-3, 7.6-4, and 7.6-5 show results for declining legal fees, ethics and hotline training, and confidence in leadership for the entire Alamo Colleges system and for ACDS. Figures 7.6-3 and 7.6-4 show improvement over four and five years. Figure 7.6-5 contains only one data point and indicates that Alamo Colleges ranks in the mid-three on a five-point scale (where five is highest).

- ACDS has a multi-faceted approach to identifying and addressing adverse impacts on society of programs, services and operations. It tracks regulatory issues; scans the environment through a variety of listening sources; learns from national and state education associations and groups; receives input from local Chambers of Commerce, business and civic groups, public information from state and federal agencies; and keeps abreast of changes to standards and compliance requirements through accreditation groups. The organization also responds to the training needs of new companies relocating or expanding in San Antonio, as well as responding to layoffs from companies that are downsizing or closing, by developing appropriate education and training for these requirements. During regularly scheduled meetings, the PVC discusses current or potential adverse impacts on society which have been identified and takes actions that are necessary to prepare for these concerns in a proactive manner. Adverse impacts are monitored through the calendar system with check-offs built in (ticklers) so that all requirements are met at each cycle as required. The Strategic Plan is modified as necessary to address any adverse impacts on society of programs, services and operations.

- ACDS aligns its approach to ethical behavior on the key organizational value of "Integrity." It has an Office of Ethics and Compliance to oversee the ethics program that includes open channels of communications for employees, students and vendors to participate in promoting a safe and ethical environment. Employees are reminded on a regular basis about their responsibility to act ethically and inform the appropriate people if they perceive ethical issues. The organization provides an ethics hotline for anonymously reporting ethical issues.
All employees, including senior leaders, participate in an annual online ethics training event. All employees, including senior leaders, personally review the ethics handbook and submit a signed acknowledgement form. Senior leaders use the Office of Legal Affairs as a resource in ensuring that ongoing decision making and actions are legally and ethically appropriate.

Additionally, the Grants Division meets with District staff charged with executing new grants to ensure they understand the requirements. The ethical standards are communicated to suppliers, partners and collaborators, who also must comply with specific ethical standards. These measures help ensure a legal and ethical environment that protects sustainability and ensures the trust of employees, students and the community.

In addition to general education services, the organization provides Community Education Centers to ensure college and program awareness for adult learners, no-cost computer labs with Internet access; bilingual presentations for target populations, and television station presentations. As part of the strategic planning process, information is updated daily on industry trends and local demographics (including unemployment, limited English proficiency, dropout rates, and poverty) to identify areas of greatest need. Responsiveness to the needs of the community is addressed by working with the City to solicit new business and industries to the area and working with State offices to create programs to train people in future growth in the community and in the skill sets needed for jobs coming to the community. Figure 7.6.7 shows how ACDS worked in 1995 for passage of HB 1337 to establish dual credit program at no cost to students, and that it currently leads the state in highest number of dual credit students, as well as working in legislative sessions on an annual basis.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Although ACDS indicates the Leadership System is reviewed annually and opportunities are identified to improve the Leadership System, no evidence of improvements are provided. It is unclear how performance reviews are used to further develop and improve personal leadership effectiveness and that of the Board.

- ACDS does not address an effective process for supplier management. Because suppliers provide significant and one-of-a-kind services, it is critical that a process is in place to manage suppliers. Suppliers can impact financial success, operations, and ethical/legal issues.

- ACDS does not directly address key processes, measures and goals for risks associated with programs, offerings, services and operations.

Although internal audits and external audits are conducted and reported to the Board of Trustees, it is not clear how the results of internal audits are trended or evaluated or if there are cycles of learning and improvement.
If the organization does not have processes, measures and goals for current and potential risks, it may not be adequately prepared to mitigate these risks and protect the interests of all stakeholders.

- ACDS has policies and procedures in place for employees and stakeholders to report ethical behavior and reports this information to the Board quarterly; however, it is not clear if there is a process in place to report this data to senior leaders and other key groups. Without a systematic means to categorize, examine, track and report ethical infractions, ACDS may not be addressing one of its critical employee behaviors of integrity by acting ethically and building a culture of trust and respect.

- The approach for prioritizing key community support is not clear. Although ACDS has identified the key communities it supports as underprivileged citizens, business and industry associations, community education, and the broader education in the community, it is not clear how it identifies and determines organizational involvement. While ACDS’s mission is to empower the diverse community for success, considering the large number of support possibilities each year, it may benefit from a refined approach to determining criteria for and prioritization of community efforts.

- While ACDS addresses social and economic well-being, it is not clear how it addresses environmental well-being (ie, use of green technology, resource conservation activities). A systematic approach could enable ACDS to deliver on the core values of effective use of resources and the strategic advantage of technology.

- On page six, the Application references Figure 1.2-1 to show potential societal impacts and the processes used to prepare for these potential concerns. This Figure is not included in the document.
Category 2  Strategic Planning

2.1  Strategy Development

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 50-65 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

- An ongoing environmental scan collects data from internal and external sources for analysis of key factors in prioritizing strategic actions. This scan is updated daily to help identify any potential blind spots.

- ACDS has a well-defined and implemented Strategic Development Process that includes the District and all five Colleges that are a part of the system. The Strategic Planning Process (Figure 2.1-1) includes an annual review of the MVV, SWOT analysis, environmental scan, analysis of internal and external trends, a professionally facilitated strategic planning retreat and identification of priorities by the Colleges and the District. The Strategic Development Process includes the establishment of three-year goals and strategies based upon core competencies and a set of District KPIs to track performance. It also includes the evaluation and revision of core competencies and the identification of strategic advantages and strategic challenges. The five Colleges use the output from the strategic planning retreat, as well as the goals and strategies, to drive their own strategic planning. The CEC prioritizes strategic actions, a budget is developed to support high-priority actions, and teams (including members of the CEC) develop and execute the plans to ensure allocation of people and resources to projects. Throughout the year, KPIs and action plans are monitored to evaluate performance. The Strategic Development Process is evaluated and improved each year prior to beginning the Strategic Development Process cycle.

- ACDS has developed five long-term (three year) over-arching strategic objectives ("goals") that balance short- and longer-term challenges and are supported by specific strategies ("initiatives") from strategic planning. These objectives provide a clear direction to the District and five Colleges, as well as employees, students, organizations and businesses, and the entire community.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- While ACDS develops a Strategic Alignment Matrix (Figure 2.2-3), there is little evidence of how the strategic objectives ("goals") and goals ("initiatives") address all of the strategic challenges, strategic advantages, and core competencies. For example, it is unclear how the organization establishes goals to ensure adequate funding, how the strategic objectives address future core competencies or how ACDS considers and balances the needs of some key stakeholders. Without a clear linkage among these elements, ACDS may not achieve its
mission and vision, be prepared for opportunities or challenges, or be able to maintain sustainability.

- It is unclear from Figure 2.2-3 how the organization utilizes gains in market share to evaluate its success or what benchmarks are used to compare to its 29 competitors in terms of innovation of educational programs, offerings, services and operations. Understanding of the competition will enable the organization to achieve its vision of being the best in the nation.

- Although Step 8 in the Strategic Planning Process includes an evaluation with improvements identified and implemented, it is not evident how the evaluation addresses the effectiveness of the SPP. Additionally, it is not evident how cycles of learning have resulted in the improvement or innovation of the SPP. A systematic approach to learning relative to the SPP may allow the applicant to more readily develop new and improved programs and business processes of value to students and stakeholders.
2.2 Strategy Deployment

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 30-45 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

- ACDS ensures that resources are available to support its action plans through financial and Human Resources linkages. Annual budgeting processes ensure appropriate funding is available to support action plans. A multi-year plan developed by the HR department (Figure 2.2-2) helps support the accomplishment of short- and longer term strategic objectives ("goals") and action plans. Additionally, plans such as phased retirements, job freezes, salary studies, and phased workloads are designed to address impacts on the workforce, particularly related to the significant state-level budget cuts experienced by community colleges over the past few years.

- ACDS’s budgeting process occurs during the Strategic Development Process timeline. As such, strategic goals, action plans, and District and College budget requests are based on the Strategic Plan when the budget is approved. This systematic approach to budgeting ensures financial and other resources are available to support the accomplishment of the action plans, as well as current obligations and operations. The budget planning process also takes into account any requirements for additional resources for planned improvement activities. Each District division, department, and office operates under a specific budget that is approved by the Board of Trustees and allocated by the PVC team.

- Key Performance Indicators are aligned to the Strategic Goals and Strategies (Figure 2.2-3). Measurements are established with targets for key areas of the plan (Figure 4.1-1). The approach is aligned with organizational needs identified in response to the Organizational Profile and other Process Items.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Although ACDS indicates use of benchmarking, best-in-peer group and best-in-state comparisons, there is little evidence of benchmarking throughout the application and very limited use of comparative data. Without a systematic process for addressing current or projected gaps in performance against competitors or comparable organizations, ACDS may not be able to measure achievement toward its vision of being the best in the nation.

- While the organization has established an annual budgeting process to meet current obligations, it is unclear how financial and other risks associated with its action plans have been assessed and managed, in particular the for the longer term objectives. An approach can be important in helping the organization address its Strategic Challenge of long-term reduced state funding.
• Although plans are developed in Step 7 of the Strategic Planning Process, it is unclear how the applicant deploys its strategic objectives, action plans, and performance measures to all segments of the workforce, suppliers, partners, and collaborators. The Application focuses on deployment at each unit level, with unit leaders selecting and focusing on the strategies in which they are involved. Without the entire workforce and other stakeholders understanding the overall Strategic Plan, goals, strategies and expectations, they may not grasp how their job fits into the overall Plan and its importance to the entire organization. This may lessen employee engagement and satisfaction, and it may reduce the probability of accomplishing strategic goals.
Category 3  Customer and Market Focus

3.1  Customer and Market Knowledge

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 10-25 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

• ACDS has multiple mechanisms to build and manage relationships to work with the Colleges to increase the student base and build relationships with the community, businesses and other stakeholders. Many of these approaches are outlined by student and stakeholder segment in Figure 3.1-2. These include regularly scheduled meetings, co-locating certain services at the Colleges, surveys, user groups, community activities, participation in community and business groups, coordination of activities among Colleges, involvement in community college and education associations, and other mechanisms. Vice chancellors and vice presidents help build and manage relationships as they work across the District in partnerships.

• All leaders work towards creating an organizational culture that ensures a consistently positive customer experience and engagement with stakeholders. For example, customer service training and the empowerment of employees at all levels ensures a customer focus. The annual evaluation process is designed to provide feedback on performance in key areas such as collaboration with Colleges and interface with key stakeholders (where appropriate). The organization ensures that communications about student success are deployed across the entire District which reinforces the findings of a 2008 study indicating the most important area of employee engagement was contribution to the mission of making students successful. Additionally, employees participate in a variety of formal, informal, and leadership training events that reinforce a positive customer experience.

• ACDS uses a variety of mechanisms to determine most effective ways to support use and means of communication. Direct feedback through meetings and individual contacts are used to understand customer support requirements and issues. Because each College has a slightly different leadership organization, the access and communication methods vary for each. Colleges most often use electronic methods and, where impractical, personal contact. Services/communications for other stakeholder groups is specified by group. Customer support requirements are deployed appropriately through written procedures or training for specific functions. Informal tracking of the amount of business performed through specific approaches determines how well the approach meets the Colleges' needs. When a deficiency is identified, the organizational group is responsible for improving the process using FOCUS PDCA.

• The applicant utilizes a variety of listening and communication methods to identify and innovate product/service offerings. Figure 3.1-1 identifies the frequent and direct personal contact methods used. The PVC team meets weekly and discusses new issues and initiatives.
Cross-functional teams provide a forum to identify needs. For example, new off campus sites and the New University Center were developed by a team of stakeholders and staff.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Although ACDS describes its FOCUS PDCA Methodology in Category 6 and mentions training the leaders and workforce in this methodology in this Item, it provides no indication that the methodology has been applied to the areas in this Item. Without a systematic approach to identifying needs for performance improvements, making improvements and generating organizational learning as a result of improvements, Alamo Colleges may not be effectively engaging customers and stakeholders to serve their needs and build relationships.

- ACDS gathers and uses information from multiple sources to understand customer, student and stakeholder requirements and to determine key use, communication and support requirements. However, it is unclear how the information is systematically analyzed to determine the key support mechanisms and to identify and innovate programs, offerings or services. Without a process in place, ACDS may find it difficult to deliver on changing customer requirements.

- It is unclear whether there is a process or method for ensuring that information is received by all staff. Lower level and support staff without access to computers and electronic updates and correspondence are asked to rely upon second-hand information. Lack of access to electronic channels may inhibit the ability to successfully deploy student and stakeholder requirements to all employees.

- Although the organization evaluates through varying levels of formality, it is not evident how approaches are kept current for 1) identifying and innovating programs, offerings and service and 2) for keeping customer focused culture and relationships current with needs and directions. ACDS cites the use of FOCUS PDCA teams, benchmarking best-in-class, and use of Baldrige Criteria as methods of evaluating approach effectiveness. However, no evidence or examples of use were identified or presented.
3.2 Customer Relationships and Satisfaction

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 10-25 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

- Customer listening, determining satisfaction and using stakeholder data are kept current through evaluation cycles built into these approaches, benchmarking organizations and other best-in-class approaches. Using the Baldrige Criteria provides assessment opportunities. ACDS uses this assessment information to improve approaches by assigning actions to improvement teams, department teams or individuals who use the FOCUS PDCA improvement methodology to keep processes current.

- ACDS has various methods for listening and determining customer satisfaction. Methods are designed to be primarily through personal and phone contact and vary across the customer segments. Employees are empowered to handle dissatisfaction immediately when observed. Improvement teams may be created in response to issues.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- ACDS does not have a clear systematic approach to determining customer satisfaction and engagement, including comparative customer satisfaction. While Figure 3.1-2 outlines activities that gather information about customer engagement and satisfaction, there does not appear to be a formal method of gathering, aggregating, analyzing and evaluating this data in order to improve approaches, achieve organizational learning or integrate customer engagement and satisfaction data into other processes. Because ACDS is an internal support organization, it states that it has no actual competitors. There are many external vendors who provide the same services. Without a clear and accurate picture of customer engagement and satisfaction, the applicant may be blindsided by demands from the Colleges to use external resources that show better performance.

- ACDS does not indicate a systematic approach to managing student and stakeholder complaints. The two areas mentioned, the ethics Hotline and the employee grievance system, do not necessarily include students and other stakeholders. While ACDS employees are empowered to personally address and close any complaints, there does not appear to be a common approach for this. There also does not appear to be a systematic method for aggregating and analyzing complaints in order to identify and rectify systemic issues. Without a systematic approach, the organization may lose the confidence of customers and stakeholders and be unaware of systemic challenges.

- While ACDS has numerous methods of listening and learning (Figure 3.1-2) for customers, students and stakeholders, it is not clear if the approach is systematic, or how the feedback is
used to make improvements. It is unclear how ACDS follows up with stakeholders on the quality of programs and services or how the information feeds into other processes such as the SPP. Nor is it clear how results are shared/deployed to key personnel on a routine basis for learning. Without a systematic process for listening and learning, the applicant may be limited in addressing its customers key requirements.

- In the Application, ACDS states, "Our role as an internal service provider to our Colleges excludes the need to anticipate future customer groups and market segments..." The concept that ACDS has no need to continually explore new areas within and without the Colleges for new opportunities can be shortsighted. There may be groups within the colleges that ACDS does not currently serve with its products and services, but they may have future needs for other services. ACDS may also identify roles it can play externally to help achieve its mission and vision. Without continually identifying potential new customers and markets, ACDS may stagnate and diminish its value with current and prospective customers and markets.
Category 4  Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

4.1 Measurement, Analysis and Improvement of Organizational Performance

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 30-45 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

- ACDS reports a systematic method of selecting, collecting, aligning and integrating data. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are established during the Strategic Development Process to monitor and track the progress of Strategic Goals and action plans. Figure 4.1-1 identifies key short- and long-term measures and targets aligned with the Strategic Plan. Additional measures are selected by the Colleges to support daily operations based on their own goals and environments. Departments also select measures of daily and operational performance to support their specific process requirements. Until recently, these were rarely aggregated at the district level. The Institutional Research Department (IR) collects and reports data for all KPIs to support decision making at all levels. Measures are reviewed and acted upon by the CEC, PVC, C3 and Board of Trustees (as appropriate). They are also reviewed by individual departments with the District on a daily, weekly and/or monthly basis. Many KPIs include comparative data from sources outlined in the Organizational Profile. By establishing meaningful KPIs and reviewing them regularly, the applicant can identify areas of success and concern and take appropriate actions without delay to help ensure the achievement of Strategic Goals and the maintenance of sustainability.

- ACDS has a well deployed process for analysis and review. Key performance reviews are conducted in a variety of meetings covering a broad spectrum of employees as identified in Figure 4.1-2. These performance reviews track progress toward strategic goals and action plans. The senior leaders’ performance evaluations are tied to performance accountability. Analysis is performed and reported in a variety of views including data tables, Pareto charts, data trends, and comparison of targets with peers. Where deviation occurs, root cause analysis is conducted. Frequent performance measure reviews allow the senior leaders to make adjustments which contribute to organizational agility (Core Competency). As a cycle of improvement, a modified KPI scorecard was created to allow weighted values. This improvement was a result of benchmarking a scorecard used by Baldrige recipient.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Although the Application discusses performance measurement, performance analysis and review, and performance improvement, few charts in Category 7 show results of measurement, review, analysis and improvement, especially in the areas outlined in Figures 2.2-3 and 4.1-1. Without being able to track results for key KPIs over time, ACDS will find it difficult to achieve its mission, vision and Strategic Goals. ACDS also states that it has just begun to aggregate data above the department level.
• Although ACDS identifies comparative data sources, comparative data from outside the District is provided in only a few examples (Figures 7.1-5, 7.1-6, 7.2-2, 7.3-3 and 7.3-4) in Category 7. Effective use of comparative data by ACDS to support operational and strategic decision making and innovation is not evident. Lack of comparative measures may limit ACDS's ability to attain its vision of being best in the nation.

• It is not clear ACDS has a systematic approach to identifying opportunities for innovation. While data and information are used for decision making, few improvements are noted, and it is not evident how data and information from daily operations, comparisons with others and findings from performance reviews result in improvements or breakthrough change through innovation. Without a systematic approach, ACDS may find it difficult to reach its vision of being the best in the nation.

• It is unclear how priorities, improvements, and opportunities are deployed to all areas. Results and decisions are posted on the C3 webpage, but there are no formal processes defined for deploying these throughout organization (faculty, staff, other work groups, and functional-level operations).
4.2 Management of Information, Information Technology, and Knowledge

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 50-65 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

- Utilization of market and industry proven equipment as the basis for the organization's computer hardware helps to ensure reliability and ease of use. Additionally, ACDS maintains supplier support agreements and replaces workstations at manufacturer-specified end-of-life dates. Security is ensured through policies such as card entry systems and video surveillance for their network operations center. ACDS uses market leaders in the higher education IT industry (BANNER, Blackboard Vista, and TurnItIn) to help ensure reliability. It also ensures reliability through an IT Disaster Recovery Plan that provides for a backup facility with duplicate hardware. Support agreements with software vendors are maintained to ensure upgrades, enhancements, and code fixes are received. Extensive testing and training is performed prior to gaining user acceptance.

- ACDS is responsible for providing information, knowledge and information technology to its Colleges and other stakeholders. It recently adopted the BANNER Enterprise System to increase the depth and breadth of information readily available to Colleges and departments. The Banner Digital Campus is the world's most widely used collegiate administrative integrated suite of student, financial, finance, human resources and advancement systems. Data in this system are dynamic and used for the extraction of daily performance to ensure that data are provided to users in a timely manner. Various technologies make information accessible to employees, students, suppliers, partners, collaborators, and stakeholders. These includes ACDS's website, the Educational Services portal, BANNER, email, the Acquisitions website for suppliers, live streaming Board meetings, electronically posted meeting minutes. Students can also access eLearning Resources such as Blackboard, Discussion Boards, Softchalk, Elluminate, Respondus, Questionmark and Turn-It-In. By continuing to upgrade its technology resources and ensuring the accuracy, integrity, reliability, timeliness, security and confidentiality of its data, information and knowledge, ACDS contributes to high performance across the organization.

- ACDS applies several methods of managing and transferring organizational knowledge, including workforce knowledge; the transfer of knowledge to and from students, stakeholders, suppliers, partners and collaborators; the rapid identification, sharing and implementation of best practices; and the assembly and transfer of knowledge for strategic planning. These methods include an Educational System which provides file sharing of documented policies, processes and procedures; maintenance and user training materials; help guides; documentation; and organizational communication. Other methods include the leadership academy, cross-training, ongoing employee development initiatives, participation in a variety of cross-district teams, meetings, and website. External best practices are generally identified through environmental scanning, KPI benchmarking, and participation in national surveys such as CCSSE and PACE. The assembly and transfer of knowledge for use
in strategic planning are accomplished by the SPPS department through the environmental scanning website.

- ACDS’s Network Operations Center is secured by a card entry system and video surveillance systems. Uninterrupted Power Supplies and a backup generator assure sustainable power. The Center provides independent temperature control and fire suppression systems. A remote backup facility contains duplicative hardware and software for mission critical systems. Security for hardware and software is controlled by firewalls, spam filters, anti-virus protection and security protocols.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Several of ACDS’s systems and processes for managing information, knowledge and information technology are relatively new to the organization. While the applicant is to be commended on the selection of integration processes used to integrate the BANNER system, it is critical to continue the full implementation of the system by developing and refining measures for the continuous evaluation of the business processes that are integrated through BANNER. It is also important to ensure that the various systems that are used to manage information, knowledge and IT are integrated and provide consistent, accurate information and knowledge to all stakeholders.

- While ACDS has several approaches for identifying best practices (KPI benchmarking, environmental scanning, and participation in national surveys) it is unclear how the sharing of these best practices is deployed throughout the organization.

- It is unclear how the workforce, stakeholders and students become aware of the vast amount of information and knowledge available on the various systems. It is also unclear how or if they take advantage of the information and knowledge. In addition, ACDS could provide more explanation of how information is systematically and accurately transferred to those employees who do not have access to a computer/internet. If information and knowledge are not used for fact-based decision making, ACDS may not be able to gain consistency across institutions and may have a challenge in achieving the vision to be the best in the nation.
Category 5  Workforce Focus

5.1  Workforce Engagement

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 50-65 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

- ACDS presents a systematic Performance Management System (Figure 5.1-2) to support high performance and workforce engagement. Based on the mission, vision, Strategic Plan, Strategic Goals, Initiatives, job descriptions and general performance measures, employees and their supervisors develop annual an Individual Action Plan (IAP) that aligns employee goals to the directions of the organization and their group's action plans. These tie directly to the goal of student success and support a key factor of employee engagement. Employees are evaluated on their performance (which includes peer review) to these goals annually and develop an IAP for the coming year. The Performance Management System encourages two-way open communication and employee engagement. The IAP includes a roadmap for developing additional knowledge, skills and abilities.

- ACDS’s Training Model addresses Required Training, Leadership Development, Employee Development, Continuous Improvement, Technology and Customer Service Skills. The Training Model is developed by the Human Resources Department for leaders and workforce members based on the Strategic Plan of the organization. It addresses core competencies (current and future), strategic challenges and action plans to support the short- and long-term strategic direction of ACDS. The learning and development system demonstrates aligned, integrated approaches with some deployment.

- Identification of key factors for workforce engagement (Figure 5.1-1) was developed through focus groups that included faculty, staff, administrators and employees. The factors were then sorted to determine those that employees considered important to their engagement. The factors have been tested and revised.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- While ACDS uses an employee survey as a tool to determine effectiveness of workforce engagement and satisfaction, the instrument is not administered in regular cycles so that trends can be established, gaps recognized and improvement areas identified. The organization also reports that it participated in the Work Dynamics Top Places to Work in the area and the area Best Place to Work programs. It states that these surveys and reports allow ACDS to segment data by varying groups and segments. However, in Category 7.4, only a few questions from the 2008 survey are reported with results, and these results are not segmented by the employee groups identified in the Organizational Profile or other
Categories. The current results shown in Category 7.4 do compare the results for the entire organization and ACDS, with the results for the District consistently lower than for the overall organization. Without consistency in using this tool and without more data points, segmentation and comparisons, ACDS may fail to identify or misidentify meaningful shifts in the workforce climate.

- It is unclear how ACDS collects and uses data from different workforce groups and segments or ensures representation of diverse ideas, cultures and thinking of the workplace. This applies to how engagement factors are determined, how survey results are interpreted, how communication is analyzed and how approaches for fostering the organizational culture are deployed.

- ACDS states that it uses comparative data from a number of sources to measure its own progress toward goals. The sources for Workforce Focus are generally readily available and up-to-date. However, no examples in this Category or in Category 7 include comparisons. Without a commitment to comparisons and benchmarks, ACDS may not gain a clear and accurate picture of its progress and performance.
5.2 Workforce Environment

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 50-65 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

- ACDS has a systematic and standardized recruiting, hiring, placing and retaining process that ensures consistency in the interview and evaluation process and helps promote diversity. It is a collaborative effort between HR and the hiring unit. Interviews are conducted by a search team from the hiring unit and other units that may interface with the position, thus contributing to employee engagement. Senior leaders also interview candidates. New employees are selected based on alignment with organizational values, an attitude of service and a desire to collaborate. The first 90 days include orientation and training and conclude with an evaluation. A recent cycle of improvement includes having senior leaders interview new employees at the 90-day period to gain the employee's perception to drive performance improvements. Other systematic methods of encouraging employee retention include competitive compensation and benefits, training and education, career progression and a focus on diversity. This systematic approach to recruiting, hiring, placement and retention enables ACDS to create and enhance and organizational culture that supports its Core Values and Core Competencies to help achieve its mission, vision and Strategic Goals.

- ACDS systematically addresses workplace environmental factors to ensure and improve workforce health, safety and security. It uses a standardized safety assessment system to identify, categorize and address hazards, and the organization complies with all regulatory requirements related to safety and health. Employees are trained to identify and respond to potential hazards in their areas and empowered to address any safety issues they might witness, including reporting the issue to management or OERM. OERM tracks and reports injury and accident trends, identifies safety focus areas, and works with areas to develop best practice solutions. Security measures include access control systems at each campus, CCTV systems, emergency call stations at each campus, and 55 licensed peace officers who are deployed to the District office and each campus. Health and well being approaches include an employee assistance program, YMCA discounts, health and dental insurance, FMLA/leave benefits, sick time pool, and sick time for employees and dependents.

- The organization is challenged by its financial environment and is proactively seeking to protect itself and ensure sustainability through cross-training and retraining. It has identified both organic and non-organic means of controlling costs.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- It is not clear how ACDS takes a systematic approach to identifying, managing and changing capability and capacity needs, especially those related to Core Competencies. In addition, although ACDS provides cross-training to prepare for changing capacity and capability
needs, this cross-training does not appear to be a systematic process that identifies needs, determines frequency of training, ensures that it applies to all segments and groups, includes regular reviews and analysis, and is improved for better performance. Without a systematic approach, ACDS may not be able to maintain its ability to meet future requirements and its own sustainability.

- ACDS does not appear to have a systematic approach for reviewing, analyzing, improving and learning in relationship to workforce policies, services and benefits to ensure they represent the workforce's changing requirements. No examples of cycles of improvements are included in the Application. Without continuing evaluation of workforce policies, services and benefits, ACDS may become less competitive and experience a decline in employee engagement.

- Although ACDS states that OERM uses metrics to compare its loss data to those of comparable organizations, no results are presented in Category 7.4. Therefore, it is not clear that systematic measurements are gathered, analyzed, and used to make improvements to the safety of the workforce and students. If safety issues are not systematically identified, measured, analyzed and used for improvements, ACDS may experience tragic incidents and/or may not be able to comply with regulatory and organizational requirements.
Category 6  Process Management

6.1  Work Systems Design

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 50-65 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

• ACDS has a systematic approach to designing and innovating work systems. The Application reports at least two cycles of improvement and learning related to work systems. The process for work system design shows a systematic approach, deployment, learning and integration to deliver stakeholder value and achieve organizational success and sustainability.

• Emergency preparedness plans have been developed to address specific challenges at each location.

• ACDS identifies key requirements for work processes through the listening and learning methods shown in Figure 3.1-2. Processes are determined to be "key" based on their importance to 1) meeting College or other stakeholder requirements, 2) organizational financial viability, 3) the overall success of the organization and 4) long-term sustainability. Work systems and processes support the five Colleges. Inputs may come from stakeholders, benchmarked best practices or performance/efficiency improvement initiatives. The decision for in-house/outsourced provision is based on alignment with the organization's core competencies, and non-critical processes may be outsourced to provide cost savings.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

• While ACDS maintains a disaster planning process, it is not clear how well the plan is effectively deployed or communicated with the workforce. Furthermore, it is not clear if ACDS participates in mock disaster drills to help ensure work systems and workplace preparedness for emergencies and disasters are effective. Lack of preparedness can potentially impact the ability to execute the plan requirements to prevent, manage and recover from a disaster.

• ACDS provides comprehensive stakeholder requirements related to specific processes in Figure 6.1-2. However, these do not always directly relate to the highly generalized customer and stakeholder requirements listed in Figure P.1-3. Consistent requirements ensure alignment so that the organization fully understands stakeholder expectations.

• It is not clear if the work process design model is deployed to all locations and work sections and to what extent various levels of employees are involved. In addition, it is not clear how information on student segments and individual students are used in the design of key work processes to engage all students in active learning.
6.2 Work Process Management and Improvement

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 50-65 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

- Work processes are designed and innovated using one of three methods: FOCUS PDA methodology (Figure 6.2-1), Work Process Design process (Figure 6.1-1) or the Business Process Analysis (BPA) efficiency evaluation. FOCUS PDCA and the Work Process Design are aligned providing for continuity between improvement and design of new systems/processes. To ensure work processes are meeting design requirements, they are managed using performance measures, early on and throughout the process lifecycle. Input from stakeholders and customers are obtained to create customer requirements and key performance measures.

- ACDS outlines various methods it uses to identify opportunities for process improvement, including ongoing review of process performance, complaints and suggestions from stakeholders, ethics hotline reports, and self assessments through the TAPE Application and the Baldrige Criteria. In addition, it identifies opportunities through the BPA approach that include process mapping and improvement. Once opportunities for improvement are identified, the organization uses the FOCUS PDCA methodology for process improvements (Figure 6.2-1). All employees are trained in this methodology. Once a process is improved and tested to meet requirements, learning is shared with other organizational units through various internal communication methods and through participation in cross-functional, cross-district teams.

- Work processes are designed, piloted and tested before implementation to ensure they meet requirements, and systematic methods to manage and conduct processes (forms/computer screens) reduce variability to help ensure the process meets the original design. Stakeholder input is used to manage the processes. Deviations from expected results lead to the initiation of improvement activities.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Although ACDS discusses the FOCUS PDCA methodology and its commitment to continuous improvement, only anecdotal information of improvements was provided and no evidence of learning and innovation from use of process improvement methodologies was included. Few examples are provided in the various process Categories, and few data are shown in the Results Category. Without systematically implementing improvement efforts and measuring results, it will be difficult for ACDS to evaluate its progress and its achievement of its mission, vision and Strategic Goals.

- It is not clear how ACDS incorporates new technology, cycle time, and other efficiency and effectiveness factors into its process design model. This may adversely impact the District’s ability to effectively address its strategic challenges in the areas of technology, quality and effectiveness.
Category 7  Results

7.1  Product and Service Outcomes

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 10-25 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

- ACDS has favorable trends in the percentage of students receiving financial aid during the time period 2007 to 2009. Overall and across each College, the number of recipients increased by approximately 5% (Figure 7.1-3). Additionally, the average amount of financial aid per student has increased by $1,000 over the five year period 2006 to 2010 (Figure 7.1-4). Providing increased financial assistance to support higher education supports ACDS’s core competency and mission of empowering students to succeed.

- ACDS has good performance levels and compares favorably on average class size and faculty-to-student ratio. For example, average class size in 2009 for Alamo Colleges was approximately 23, which is within the limits for the public benchmark of a very large community college (Figure 7.1-6). Alamo Colleges’ faculty-to-student ratio is 23:1 compared to 27:1 at a competitive community college system (Figure 7.1-7).

- The organization has established targets for the number of degrees and certificates awarded. Figure 7.1-5 shows the high-level outcomes of the Colleges’ success in helping students meet their educational goals.

- ACDS reports favorable data related to the HR services it provides to the Colleges (Figure 7.1-1), one of the primary services it provides to the Colleges. The six questions reflect key customer requirements. In 2009, ACDS placed HR generalists on the five College campuses. Overall, satisfaction increased from 2009 to 2010 in each of the key requirement areas.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Results reported in 7.1 provide no basis to evaluate results of student success. Current levels and trends of key measures or indicators of student learning and improvement in student learning compared to competitors and other appropriate student and market segments, are not evident. Figure 7.1.5 shows the Colleges’ success rates in meeting educational goals in terms of degrees, but not in how student performance compares to competitors. Only one of the four measures provides comparative data, and ACDS is performing below the comparison. The only point of comparison is 2009. Understanding performance relative to high performing organizations may allow the applicant to assess its vision of being the best in the nation.
• HR Services Success (Figure 7.1-2) is not benchmarked against a comparable organization to demonstrate whether measures are relevant and/or whether the results are comparable to other best-in-class organizations.

• Item 7.1 only includes a few results of ACDS’s products and services. Those that are included only reflect one or two of the measures and strategies related to Strategic Goals (Figure 2.2-3), stakeholder requirements (Figure 6.1-2), or process measures (Figure 6.1-2). The results presented are only integrated with one or two of the measures and strategies listed for Strategic Goals in Figure 2.2-3 2010 Strategy Alignment Matrix.
7.2 Customer-Focused Outcomes

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 10-25 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

- ACDS demonstrates results of relationship building with a 168.5% increase in Donations (Figure 7.2-3) from 2007 to 2009. It links this increase to mechanisms in place to build relationship with stakeholders, including current and potential donors, which relate to core competencies 1 and 6. With severe cutbacks in state appropriations, the increase in donations provides a source of income that is necessary for success and sustainability.

- College Satisfaction with HR Services (Figure 7.2-1) shows overall satisfaction improved by approximately one point from 2009 to 2010. During that two year period, satisfaction increased at four of the five College campuses. Three Colleges reported an increased satisfaction of approximately 3 points while a fourth experienced a minimal increase. One College experienced a slight decrease in satisfaction. ACDS reports that corrective action has been taken and that satisfaction rates have improved dramatically (although the improved results are not reported).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Few results are reported in item 7.2a(1) to support customer/stakeholder satisfaction. ACDS only reports two results for customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction. In Category 3, ACDS identifies multiple methods of obtaining customer satisfaction and complaint results, however the results are not provided. ACDS identified the services it provides to the five Colleges and students as IT, HR, purchasing, marketing, communication, legal, facilities, financial aid, bursar, and security. However, satisfaction data was only provided for HR services. Without customer satisfaction data, ACDS may find it difficult to determine how well it is meeting the needs of stakeholders.

- There is limited evidence or data reported to support measures/indicators of stakeholder relationship building and engagement. Without systematically measuring, analyzing, evaluating and improving satisfaction, ACDS may be blindsided by issues of client loyalty and willingness to continue using programs and services.

- Although ACDS reports 29 competitors and identifies comparative data sources, the results in 7.2a contain no comparisons for customer satisfaction with competitors and other organizations providing similar programs, offerings and services. Without comparative data it is difficult to assess how well the organization is performing compared to the best in the nation.
Results reported in Item 7.2 include no segmentation by student and stakeholder groups. Without understanding the perceptions of the various groups, ACDS may not be able to focus on expanding satisfaction, engagement and relationships among segments that are positive and improving satisfaction, engagement and relationships on groups that are not as positive.
7.3 Financial and Market Outcomes

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 10-25 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

- ACDS reports a favorable trend in contact hours over a four year period and exceeds the established 2009 target by approximately 5% (Figure 7.3-2). Contact hours provide the basis for funding from the state, so an increase in hours relates to an increase in funding in addition to an increase in tuition and fees. This increase in contact hours and the associated funding addresses the Strategic Challenge of decreasing state education funding.

- Figure 7.3-4 demonstrates that after remaining flat for the previous three years, the percentage of available population in the service area that participate at one of the Alamo Colleges has increased, with a measure approaching the state best and above target for 2009.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Although ACDS provides budgetary and financial reports (Figures 7.3-1 and 7.3-2), the data offer no picture of overall current levels and trends in key measures of budgetary and financial performance. Additionally, aggregate measures of cost containment or financial viability are not present. At any period, an organization must have a firm grasp on its financial performance in order to sustain its viability. This becomes even more critical during a time of economic concerns and state cutbacks.

- Trend data of state appropriations and ACDS's expense budget (Figure 7.3-1) demonstrates an increasing gap in funding. Information regarding the organization's additional sources of funding is not reported, so a final gap cannot be determined. This gap presents a challenge to long term sustainability, of offering financial aid, and increasing the number of students ACDS wishes to enroll.

- Although Alamo Colleges' overall student headcount has increased 16% in the last year, the market share demonstrates unfavorable trends. Alamo Colleges' local market share has consistently decreased from approximately 8.65% in 2005 to 8.47% in 2009. Similarly, the Texas market share for Alamo Colleges has decreased from approximately 8.95% in 2005 to 8.75% in 2009. This unfavorable trend may present a challenge and impact ACDS's core competency of capturing market share in selected markets.

- The number of students is increasing, while state funding is decreasing. In a down economy tax revenues would decline and the ability to increase tuition and fees becomes limited. It is not clear how ACDS has been able to improve its financial position in terms of instructional and/or G&A expenditures per student or as a percentage of total budget, or how much of the shortfall has been supplemented by cost avoidance/savings measures implemented as part of...
its improvement programs. This could negatively impact the ability to maintain smaller student-teacher ratios or increase the number of product/class offerings.
7.4 Workforce-Focused Outcomes

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 10-25 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

- Figure 7.4-5 shows the number and diversity of participants in the nine-month leadership development program for the District. Between 24 and 30 leaders and potential leaders are selected each year to participate. This Figure indicates that the number of participants has been fairly consistent from 2008 through 2011 Fiscal Years, and the ethnic diversity of attendees from 2007 through 2010 is approximately balanced with the ethnic diversity of the organization. This formalized leadership development program helps ensure the availability of future leaders and the sustainability of the organization.

- Figure 7.4-7, Tuition Assistance Use, shows employee participation in this program has increased from 108 in FY2004-05 to 245 in FY2008-09. This positive trend and current levels support the workforce engagement factor of ample training and development and the core values related to culture of learning and continuous learning. It indicates that employees are committed to continuing their learning and education, potentially increasing their opportunities for advancement.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Many results requested in 7.4 are not included in the Application. These include measures of workforce climate (health, safety, security, benefits and services), measures of workforce performance, and measures of workforce capability and capacity. Without these results, ACDS may find it difficult to assess the effectiveness of its approaches that address its key strategic challenges.

- Figures in 7.4a(1), Engagement and Satisfaction, show the results on a 2008 Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) survey, with no trend data. Only 30.8% of employees of the entire system completed and returned the survey. In all charts indicating the results from both the overall organization and ACDS, ACDS shows lower rankings to each question. This is evident in results of questions overall, as well as those related to Engagement and Satisfaction. No explanation is provided for these differences, and ACDS gives no indication of when another survey may be conducted. The results are not segmented by the employee groups shown in Figure P.1-2 (Employee Demographics) or by diversity. Additionally, with less than one-third responding, it is possible that that the key drivers and measures of satisfaction/engagement are not representative of the overall organization. The organization has identified employee engagement as a core competency.

- ACDS includes no indication that it researches and uses comparative data for its workforce focused outcomes. Although it includes many available sources for comparison in P2a(3), no
results in 7.4 include comparisons. Without comparing itself to other organizations, ACDS may find it difficult to target improvements and determine if it is reaching its vision of being the best in the nation.

- Although information in Figure 7.4-7 is segmented by degree, it is not segmented by other aspects shown in the Employee Demographics (Figure P.1-2). ACDS identifies four key workforce segments: gender, job type, job site, and race. The workforce results do not provide any segmentation by employee group. For example, employee engagement, work environment, and feedback and development are not segmented. By not analyzing these results by employee type, ACDS may miss differences among employees that could be significant and limit its ability to identify opportunities for improvement.
7.5 Process Effectiveness Outcomes

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 10-25 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

- Figure 7.5-4, Help Desk Calls, shows metrics for the IT Help Desk during the week of September 18, 2010. These metrics show that the actual response time to answer calls and average call length were better than the target measures.

- Figure 7.3-3, College Headcount, demonstrates an increase in enrollment, which is identified as key measure of the impact of work systems.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Key measures on key work process performance are not provided for most of the processes and measures outlined in Figure 2.2-3, 2010 Strategy Alignment Matrix, and Figure 6.1-2, Key Work Systems Matrix and Sample of Work Processes. Without complete and accurate measures and outcomes for Strategic Goals, Key Work Systems and Key Processes, ACDS may be placing its success and sustainability at risk.

- The measures provided in section 7.5 did not meet the criteria requirements. ACDS provides little or no data related to productivity, cycle time, and other appropriate measures of process effectiveness, efficiency and innovation.
  - Figure 7.5-1 shows changes in personnel expense from 2006 to 2008, and more current data is not available. Although personnel expense has declined 0.1% in two years, it is not clear that this demonstrates process efficiency, or the ability to do more with less people.
  - Figure 7.5.2, Invoice Processing, is an activity measure and does not reflect the customer requirement of timely and accurate invoice payment.
  - Figure 7.5-3 Direct Pay Defects, cannot be evaluated since no level, trend or comparison was provided to assess the effectiveness of payment process.
  - Figure 7.5-4 provides activity statistics which do not show effectiveness and are only for a one week period. The Help Desk Metrics cannot be evaluated since no level, trend or comparative data was provided, and the data only covers a one-week time period.
  - Figure 7.5-5, IT Effectiveness and Safety, does not evaluate the effectiveness of the process or operational improvement.
  - Figure 7.5-6 PR/Marketing/Communication Results shows activities with no measureable targets or results to evaluate the operational process or improvements. It does not address the following items mentioned in the Application: suggestion program, efficiency of HR processes since they were centralized, improvement in cycle time.
Without such measures to gauge the performance of its work systems, ACDS may miss the opportunity to improve them through the FOCUS PDCA approach.

- No comparative data are provided for results in 7.5. Understanding performance relative to high performing organizations may allow the applicant to become more innovative and efficient with its work processes in order to move toward its vision of being the best, address its strategic challenge of reduced funding and provide consistency across individual institutions.

- No key measures/indicators for workplace preparedness for disasters or emergencies are included as required by the Criteria. Although the organization has developed disaster recovery plans, it is not clear that these plans have been tested to demonstrate workplace preparedness for disasters or emergencies. A lack of preparedness can potentially impact ACDS’s ability to execute the plan requirements to prevent, manage and recover from a disaster.
7.6 Leadership Outcomes

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 10-25 percent range. (Please refer to the attached “Scoring Guidelines”.)

STRENGTHS

- ACDS is committed to ethical actions and building a culture of trust and respect, combined with responsibility for actions. Ethics training has been in place since 2006. Figure 7.6-4 shows the number of Ethics reports has declined since 2007, and recurring ethics training has exceeded 96% of employees.

- ACDS has established goals of 100% compliance with federal, state and local regulatory requirements. Figure 7.6-3 reports legal fees for the past four years show a declining trend. According to ACDS, as the level of compliance improves, the expenditure risk declines.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Based on the way results are provided in 7.6, Leadership Outcomes, it is difficult to determine whether or not ACDS shows evidence of Strategic Plan accomplishments, fiscal accountability, legal compliance, ethical behavior, societal responsibility and support of key communities. For example, the only objectives displayed are for the HR plan, not the Strategic Plan. Of these, most objectives for 2009 and 2010 are not complete. No explanation is provided for the incomplete progress on meeting objectives for the two years. Figure 7.6-2 shows the results of internal audits by listing the number of recommendations ACDS received. Again, no explanation is provided as to the severity of these recommendations, and no comparisons are provided to place the number in perspective. The same problem occurs with data in Figure 7.6-4, Ethics Hotline and Training. In Figure 7.6-5, in the results of the PACE survey, ACDS falls behind the overall results with no explanation of issues, segments or other reasons for this disparity.

The organization has established individual department action plans. Not all action plans have been presented, and projected completions are not presented. It is not clear how unmet action items are carried forward, re-evaluated or prioritized for the upcoming Strategic Plan.

- Societal and community responsibility results show some trended improvement, despite variation. The percentage of donors increased from 13% FY06-07 to 18% in FY08-09 and dropped again in FY09-10. We might assume economy had an impact, but ACDS did not provide a reason. The number of dollars raised to support key communities increased from $24K in FY06-07 to $33K in FY08-09 and dropped to FY09-10 to 24K, with no reason provided for the decline. No comparative data are provided to assess level of participation by employees.

- Figure 7.6-5 represents employee opinions on Confidence in Leadership. These results represent employee opinions; not stakeholders. Relationship development and community
partnerships are considered a core competency and strategic advantage, yet these are not measured. There are no comparisons to external sources (e.g., similar community colleges) and no trends over time to see if this is improving or declining.

- Results of performance for the regulatory measures listed in Figure 1.2-2 are not reported in 7.6. Instead, ACDS reports on a favorable decrease in litigation fees. In FY2007 ACDS was paying $420K annually, and in FY2010 applicant paid $215K in litigation fees. ACDS has experienced an inconsistent level in the amount of general legal fees it pays. In 2007, it paid $100K in general legal fees, and in 2010, ACDS paid $135K in general legal fees.

- It is not clear how many of the recommendations made as a result of internal audits have been determined to be actionable and what percentage of the audit items have been completed. Figure 7.6-2 presents the internal audits which have been completed. No audit activity is reported in 2009, and there have been no repeat audits of the same area. Without comparison data on performance over time it is difficult to evaluate organizational learning in relation to internal audits. Without information on the percent of completion, it is difficult to determine if adequate resources have been assigned or if additional support is required.

- ACDS utilizes relationships with legislative contacts to impact the community according to Figure 7.6-7. ACDS played a key role in legislative passage of a dual-credit program available at no cost to students. There are currently 91,000 dual-credit students in Texas, 8,200 of which are enrolled through Alamo Colleges (the highest in the state). However, there are no trends, levels, or comparisons presented for the changes in dual-credit students or the success of other legislative activities.
APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Your application was evaluated against the Award Level criteria of the Texas Award for Performance Excellence. This report, which contains the findings of the Board of Examiners, is based upon the information contained in the written application. It includes background information on the examination process, a summary of the scoring for your organization, and a detailed listing of strengths and opportunities for improvement.

The application review process began with the first stage review, in which a team of seven examiners was assigned to each of the applications that met the requirements for evaluation. Assignments were made based on the examiners' areas of expertise while avoiding potential conflicts of interest. Each application was independently evaluated using a scoring system that was developed for the award program, and which was reviewed and put into practice using case studies in examiner preparation courses. Every examiner scored all items.

In the second-stage review, the examination team developed a consensus score for each item and an aggregated list of comments. A team leader directed the consensus process to ensure the resolution of any scoring differences. The team proceeded with preparation of the Feedback Report based on the findings during the Consensus process.

The draft feedback report is submitted to Quality Texas for review by an experienced Editing Team to ensure clarity of the report. The report is then reviewed by the QTF Director of Operations before distribution to the applicant.

The applicant is invited to request a meeting with a representative of Quality Texas for additional support in interpretation of the Feedback Report.

The applicant is asked to provide feedback on the process and the usefulness of the Feedback Report through an on-line survey to assist Quality Texas in improving the overall award process and to increase the value of the Feedback Report to the applicant organization.
### Scoring Band Descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band Number</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-250</td>
<td>Early stages of developing and implementing approaches to Category requirements. Important gaps exist in most Categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251-350</td>
<td>Beginning of a systematic approach responsive to the basic purposes of the Items, but major gaps exist in approach and deployment in some Categories. Early stages of obtaining results stemming from approaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>351-450</td>
<td>A systematic approach responsive to the basic purposes of most Items, but deployment in some key Areas to Address is still too early to demonstrate results. Early improvement trends in areas of importance to key organizational requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>451-550</td>
<td>Effective approaches to many Areas to Address, but deployment may vary in some areas or work units. Fact-based evaluation and improvement occur responsive to the basic purposes of the Item. Results address key customer/stakeholder and process requirements, and demonstrate some areas of strength and/or good performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>551-650</td>
<td>A sound, systematic approach responsive to many of the Areas to Address, with a fact-based evaluation and improvement process in place in key Areas. No major gaps in deployment, and a commitment exists to organizational learning and sharing. Improvement trends and/or good performance reported for most areas of importance. Results address most key customer/stakeholder and process requirements and demonstrate areas of strength.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>651-750</td>
<td>Refined approaches, including key measures, good deployment, and very good results in most Areas. Organizational alignment, learning, and sharing are key management tools. Some outstanding activities and results that address customer/stakeholder, process, and action plan requirements. May be &quot;industry&quot; leader in some Areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>751-875</td>
<td>Refined approaches, excellent deployment, and good to excellent performance improvement levels demonstrated in most Areas. Good to excellent integration and alignment, with organizational analysis, learning, and sharing of best practices as key management strategies. &quot;Industry&quot; leadership and some benchmark leadership demonstrated in results that address most key customer/stakeholder, process, and action plan requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>876-1000</td>
<td>Outstanding approaches, full deployment, excellent and sustained performance results. Excellent integration and alignment, with pervasive organizational analysis, learning, and sharing of best practices. National and world leadership in results that fully address key customer/stakeholder, process, and action plan requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Process (for use with Categories 1–6 Items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 0% or 5% | No systematic approach is evident; information is anecdotal.  
Little or no deployment of an approach is evident.  
An improvement orientation is not evident; improvement is achieved through reacting to problems.  
No organizational alignment is evident; individual areas or work units operate independently. |
| 10%, 15%, 20% or 25% | The beginning of a systematic approach to the basic requirements of the Item is evident.  
The approach is in the early stages of deployment in most areas or work units, inhibiting progress in achieving the basic requirements of the Item.  
Early stages of a transition from reacting to problems to a general improvement orientation are evident.  
The approach is aligned with other areas or work units largely through joint problem solving. |
| 30%, 35%, 40% or 45% | An effective, systematic approach, responsive to the basic requirements of the Item, is evident.  
The approach is deployed, although some areas or work units are in early stages of deployment.  
The beginning of a systematic approach to evaluation and improvement of key processes is evident.  
The approach is in early stages of alignment with basic organizational needs identified in response to the Organizational Profile and other Process Items. |
| 50%, 55%, 60% or 65% | An effective, systematic approach, responsive to the overall requirements of the Item, is evident.  
The approach is well deployed, although deployment may vary in some areas or work units.  
A fact-based, systematic evaluation and improvement process and some organizational learning are in place for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of key processes.  
The approach is aligned with organizational needs identified in response to the Organizational Profile and other Process Items. |
| 70%, 75%, 80% or 85% | An effective, systematic approach, responsive to the multiple requirements of the Item, is evident.  
The approach is well deployed, with no significant gaps.  
Fact-based, systematic evaluation and improvement and organizational learning are key management tools; there is clear evidence of refinement and innovation as a result of organizational-level analysis and sharing.  
The approach is integrated with organizational needs identified in response to the Organizational Profile and other Process Items. |
| 90%, 95% or 100% | An effective, systematic approach, fully responsive to the multiple requirements of the Item, is evident.  
The approach is fully deployed without significant weaknesses or gaps in any areas or work units.  
Fact-based, systematic evaluation and improvement and organizational learning are key organization-wide tools; refinement and innovation, backed by analysis and sharing, are evident throughout the organization.  
The approach is well integrated with organizational needs identified in response to the Organizational Profile and other Process Items. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Results (for use with Category 7 Items)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0% or 5%</td>
<td>There are no organizational performance results or poor results in areas reported. Trend data either are not reported or show mainly adverse trends. Comparative information is not reported. Results are not reported for any areas of importance to the organization’s key mission or business requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%, 15%, 20% or 25%</td>
<td>A few organizational performance results are reported; there are some improvements and/or early good performance levels in a few areas. Little or no trend data are reported, or many of the trends shown are adverse. Little or no comparative information is reported. Results are reported for a few areas of importance to your organization’s key mission or business requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%, 35%, 40% or 45%</td>
<td>Improvements and/or good performance levels are reported in many areas addressed in the Item requirements. Early stages of developing trends are evident. Early stages of obtaining comparative information are evident. Results are reported for many areas of importance to your organization’s key mission or business requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%, 55%, 60% or 65%</td>
<td>Improvement trends and/or good performance levels are reported for most areas addressed in the Item requirements. No pattern of adverse trends and no poor performance levels are evident in areas of importance to your organization’s key mission or business requirements. Some trends and/or current performance levels, evaluated against relevant comparisons and/or benchmarks, show areas of good to very good relative performance. Organizational performance results address most key customer, market, and process requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70%, 75%, 80% or 85%</td>
<td>Current performance levels are good to excellent in most areas of importance to the Item requirements. Most improvement trends and/or current performance levels have been sustained over time. Many to most reported trends and/or current performance levels, evaluated against relevant comparisons and/or benchmarks, show areas of leadership and very good relative performance. Organizational performance results address most key customer, market, process, and action plan requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90%, 95% or 100%</td>
<td>Current performance levels are excellent in most areas of importance to the Item requirements. Excellent improvement trends and/or sustained excellent performance levels are reported in most areas. Evidence of industry and benchmark leadership is demonstrated in many areas. Organizational performance results fully address key customer, market, process, and action plan requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>