Standard 4: Governance and Decision-Making - Draft #3 (as of April 11, 2025)
The institution engages in clear and effective governance practices that support the achievement of its mission. Governance roles and responsibilities are delineated in widely distributed policies, and institutional decision-making processes provide opportunities for meaningful participation and inclusion of relevant stakeholders.

<mark>Suggested length for Standard 4 is no more than 12 pages.</mark>

4.1. The institution upholds an explicit commitment to principles of academic freedom, academic integrity, and freedom of inquiry. (ER 13)

Academic Freedom is a cornerstone of the College. We follow [Board Policy 6.35](#) and [procedures.](#) According to the [SMCCCD statement on academic freedom](#), "The District's faculty have the right to express their informed opinions which relate, directly or indirectly, to their professional activities, whether these opinions are expressed in the classroom, elsewhere on campus or at college-related functions. In a search for truth and in a context of reasoned academic debate, students also have the right to express their opinions and to question those presented by others."

The College also has an [Academic Integrity Policy](#) that was updated in [Fall 2018](#). This policy defines forms of academic dishonesty that include, but are not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, multiple submissions, or facilitating academic dishonesty. As members of the college community, students at Cañada are expected to demonstrate integrity in all academic endeavors. Students are evaluated on their own merits, so they should protect academic integrity at Cañada College and be proud of their achievements.

General principles of academic integrity include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others and to avoid using another's work as one's own. Faculty, with the full support of the College, have the right to take standards of academic integrity into account when assigning grades. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles.

Any act which gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage or which compromises the integrity of the academic standards of the college may be considered an act of academic dishonesty.

The college's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) is communicated to students through the [college website](#) and [the College Catalog](#). Faculty are required to include [course policies](#) on their syllabus.

Consequences for violating the Academic Integrity policy are outlined in the [College Catalog](#). There is also an [Academic Integrity Violation Form](#). Issues of academic integrity violation go to the Vice President of Student Services.

To address the issues that artificial intelligence has brought to academic integrity, the District Teaching and Learning Committee created guidance around plagiarism and artificial intelligence. The District Academic Senate approved and adopted this guidance at their December 9, 2024 meeting and created a new, district website with the guidance, useful tools, and other resources for faculty. The Faculty Teaching and Learning Center & Lounge (FTLCL) has sponsored numerous trainings on related topics, including "How NOT to be an Accidental Pirate" by Doniella Maher.

The English as a Second Language (ESL) Department identified an ongoing issue with students not understanding plagiarism in the context of academic norms at an American college. They worked with the Library to integrate lessons on plagiarism and citation into information literacy sessions for those courses and the Library created Canvas modules for ESL classes.

At the College's January 10, 2025 Flex Day, Academic Senate Leaders and the Director of Equity gave a session entitled Free Speech, Academic Freedom, Bullying, and Many Other Kinds of Speech in our Canada Community to remind faculty and staff of their rights, address concerns about explain the difference between bullying and free speech, among other topics surrounding freedom of inquiry. This Flex Day session was followed by a survey that allowed the college community to provide feedback on the topic. The Academic Senate passed a resolution on upholding academic freedom as well as supporting student mental health and affirming ASCC's statement of solidarity with the people of Palestine. They drafted another resolution in 2025 to work with AFT 1493 to negotiate having Academic Freedom as part of the faculty contract.

4.2. **Roles, responsibilities, and authority for decision-making are clearly defined and communicated throughout the institution. The institution's structure for decision-making provides opportunities for stakeholder participation and ensures the inclusion of relevant perspectives.**

Board Policy 2510 describes the governance and decision-making bodies and their respective roles and responsibilities for the District and the College, per Title 5 Sections 53200-53206, 51023.5, and 51023.7 as well as Education Code Sections 70901.2 and 70902 (b)(7).

Cañada's online Participatory Governance Manual further defines the roles, responsibilities, and authority for decision-making at the college. Included in this Manual is the college's Compendium of Participatory Governance Bodies which describes all college council, senate, and committee charges, membership, and bylaws. The relationship between these various bodies and the way they work together to make recommendations to the college president is communicated to campus constituencies in several ways each year. First, the Planning and Budgeting Council (PBC) organizes and conducts a Participatory Governance Orientation open to all. An invitation to the Orientation is published in the President's Weekly Update and all Council, Senate, and Committee Co-Chairs invite all of their members. It is required for all members of the PBC. The Orientation presentation is then posted on the PBC website and linked to the Participatory Governance Manual home page.

Second, the college's participatory governance and decision-making structure is also communicated to new faculty as part of the new faculty orientation. Third, the Classified Senate, working closely with CSEA, helps communicate opportunities for participation to classified staff and makes appointments to Councils and Committees in consultation with CSEA.

Each of the college's Planning Councils, Senates, and Committees maintain their own websites (for example, see the PBC, EAPC, Academic Senate, Classified Senate, and Student Senate websites) where they regularly post their roles and responsibilities in college decision-making as well as their meeting agendas and minutes, detailing any recommendations they make. The Planning and Budgeting Council Bylaws, for example, detail how it provides an opportunity for all groups on campus to participate in developing recommendations and priorities for the college on various matters, including: (1) advising and making recommendations to the President on matters pertaining to accreditation; (2) the program review process; (3) prioritizing expenditures to advance the College goals; and (4) college-wide planning.

At Cañada, institutional constituency groups work together in various Councils and Committees to make decisions. For example, (1) the Instructional Planning Council members work closely with the Academic Senate and its Division representatives to determine faculty reassignments each year; (2) the Planning & Budget Council works closely with both the Academic and Classified Senates to publicize and prioritize requests for new positions each year; and (3) the Academic and Classified Senates, Instructional Planning Council, and Student Services Planning Council collaborate closely via the PBC Program Review Subcommittee to help coordinate and support an effective program review process each year across instructional, administrative, and student services programs.

Each of these processes is evaluated periodically to assess its efficacy and the degree to which each constituency group is engaged meaningfully. For example, the PBC Program Review Subcommittee conducts an annual feedback survey to assess the efficacy of that year's program review processes. Survey results are disaggregated by constituency groups and discussed by PBC, IPC, SSPC, as well as Academic and Classified Senates where improvements might be implemented.

4.3. The institution's decision-making structures are used consistently and effectively. Institutional decision-making practices support a climate of collaboration and innovation that advances the mission and prioritizes equitable student outcomes.

To ensure the college's decision-making structures are used effectively, the Planning and Budgeting Council works in collaboration with the Office of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness (PRIE) to evaluate how well the College's participatory governance processes are working each year. As described in their bylaws, PBC is responsible for

developing an evaluation tool (survey instrument, or other) to ensure continuous quality improvement in broad-based participation and collective decision-making. In the fall of each year, the Dean of PRIE or designee presents the results of the evaluation to the PBC and shares the results broadly with all college constituents for discussion, deliberation, and possible action.

The college decision-making structures are also evaluated and changed as a result of other college-wide reflection and analysis. In May 2022, as a result of the College's 2021 Internal Equity Audit, the PBC recommended to the President the creation of a new Equity and Antiracism Planning Council (EAPC) to disrupt and dismantle systemic racism and White supremacy for our college community in pursuit of equity, antiracism, justice and liberation. In December, 2022, the PBC adopted bylaws for the new EAPC.

In the proposed bylaws, the decision about whether the EAPC would report to PBC or report directly to the College President was debated. To accommodate different views, the PBC recommended to the President that the EAPC reporting structure be in place as a pilot for one year and then evaluated. In 2024, the College's Participatory Governance Evaluation evaluated the pilot reporting structure for EAPC. On May 1, 2024, PBC reviewed the results of the evaluation which strongly supported ending the pilot and took action to make the new reporting structure permanent. On May 24, 2024, PBC adopted revised bylaws for itself, which reflected the creation of EAPC and modified PBC's roles and responsibilities accordingly.

The decision-making processes followed by the Academic Senate's Curriculum Committee are described in the college's Curriculum Handbook. The Curriculum Committee meets, reviews proposals, and, due to the technical review work described above, in most cases, approves them. After the Committee approves curricula, the college's Curriculum Specialist submits curricular updates to the Board of Trustees' consent agenda for final approval, as referenced in the Board of Trustees' Policies and Procedures Chapter 6 ("Educational Program"). The Board of Trustees approves curriculum at the Board of Trustees Regular Meeting held on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

The college's culture of collaboration and shared decision-making is perhaps best represented at the annual Leadership Retreat. As part of Cañada College's annual planning cycle, student, faculty, classified staff, and administrative leaders convene just before the start of each academic year to determine the strategic priority projects on which they will collectively focus during the coming year. They review the progress the college has made to date on its Educational Master Plan and identify those areas of strategic importance for the year ahead. These priorities are presented to the college on flex day and to PBC at its first meeting of the year for adoption and monitoring. This "annual plan" is posted on the college planning website and those responsible for leading "EMP priority projects" are identified on the Cañada Collaborates website.

One of the best sources of innovation at Cañada are our students. Each year, Associated

Students of Cañada College (ASCC) leaders share their annual priorities at the college's annual Leadership Retreat. In recent years, they have spear-headed efforts to create a land and labor acknowledgement statement for the college, launch a Cultural Center, and build a Childcare Center on campus. Many of these ideas have made their way into the College's Educational Master Plan. The first two of these initiatives have become reality at Cañada. The road to the creation of a Childcare Center has been a long one, starting on October 5, 2022, when the PBC, at the suggestion of the Student Senate and PTK honors program, proposed the formation of a Childcare Center Task Force (to be composed of students, faculty, staff, and administrators) to determine the feasibility of creating a Childcare Center on campus. On April 19, 2023, the Childcare Task Force made its recommendations to PBC and the College President. On May 10, 2023, the Board of Trustees reviewed the Task Force's recommendations, expressed their support, and on May 24, 2023, the Board approved a resolution in support of the college applying for additional funding to finance the construction of the Center. As of February 5, 2025, the Childcare Center Task Force informed PBC that construction of the Center should be complete in 2026.

- What else?
    - Decision to grow our evening college?
    - Decision to strengthen outreach in EPA?
    - CDC?
    - ADD the PIV process and tell that story here

4.4. Acting through policy, the governing board takes responsibility for the overall quality and stability of the institution, and regularly monitors progress towards its goals and fiscal health.
(ER 7)

Board Policies

The SMCCCD Board of Trustees (Board) is an independent, policy-making body elected by the citizens of San Mateo County and charged by California Education Code, Section 70902, with responsibility for establishing academic standards, approving courses of instruction and educational programs, and determining and controlling the operating and capital budgets of the District. The Board's policies are publicly posted on the District's website and reviewed regularly for accuracy, currency and relevance per Board Policy 2410.

Board Policy 2200 outlines the duties and responsibilities of the Board, including oversight of educational quality, integrity, legal matters, financial stability, and for ensuring that the District's mission is implemented. The Board generally meets once per month, with the

addition of occasional "study session" meetings that allow the Board to more thoroughly review and discuss topics, generally those relating to student success, and become more familiar with issues facing students, faculty and staff. The Board also holds a public annual retreat meeting for in-depth discussion of the most far-reaching matters and initiatives under consideration by the District. Board Policy 2310 describes the regular meetings of the Board and the schedule of Board meetings is posted on the Board's website. These practices are also detailed in the Board of Trustees Handbook.

The District mission of providing a breadth of high-quality educational opportunities, programs and services is set forth in Board Policy 1200. The Board has approved policies, set priorities, and established goals that describe the Board of Trustees expectations for quality, equity, integrity, and improvement of the District administration, and of student learning programs and services at the colleges. The Board ensures the District mission is at the heart of the planning process through its role in guiding the development of the SMCCCD Strategic Plan, as described in this fall 2024 Board Report regarding District Strategic Plan Development. This is also part of Board Policy 2.75 on Institutional Planning and Effectiveness.

Key Indicators

The Board ensures fulfillment of its mission by holding the District Chancellor accountable for implementing the District Strategic Plan along with a set of annual Board goals and priorities, and by monitoring key indicators of student learning and achievement. The District's Administrative Procedure 2.75.1 on Institutional Planning and Effectiveness describes this. The Board tracks progress toward student outcome metrics via the SMCCCD Strategic Plan Metrics Tableau Dashboard, which includes 5-year trends on key metrics such as course success rates, persistence rates, enrollment and completion of transfer-level math and English, unit accumulation, graduation rates, time to graduation, and transfer to 4-year college rates, all disaggregated by gender, race-ethnicity, and other student demographics. HOLD for May 2024

In addition to District planning and metrics, the Board reviews and approves College plans, including Cañada'a Education Master Plan and the Student Equity Plan which detail goals and strategies for improving academic quality and equitable student outcomes. College-level outcome metrics are presented to the board along with these plans and are available for review at any time through various publicly accessible Cañada College Tableau Dashboards.

Financial Stability & Information

The Board of Trustees' role and responsibility in ensuring the financial stability of the institution is clearly delineated in the Board Policy Manual. Policies specific to the Board's

fiscal responsibilities include Board Policy 8.0 covering fiscal management and Board Policy 2430 delegating authority to the Chancellor to supervise and carry out the business of the District in accordance with all laws and the California Community Colleges Budget and Accounting Manual. Board Policy 8.05 covers external financial audits, District budgets and financial planning, and investment of District funds, among other items designed to ensure fiscal accountability. Board Policy 8.11 details the Board's role in managing the District's Budget. Board Policy 8.06 outlines the Board's role in investing District funds.

In addition to reviewing and approving an Annual Budget, the Board consistently examines financial reports and related documents to monitor the institution's fiscal health. Regular reports presented and discussed at Board meetings include budget updates, detailed mid-year budget reports and a District Financial Summary for each quarter. The Board also receives and accepts an annual district audit (p. 4-5) prepared by an independent certified public accountant, as well as independent performance audits of bond measures. To further ensure that the District's internal controls, processes, guidelines, and policies are effective and in compliance with the highest standards, the Board established an internal Performance Audit Unit in August 2024 and created the permanent position of Performance Auditor, reporting directly to the Board. Each fiscal year, the Performance Auditor submits a performance audit plan for Board approval, and audit reports are presented in board meetings throughout the year. The Chancellor is responsible for responding to the audit report and for implementing recommended actions approved by the Board.

In accordance with Board Policy 2410, the Board regularly reviews and assesses all Board policies for effectiveness in fulfilling the District's mission. The policy requires the administration, in conjunction with the appropriate constituencies, to review each policy on a six-year schedule. In November 2023, the District embarked on an ambitious overhaul of the entire Board Policy Manual that includes review, updating and conversion of Board policies to the numbering and titling system recommended by the Community College League of California. Note that this is a multi-year process, and this Institutional Self Evaluation Report includes Board policies that have been converted to the new numbering system, as well as policies that are still numbered in accordance with the legacy system.

4.5.   The governing board selects and evaluates the institution's chief executive officer (CEO). The governing board gives the CEO full authority to implement board policies and ensure effective operations and fulfillment of the institutional mission.

Chancellor Selection & Evaluation

The Chief Executive Officer of the San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD) is the Chancellor. Board Policy 2431 specifies that the Board "shall employ a full-time Chancellor to serve as chief executive officer of the District, whose principal responsibility is leadership of

the educational program." [Administrative Procedure 2.02.1](#) provides detailed guidance as well as general principles to guide screening and selection, development of the job announcement, search committee membership and orientation, development of an assessment plan, close of the recruitment process, screening of application materials, screening of interviewees, and final interviews and reference checks.

The Board sets clear expectations for the Chancellor in the [position description](#) and in their [annual Board Goals](#) which enumerates the support the Board expects from the Chancellor in achieving their goals and priorities in the given year. which

The Board conducted a [national search](#) for a new Chancellor during the 2023-24 academic year. On July 26, 2023, the Board first discussed the process and timeline for their search ([Board Minutes item 15.1](#)). On September 13, 2023, the Board adopted revised selection procedures and a timeline for their search process ([Board Minutes item 12.3](#)). By April 24, 2024, the Board approved an employment agreement with Melissa Moreno, who had been serving as the interim Chancellor and had previously served as President of Skyline College ([Board Agenda item 2.1 Pursuant to Gov. Code §54957](#)).

[Board Policy 2435](#) specifies that "the District Chancellor will be evaluated by the Board annually based upon goals which are mutually agreed upon by the Board of Trustees and the District Chancellor…using an evaluation process…based on board policy, the District Chancellor's job description, and performance goals and objectives developed in accordance with BP 2430 Delegation of Authority to the District Chancellor…the criteria for evaluation of the District Chancellor shall also include performance goals and objectives related to the District's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion."

[AP 2.02.2 Chancellor of the District: Evaluation](#) lists the performance areas for evaluation and references where to find an [evaluation instrument](#). Following her appointment in April 2024, the Board Board discussed Chancellor Moreno's evaluation in closed session every month (in [May](#), [June](#), [July](#), [August](#), [September](#), [October](#), [November](#), and December).

Delegation of Authority

[Board Policy 2430](#), specifies that the Board of Trustees shall delegate to the Chancellor of the District the executive responsibility for administering policies adopted by the Board and executing all decisions of the Board requiring administrative action and that the District Chancellor shall perform all duties specifically required of or assigned to the Chancellor by the statutes of the State of California and by the Board of Trustees of the San Mateo County Community College District.

References *AP 2430 Delegation of Authority to the District Chancellor and College Presidents* Has not yet been renumbered, still AP 2.02.3 and AP 8.02.1 Delegation of Authority This basically restates what's in the Board Policy

4.6. **The governing board functions effectively as a collective entity to promote the institution's values and mission and fulfill its fiduciary responsibilities. The governing board demonstrates an ability to self-govern in adherence to its bylaws and expectations for best practices in board governance. (ER 7)**

The San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCD) has a robust mission statement that it reviews every three years via a broad-based participatory governance process. This mission guides the Board's work as a collective unit and provides a framework for District strategic planning, prioritization, and resource allocation decisions in a manner consistent with the values of the three colleges. Board Policy 2330 outlines how the Board makes decisions.

Board Policy 2200 clearly lays out the duties and responsibilities of the Board. This includes provisions for assuring the District's fiscal health, stability, and transparency as well as advocating for and protecting the District from undue influence or pressure. Board Policy 2715 defines the Board's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.

In 2019, when allegations of fraud came to light concerning the then long-time Chancellor, the Board promptly took action to remove the Chancellor under suspicion and minimize risks to the colleges. This was an instance when the Board acted quickly in the best interest of the institution. In the ensuing years, the Board has hired two Chancellors. It has also hired a new internal Performance Auditor who provides independent review and analysis of various college district programs and procedures, and who develops findings and recommendations for review by the Board of Trustees and Chancellor. The primary purpose of this position is to assist the Board of Trustees and Chancellor in identifying strengths and weaknesses in various district programs, identifying best practices for the Board of Trustees to consider, including correcting shortcomings in district practices and programs. This position maintains a degree of independence from other District staff, and functions in a manner sufficient to provide positive integrity of the responsibilities of the performance audit function. It also makes recommendations for improved internal controls, operating procedures, accounting records, and systems.

The Board also hires and works annually with a variety of external financial and compliance auditors. (see Standard 3?)

In 2023 and 2024, the Board hired and worked with a facilitator, Cindi Reiss, a Board Member of the Peralta Community College District and faculty at West Valley College, to (1) update Board policies to make them compliant with legal updates, usable and clear, and compliant with the California League of Community Colleges numbering system; (2) develop and adopt a new Board of Trustees Handbook; and (3) develop and set Board goals. (Board_Minutes_October_4_2023). By the end of 2023, the Board had updated all of

Chapters 1 and 2 of its Board Policy Manual. And in August of 2024, after over a year of discussion and refinement, the Board adopted new Goals.

As new members join the Board, they are oriented on the basis of the SMCCCD Board of Trustees Orientation as well as the Student Trustee Orientation. Board Policy 2745 governs how the Board evaluates itself. In 2024, it assessed its own performance as a Board in order to identify its strengths and areas in which it may improve its functioning. On August 28 2024, the Board discussed (Board Agenda Item 2.6) the results of the Board of Trustees Self Evaluation 2024, including areas of progress and areas of improvement (Board Minutes August 28, 2024 item 2.6).

Every five years, the colleges review and update their mission, vision, and values statements. The Board reviews and approves them. June 22, 2022 Board of Trustees meeting minutes approving Cañada's EMP/mission/vision/values).