C. Technology Resources

General Observations:

Technology resources and services are provided by Information Technology Services, which includes our units: Technical Services, Technical Operations, Project Management and Consulting, and Administration. These units provide service and support such as the Service Desk, desktop services, networking and infrastructure, computer lab management, enterprise computing resources, programming, administrative support, and telephony services.

City College of San Francisco has an active and innovative Information Technology Services (ITS) Department. Training is available for faculty who want to develop online courses or use technology resources in on-ground classes. Several college departments (e.g. the library and the Learning Assistance Center) have programs and classes to train students in the effective use of technology.

A new chief technology officer was hired in the summer of 2010 and a current Technology Plan is now in place. During this difficult budget period, funds are lacking to implement an annual technology replacement program. Starting in the 2010-2011 academic year, the college began to transfer into Information Technology Services classified technology employees who previously reported to exclusive departments.

Findings and Evidence:

The college has used the components of the college planning process to develop the collegewide Technology Plan, which ensures that its various types of technology needs are identified. The CCSF vision and mission statements, Strategic Plan, and Annual Plan inform the Technology Plan. The 2009-11 Technology Plan is evidence based and addresses the technology needs as articulated by faculty, staff, and students. These constituents have provided input by means of the shared governance process (e.g., the Teaching, Learning, and Technology Roundtable), departmental committees (e.g., the Library Technology Committee), from requests or problems logged by the Service Desk and other technology staff, and from comments and suggestions provided in surveys of employees and students who use technology for a variety of purposes. Based on interviews and review of documents, it appears that technology support is related to college needs, and technology services have been effectively provided (III.C.1, III.C.1.a, III.C.1.d, and II.C.2).

As with many public and private institutions, City College of San Francisco’s information technology infrastructure is constantly under attack by viruses and hackers. The purpose of the attacks is to damage the infrastructure or capture personal information of users in the systems. In November of 2011, the college had a risk assessment done to identify vulnerabilities in the infrastructure. During this assessment, several malicious viruses were discovered within the system. Immediately after this discovery, the college took steps to remove all malicious viruses from infected computers and servers. In
addition, the chief technology officer implemented an intruder detection system to monitor incoming and outgoing network traffic. This system also helps identify computers or servers that may become infected. There is no evidence that any of the college’s databases were compromised. Even so, the college continues to discuss strategies that will keep the system secure while not interfering with academic freedom. The results of the assessment indicate the college has not met the standard for privacy and security (III.C.1.a).

Faculty and staff training and technical assistance are provided by several units, including the Technology Learning Center and the Technology Mediated Instruction Unit. Additionally, individual technical needs are served by the Service Desk and online documentation and tutorials. Notable is the training provided by library faculty to students in online research and information competency skills, and to faculty and students related to the use of online resources and technology applications. User surveys rate technology training as good.

As the college copes with a reduction in revenues, the elimination of the training facilities for the Educational Training Department has raised concerns. Although there are indications the budget shortfalls could affect the institution’s ability meet the requirements of the standard in the future, this has not yet occurred as noted in the team’s evaluation of educational programs and related use of technology. At the time of the visit, the requirement to provide quality training in the effective application of its information technology to students and personnel was met (III.C.1.b).

A review of the 2009-2011 Technology Plan and the 2009-2011 Technology Plan Update along with the 2011-2012 college budgets confirms the institution continues to rely almost exclusively on bond and grant funding for the acquisition and replacement of hardware. This does not achieve the stability that is equivalent to an ongoing source of college general funds. The college’s self evaluation acknowledges that technology plans are supported with one-time soft money. The college self evaluation also indicates bond funding for technology purchases has been discontinued. Based on this evidence, the college has not integrated into the ongoing budget plans the total cost of technology acquisition and maintenance, including regular replacement of outdated hardware (III.C.1.c).

The institution’s planning process for technology projects evolves from the Strategic Plan, the Technology Plan, the Annual Plan, and initially from program review reports. Capital equipment requests are made as part of the annual budgeting process and priorities are established by the College Planning and Budgeting Council. In addition to these processes, several shared governance committees are responsible for recommending policy and driving details of the discussion about utilization of technology resources. The Information Technology Policy Committee recommends policy regarding technology usage. The Teaching Learning Technology Roundtable provides a monthly forum for faculty to discuss technology needs, and the Communications Committee manages policies concerning website design and content. The Distance Learning Advisory Committee oversees the policies concerning distance education at CCSF, including online and telecourses.
While these numerous planning and governance groups are designed to ensure that
distribution and utilization of technology resources support the development,
maintenance, and enhancement of the programs and services at the college, the budget
does not reflect the results of the planning process because the discretionary resources are
too limited to finance established priorities and goals (III.C.1.d).

The college has a technology planning process that is linked with the institutional planning
process and receives input from multiple venues. The institution's strategic, technology,
and annual plans, as well as the vision and mission statements, emphasize that
 technological support should meet the needs of teaching, learning, collegewide
 communications, research, and operations systems. However, without a viable source of
 revenue, CCSF’s severely limited in sustaining its information technology infrastructure
 and operations. The institution’s ability to effectively use planning and assessment to
 maintain or improve technology resources to support learning and institutional
 effectiveness may be severely limited by a lack of technology funding (III.C.1 and 2).

Conclusions:

The team concludes that the college partially meets Standard III.C Technology
Resources.

The college has developed a planning process designed to meet the Standard. Even
though the institutional planning and assessment processes are designed to drive the
budgeting process to assure technology resources are used to support student learning
programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness, the plan is not linked to
the allocation of resources, presumably because the revenue is insufficient to address
the needs identified in the planning process. Although CCSF has continued to make progress
in many areas related to technology, the areas that remain to be addressed are funding of
equipment upgrades and replacement, and improving infrastructure security.

Recommendation:

Recommendation 9: Technology Resources

To fully meet Standard III.C Technology Resources, the team recommends the college
develop a comprehensive plan for equipment maintenance, upgrade and replacement that
is integrated with the institution’s budget allocation processes; and that the college
continues to monitor its information technology systems and implement measures to
more fully secure the technology infrastructure (III.C.1.a, c-d, III.C.2).