



ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR
COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

CORE INQUIRIES

Sierra College
5100 Sierra College Blvd
Rocklin, CA 95677

The Core Inquiries are based upon the findings of the peer review team that conducted Team ISER Review on March 20, 2026.

Dr. Sean Hancock
Team Chair

Contents

Peer Review Team Roster..... 1

Summary of Team ISER Review 2

Core Inquiries 3

 Core Inquiry 1..... 3

 Core Inquiry 2..... 4

Sierra College

Peer Review Team Roster

Team ISER Review

March 20, 2026

CHAIR	VICE CHAIR
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Dr. Kevin Bontenbal, Vice President	

Summary of Team ISER Review

INSTITUTION: Sierra College

DATE OF TEAM ISER REVIEW: March 20, 2026

TEAM CHAIR: Dr. Sean Hancock

An accreditation peer review team conducted Team ISER Review of Sierra College on March 20, 2026. The Team ISER Review is a one-day, off-site analysis of an institution's self-evaluation report and supporting evidence. The peer review team received the college's Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) and related evidence several weeks prior to the Team ISER Review. Team members found the report to be a comprehensive document detailing the college's alignment to the 2024 Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, and Commission policies. The College provided a thoughtful report, reflecting on the institution's transformational processes, equitable student outcomes, and planning for continuing institutional improvement.

In preparation for the Team ISER Review, the team chair attended a team chair workshop on December 1, 2025 and held a pre-review meeting with the college CEO on January 23, 2026. The entire peer review team participated in a team workshop provided by staff from ACCJC on January 29, 2026. Prior to the Team ISER Review, team members completed their assessment of the college's alignment to the Accreditation Standards and policies, identified areas for further clarification, and provided a list of requests for additional evidence to be considered during Team ISER Review.

During the Team ISER Review, team members spent the morning discussing their initial observations and their preliminary review of the written materials and evidence provided by the College for the purpose of determining whether the College meets Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, and Commission policies. In the afternoon, the team further synthesized their findings to validate the excellent work of the college and developed Core Inquiries to be pursued during the Focused Site Visit, which will occur during the week of September 21, 2026.

Core Inquiries are a means for communicating potential areas of institutional noncompliance, improvement, or exemplary practice that arise during the Team ISER Review. They describe the areas of emphasis for the Focused Site Visit. During the Focused Site Visit, the team will tour the facilities, conduct scheduled meetings and an open forum, gather additional information to further their analysis to determine whether all standards are met, and accordingly finalize their Peer Review Team Report, which will identify commendations or recommendations. The College should use the Core Inquiries and time leading up to the Focused Site Visit as an opportunity to gather more evidence, collate information, and to strengthen or develop processes in the continuous improvement cycle. In the course of the Focused Site Visit, the ACCJC staff liaison will review new or emerging issues that might arise out of the discussions on Core Inquiries.

Core Inquiries

Based on the team's analysis during the Team ISER Review, the team identified the following Core Inquiries that relate to potential areas of clarification, improvement, or commendation.

Core Inquiry 1: The team seeks to understand how the college ensures regular and substantive interaction is occurring in all its distance education courses.
Standards or Policies: 2.6 and Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education
Description: The team reviewed each course in the sample of 49 DE courses provided by Sierra College. The expectation of the ACCJC's Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education is that regular and substantive interaction be predictable and regular with students to facilitate their success. The team reviewed announcements, syllabi, feedback provided to students on grades, emails, instructor-created course learning content, and discussions/assessments for instructor facilitation, interaction, and feedback. The team also reviewed policies for student contact and office hours and meetings listed in Canvas shells and syllabi. The team further explored instructor emails, Zoom data, and professional development provided by the College. The team found that fewer than 85% of the 49 courses in the sample provided met the requirement for regular and substantive interaction per ACCJC's policy.
Topics of discussion during interviews: The College's policies on distance education Distance education instructor training methods The College's internal methods for distance education course evaluation/peer review processes
Request for Additional Information/Evidence: Documentation regarding RSI for faculty Policies related to syllabi for distance education courses Evidence of distance education course evaluation for RSI Training materials, professional development opportunities, and communication to faculty regarding RSI.
Request for Observations/Interviews: Faculty DE Coordinator/DL Coordinator DE/DL Committee Members Representative sample of students who take online courses Representative sample of faculty who teach online Director of DE /DL or Instructional Technology Academic Senate President or DE/DL liaison VP of Instruction

Core Inquiry 2: The team is impressed by the College’s assessment practices and continuous improvement measures through regularly reviewing meaningful disaggregated data to design and implement effective strategies for supporting success and achievement for all students.
Standards or Policies: 1.3, 2.9
Description: The team observed that the College has an exemplary, institution-wide commitment to student success—from disaggregated data review through the President’s initiative, departmental planning, and the development of the Umoja general education pathway—resulting in measurable increases in student success and reductions in achievement gaps. This commitment is further evidenced by Sierra College's systematic integration of practices across instructional and student services divisions, where data-informed decision-making has become embedded in program review, resource allocation, and continuous improvement cycles that collectively ensure no student population is overlooked or underserved. The team further observed that the College’s reflective practices focusing on student success contributed to an increase in student learning and achievement and the closing of equity gaps.
Topics of discussion during interviews: Use of student surveys and focus groups as part of the assessment process How do the student surveys and focus group data inform the College’s efforts to improve student achievement and close equity gaps How does or will the College guard against equity gap regression Collaboration between college constituencies to support student success and achievement
Request for Additional Information/Evidence: Student Equity & Achievement Plan 2025-2028 Evidence of alignment of student services area outcomes with institutional learning outcomes and how those advance student achievement Evidence of assessment of employee professional development activities Examples of how the use of disaggregated data and assessment practices have led to the closing of achievement gap and/or student success Examples of how data have informed decision making and resource allocation have led to the closing of achievement gap and/or student success
Request for Observations/Interviews: Faculty who teach in the Umoja cohort Representative sample of students who engage in the Umoja cohort Educational Effectiveness Committee members Office of Equity and Completion VP of Instruction VP of Student Services Dean of Institutional Effectiveness and Research President