

**The Young Americans College of the Performing Arts  
1132 Olympic Drive, Corona, CA 92881**

**October 2-5, 2017**

**Dr. Mark J. Zacovic, President Emeritus, Cuyamaca College**



This report represents the findings of the candidacy evaluation team that visited The Young Americans College of the Performing Arts, October 2-5, 2017.

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**The Young Americans College of the Performing Arts  
Candidacy Visit Team Roster  
October 2017**

**Chair**

Dr. Mark J. Zacovic  
President Emeritus  
Cuyamaca College

**Assistant**

Ms. Maryellen F. Sanchez  
Executive Assistant to Vice President of  
Administrative Services  
Lake Tahoe Community College District

**Academic Representatives**

Dr. Colette Harris-Mathews  
Dean of Communication, Visual and  
Performing Arts  
Cosumnes River College

Dr. Kathleen Werle  
Vice President for Instruction  
Saddleback College

Ms. Judith Samuel  
Librarian and  
Associate Professor of Library Science  
Los Angeles Trade-Technical College

Dr. Joseph Carrithers  
Professor of English  
Fullerton College

**Administrative Representatives**

Ms. Carol Castle  
Academic Officer/ALO  
MTI College

Dr. Joan Lang  
Research Analyst  
Los Angeles Harbor College

Ms. Jennifer Holmgren  
Director of Planning/ALO  
Long Beach City College

Dr. Mary Gallagher  
Vice President, Administrative Services  
Los Angeles Trade-Technical College

## Summary of Candidacy Evaluation Report

A nine-member accreditation evaluation team visited The Young Americans College of the Performing Arts (YACPA) October 2-5, 2017 for the purposes of evaluating the institution's application for candidacy, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement, and submitting recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) regarding the candidacy of YACPA.

On August 3, 2017, Dr. Zacovic attended the ACCJC Team Chair Training in Los Angeles, CA. Additionally, in preparation for the visit, team members (less one due to an unavoidable scheduling conflict), team assistant, and team chair attended an all-day Team Training on September 8, 2017, in Los Angeles, CA, conducted by the ACCJC. The team studied Commission materials prepared for visiting teams. Team members received "homework" assignments at the training that were completed and returned to the team chair prior to the visit. Initially, there were ten persons assigned to the team, but three had to withdraw due to unforeseen circumstances, and the commission assigned one replacement.

On August 29, 2017, Dr. Zacovic and team assistant, Ms. Maryellen Sanchez of Lake Tahoe Community College, made a pre-visit visit to YACPA to meet the president/ALO, Ms. Katiina Dull, and other staff members. Dr. Zacovic and Ms. Sanchez toured the College campus, selected the team room, visited the hotel accommodations recommended by the College, and reviewed the day-to-day schedule of events and activities for the dates of the actual visit. During this visit, routine clarification of expectations occurred, and the College assured us that all preparations for the October 2-5, 2017 were in good order. There were extensive email communications and telephone calls among the College president, the team chair, and the team assistant prior to the visit. The College responded to all requests in a very timely manner.

Well in advance of the visit, team members received hard copies and electronic copies of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER). The ISER contained lists of evidence at the end of each Standard, as well as direct links to evidence in the electronic version of the report. Team members completed both "Homework" assignments and submitted them to the team chair. The team successfully used the Dropbox software to provide direct access by all team members to electronic versions of all materials pertinent to the visit. Team members submitted lists of persons with whom they wished to meet during the visit to the team assistant who coordinated the scheduling of the meetings with the College. In addition, the chair asked members of the team to complete ACCJC's online Accreditation Basics course developed by the ACCJC for orientation of team members. Of the eight members of the team, this was the first opportunity for three of them to serve on a visiting team.

The team gathered in Corona, CA at the hotel on the afternoon of Sunday, October 1, 2017, to check in and settle into their rooms. The team met for a working dinner that evening and on Monday morning, the team arrived at the College at 9:00 A.M. to begin work. After a brief meet and greet, including a very touching performance by over 100 students who sang several songs of welcome to the team ([YACPA Student Welcome](#)), the College president provided a detailed overview of the College, and the umbrella organization, The Young

Americans, Inc., and answered questions from the team. The team then received a tour of and orientation to the campus. The College provided a fully equipped team room on campus, as well as a similar room for the team at the hotel.

The College held one open forum on campus on Tuesday, October 3, 2017. It was very well attended by 15 students, 12 faculty and staff, and six members of the team. The conversation with the entire group lasted about 40 minutes, at which time, the staff and faculty were asked to leave, and the team spent another 25 minutes in conversation with the students. It was an excellent exchange of information.

During the visit, the team had many meetings with faculty, staff, and administrators. Team members viewed academic and student support facilities, observed classroom sessions, toured residential student housing, and met virtually with the College library staff. In addition, the board of directors for The Young Americans, Inc. and for the College held a board meeting at the campus the week of the visit. All members of the visiting team participated in this meeting and there was rich and robust dialog about the College and its role within the Young Americans organization.

Overall, the team found the YACPA ISER to be mostly complete, clearly written, and accurately portrayed the status of the College. The team noted a minor editorial recommendation to have electronic evidence links link to the pertinent page in documents rather than to just the entire document. This would facilitate better access to the citation and provide the most relevant information for the team. The ISER provided a useful matrix that summarized the Standard areas the College has self-identified as areas of improvement, which also linked to the Quality Focus Essay (QFE).

The College community was very helpful in facilitating the visit and was most welcoming to the team. The team encountered an enthusiastic, nascent College, driven to succeed, clearly focused on student success, and facing a bright future.

## 2017 Commendations

1. The team commends the College for its work to integrate assignments across Breadth of Knowledge (BoK) and performance/theory courses. (Standards I.B.7, 9)
2. The team commends the College for its evaluation and program development for measuring student achievement in distance education. (Standards I.B.2, 4, 6, 8; II.A.1)
3. The team commends the College for its research and justification of a move of BoK courses from fully online to face-to-face and/or hybrid. (Standards II.A.2, 4, 5, 7, 15, 16)
4. The team commends the College for its establishment of a comprehensive Student Access plan. (Standard II.A.1)
5. The team commends the College for its implementation of a resource allocation process tied to planning, program review and assessment. (Standards IIA.1, 2, 3, 8, 11, 12)
6. The team commends the College for providing counseling access to students 24 hours a day, seven days a week. (Standards II.C.1, 3)
7. The team commends the College for the development and use of an early alert system that directs resources to help students overcome academic and non-academic barriers to success. (Standards II.C.1, 2, 5, 7)
8. The team commends faculty and staff for their strong, shared commitment to student success. The supportive and personal atmosphere of the College lends itself to open communication between students and student services staff and faculty. (Standards II.A, B, C)
9. The team commends YACPA for being extremely pro-active in recognizing the need to acquire the necessary technology to support student performance-based education and the general education curriculum. Each classroom is equipped with technology to address a variety of learning styles. (Standards II.A.2, 7; II.B.2; III.B.1, 2, 3, 4; III.C.1, 2, 4, 5; III.D.1)

## 2017 Recommendations for Improvement

1. To improve, the team recommends that the College systematically utilize student achievement data to improve student achievement, including student equity, and to inform integrated planning and decision-making. (Standards I.B.1, 3, 4)
2. To improve, the team recommends that the College engage in broad and substantive dialog in the development of the institutional annual report, as well as discuss and utilize program learning outcome results to inform improvements to student learning. (Standards I.B.1, 9)
3. To improve, the team recommends that the College set and implement a comprehensive review cycle for non-instructional departments, including developing student services learning and/or service unit outcome assessments, with metrics, that are utilized to inform integrated planning and decision-making, and to better measure effectiveness. (Standards I.B.1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9; Standard II.C.1)
4. To improve, the team recommends that the College develop a mechanism for tracking transfer and job placement rates and establish institution-set standards for these metrics. (Standards I.B.1, 3)
5. To improve, the team recommends the College add refinement and assessment of SLOs by course to its self-identified need to assess PLO outcomes through key assignments, all to reinforce student learning and to further engage faculty in the SLO and PLO reporting processes. (Standards I.B.1, 2, 3; II.A.3)
6. To improve, the team recommends the College clearly show the set-aside reserve in financial documents. (Standards III.D.6, 9)
7. To improve, the team recommends that the College develop a formal internal process to evaluate the validity of its internal control systems and use the results of this assessment to develop the departments' improvement plans. (Standards III.D.7, 8, 9)
8. To improve, the team recommends that the Board of Directors for the College conduct regular, formal evaluations of the College president, the organization's CEO, and itself, on the timeline it has established in order to maintain the cycle and fulfill the requirements of the Standards. (Standards IV.C.3, 10, 12)
9. To improve, the team recommends the Board of Directors for the College stay current on the timeline it has already established for review and possible revision of board policies and procedures, including the recent CEO selection process and development of board training programs. (Standards I.B.7; IV.C.7, 9)

## Introduction

In 1962, Milton C. Anderson founded The Young Americans, Inc., which exists today as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, as “a charitable organization dedicated to the promotion of understanding and good will among people throughout the world through music, dance, performance, academic education, and cultural interaction among Student Members and their audiences.”

In the early years of the organization, The Young Americans became an international name through concert performances and television appearances. The organization was the subject of a documentary film produced by Columbia Motion Pictures in the late 1960s. The Young Americans offer performances in dozens of major entertainment venues throughout the world. They have sold out nightly for more than 40 years of summer musical theater in a small college town in Northern Michigan. They have conducted workshops and camps for thousands of young people worldwide. Nearly 3,000 persons proudly identify themselves as Young Americans.

The first thirty years of the organization defined The Young Americans as a premier performance company. The next twenty-five years introduced the Music Outreach Program that redefined The Young Americans as a service-based learning organization that inspires, empowers, and brings people together. As the Music Outreach Program grew, it created new opportunities for members to develop communication, critical thinking, problem solving, leadership, and cultural understanding skills through practical application and hands on experiences. During this time, the number of tours grew from two national tours per year visiting 40 communities, to twelve tours per year visiting over 240 communities in the U.S., Europe, Japan, and the United Kingdom. In setting the future course for the organization, the board of directors identified three strategic challenges it needed to address:

1. To develop a rigorous training program for new members of The Young Americans to ensure they had the knowledge, skills, and talents to be effective as teachers, performers, and music advocates in the Music Outreach Program;
2. To fill the gaps in knowledge and skills essential for members to transition from their volunteer time with the organization to the professional world; and
3. To be able to translate and quantify the experiences, knowledge, and skills a member gained during their time as a Young American in a manner that was recognized and understood by institutions of higher education and by employers.

The board’s solution to address these challenges was to form The Young Americans College of the Performing Arts (YACPA) as a division of The Young Americans, Inc., which is incorporated in the State of California and has its base of operations located in California. Established in fall of 2002, YACPA began operating under the exemption clause of the California Private Postsecondary Education Act (CPPEA), and Young Americans who wished to participate in the Music Outreach Program were required to complete a series of courses the year prior to participation. By 2004, the courses had developed into a required yearlong program of study. In fall of 2010, the College was prepared to grant AA degrees



and it could no longer continue to operate under the exemption clause of the CPPEA. In 2011, YACPA began the process to obtain approval to operate as a degree-granting institution. In spring, 2014, the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (CBPPE) gave its approval and YACPA began offering an Associate of Arts Degree in Performance in addition to its certificate program. Going back to spring of 2010, at that time YACPA formed a partnership with North Central Michigan College (NCMC), an accredited community college that allowed YACPA students concurrent enrollment at both institutions. This agreement provided the opportunity for YACPA students to earn transferrable college credits and to apply for financial aid to meet the cost of taking classes at NCMA. The general education requirements and the curriculum for both colleges carefully align, and clear documentation of the responsibilities for each college exist. NCMC approves YACPA faculty to instruct its courses.

In the fall of 2015, YACPA applied for eligibility to ACCJC. The Commission reviewed the application and granted eligibility status at its meeting in June of 2016, thus paving the way for YACPA to request and prepare for the Application for Candidacy Comprehensive visit that took place in October of 2017 and is the subject of this report.

## **Eligibility Requirements**

**1. Authority\***

The institution is authorized or licensed to operate as a post-secondary educational institution and to award degrees by an appropriate governmental organization or agency as required by each of the jurisdictions or regions in which it operates. Private institutions, if required by the appropriate statutory regulatory body, must submit evidence of authorization, licensure, or approval by that body. If incorporated, the institution shall submit a copy of its articles of incorporation.

YACPA operates under the jurisdiction of the California Bureau of Private Postsecondary Education as a degree granting institution with an Associate of Arts degree with four emphases and one Certificate. The College is a California non-profit public benefit corporation and is registered as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization with the Internal Revenue Service.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

**2. Operational Status\***

The institution is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs.

For the 2016-17 academic year, 956 applications for admission were received, 452 students were granted admission, and 186 students enrolled on a full-time basis. Of the enrolled students, 14 were in the Music Outreach Training Certificate program, and 182 were in the Associate of Arts program (part-time enrollees are included in this number).

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

**3. Degrees\***

A substantial portion of the institution's educational offerings are programs that lead to degrees, and a significant proportion of its students are enrolled in them. At least one degree program must be of two academic years in length.

Ninety six percent of the student body is enrolled in the YACPA Associate of Arts degree program.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

**4. Chief Executive Officer\***

The institution has a chief executive officer appointed by the governing board, whose full-time responsibility is to the institution, and who possesses the requisite authority to administer board policies. Neither the district/system chief executive office nor the institutional chief executive office may serve as the chair of the governing board. The institution informed the Commission immediately when there is a change in the institutional chief executive officer.

The College president, Ms. Katiina Dull, is employed full-time by the Board of Directors of the Young Americans, Inc. and is charged with the full operation of the College and its programs. She does not serve as a member of the governing board.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

**5. Financial Accountability\***

The institution annually undergoes and makes available an external financial audit by a certified public accountant or an audit by an appropriate public agency. Institutions that are already Title IV eligible must demonstrate compliance with federal requirements.

**Additional financial accountability for eligibility applicants:** The institution shall submit with its eligibility application a copy of the budget and institutional financial audits and management letters prepared by an outside certified public accountant or by an appropriate public agency, who has no other relationship to the institution, for its two most recent fiscal years, including the fiscal year ending immediately prior to the date of the submission of the application. The audits must be certified, and any exceptions explained. It is recommended that the auditor employ as a guide Audits of College and Universities, published by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. An applicant institution must not show an annual or cumulative operating deficit at any time during the eligibility application process.

The Young Americans, Inc. contracts for a full, independent audit at the close of each fiscal year as mandated by policy of the board of directors. The team reviewed several years of audits and accompanying management letters and found all to be in good order. The College does not yet participate in Federal Title IV financial aid programs.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

Note: The evaluations of how the College satisfies ER's six through 21 are incorporated into, and parenthetically noted within, the discussions of the Standards as noted here. ER's six through 21 are listed and noted here simply for completeness.

**6. Mission**

The institution's educational mission is clearly defined, adopted, and published by its governing board consistent with its legal authorization, and is appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education and the constituency it seeks to serve. The mission statement defines institutional commitment to student learning and achievement. (Standards I.A.1, 4)

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

**7. Governing Board**

The institution has a functioning governing board responsible for the academic quality, instructional integrity, and financial stability of the institution and for ensuring that the institution's mission is achieved. This board is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are used to provide a sound educational program. Its membership is sufficient in size and composition to fulfill all board responsibilities.

The governing board is an independent policy-making body capable of reflecting constituent and public interest in board activities and decisions. A majority of the board members have no employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. The board adheres to a conflict of interest policy that assures that those interests are disclosed and that they do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution. (Standards IV.C.1, 4, 11)

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

#### **8. Administrative Capacity**

The institution has sufficient staff, with appropriate preparation and experience to provide the administrative services necessary to support its mission and purpose. (Standards III.A.9, 10)

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

#### **9. Educational Programs**

The institution's principal degree programs are congruent with its mission, are based on recognized higher education field(s) of study, are of sufficient content and length, are conducted at levels of quality and rigor appropriate to the degrees offered, and culminate in identified student outcomes. (Standards II.A.1, 6)

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

#### **10. Academic Credit**

The institution awards academic credits based on generally accepted practices for degree-granting institutions of higher education and in accordance with statutory or system regulatory requirements. The institution provides appropriate information about the awarding of academic credit. (Standards II.A.9, 10)

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

#### **11. Student Learning and Student Achievement**

The institution defines standards for student achievement and assess its performance against those standards. The institution publishes for each program the program's expected student learning and any program-specific achievement outcomes. Through regular and systematic assessment, it demonstrates that students who complete

programs, no matter where or how they are offered, achieve the identified outcomes and that the standards for student achievement are met. (Standards I.B.2, 3; II.A.1)

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

## **12. General Education**

The institution defines and incorporates into all of its degree programs a substantial component of general education designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry. The general education component includes an introduction to some of the major areas of knowledge. General education courses are selected to ensure students achieve comprehensive learning outcomes in the degree program. Degree credit for the general education component must be consistent with levels of quality and rigor appropriate to higher education. (Standards II.A.5, 12)

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

## **13. Academic Freedom**

The institution's faculty and students are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as judged by the academic/educational community in general. Regardless of institutional affiliation or sponsorship, the institution maintains an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom and independence exist. (Standard I.C.7)

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

## **14. Faculty**

The institution has a sufficient number of qualified faculty, which includes full time faculty and may include part time and adjunct faculty, to achieve the institutional mission and purposes. The number is sufficient in size and experience to support all the institution's educational programs. A clear statement of faculty responsibilities must include development and review of curriculum as well as assessment of learning. (Standards III.A.2, 7)

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

## **15. Student Support Services**

The institution provides for all its students' appropriate student support services that foster student learning and development within the context of the institutional mission. (Standards II.C.1, 3)

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

## **16. Admissions**

The institution has adopted and adheres to admission policies consistent with its mission that specify the qualifications of students appropriate for its programs. (Standard II.C.6)

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

### **17. Information and Learning Support Services**

The institution provides, through ownership or contractual agreement, specific long-term access to sufficient information and learning support services adequate for its mission and instructional programs in whatever format whenever and wherever they are offered. (Standards II.B.1, 4)

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

### **18. Financial Resources**

The institution documents a funding base, financial resources, and plans for financial development adequate to support student learning programs and services, to improve institutional effectiveness, and to assure financial stability. (Standard III.D.1)

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

### **19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation**

The institution systematically evaluates and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes, including assessment of student learning outcomes. The institution provides evidence of planning for improvement of institutional structures and processes, student achievement of educational goals, and student learning. The institution assess progress toward achieving its stated goals and makes decisions regarding improvement through an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementations, and re-evaluation. (Standards I.B.9; I.C.3)

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

### **20. Integrity in Communication with the Public**

The institution provides a print or electronic catalog for its constituencies with precise, accurate, and current information concerning the following:

#### **General Information**

- Official Name, Address(es), Telephone Number(s), and website address of the Institution
- Educational Mission
- Representation of accredited status with ACCJC and with programmatic accreditors, if any
- Course, Program, and Degree Offerings
- Student Learning Outcomes for Programs and Degrees
- Academic Calendar and Program Length
- Academic Freedom Statement
- Available Student Financial Aid
- Available Learning Resources

- Names and Degrees of Administrators and Faculty
- Names of Governing Board Members

**Requirements**

- Admissions
- Student Fees and Other Financial Obligations
- Degree, Certificates, Graduation and Transfer

**Major Policies Affecting Students**

- Academic Regulations, including Academic Honesty
- Nondiscrimination
- Acceptance and Transfer of Credits
- Transcripts
- Grievance and Complaint Procedures
- Sexual Harassment
- Refund of Fees

**Locations or Publications where other policies may be found**  
(Standard I.C.2)

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

**21. Integrity in Relations with the Accrediting Commission**

The institution provides assurance that it adheres to the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies, describes itself in identical terms to all its accrediting agencies, communicates any changes in its accredited status, and agrees to disclose information required by the Commission to achieve its accrediting responsibilities. The institution will comply with Commission requests, directives, decisions and policies, and will make complete, accurate, and honest disclosure. Failure to do so is sufficient reason, in and of itself, for the Commission to impose a sanction, or to deny or revoke candidacy or accreditation. (Standards I.C.12, 13)

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement.

## **Standard I**

### **Mission, Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness, and Integrity**

#### **I.A. Mission**

##### **General Observations**

The Young Americans College of the Performing Arts (YACPA) demonstrates a commitment to its mission to provide members of The Young Americans, Inc. with a performance-based education that stresses artistry, leadership, communication, and collaboration. The College's mission describes the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, the types of programs offered, and its commitment to student learning and student achievement. YACPA recently updated and approved its mission. The College broadly communicates the mission statement externally to the public and internally at the College. The College's programs and services align with the College mission. The institutional goals and strategic plan goals derive from the mission statement. To gauge the College's progress in achieving its mission, the College utilizes both student achievement and learning outcome assessment data. The mission is communicated publicly through their College Catalog and website, and internally through handbooks and planning documents. (Standards I.A.1, 2, 4; ER 6)

##### **Findings and Evidence**

The College's Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP) outlines the alignment of programs and services to the College mission and institutional goals, as well as cycles for planning and review. The College developed its Strategic Plan to define strategic goals and objectives that support achievement of the College's mission. Through the annual review process defined in the IEP, departments set and assess departmental goals and, beginning in 2016-17, align them directly with the institutional and strategic goals of the College. Student learning outcomes align to program goals and degree objectives. Institutional goals also align to program learning outcomes. Within their review, departments include requests for resources that they feel are necessary to move forward their department goals and ultimately the goals of the College and the College mission. Following completion of the department annual reviews, the College president synthesizes the annual reviews and develops an institutional annual report. The institutional annual report includes institutional priorities for the coming year, the resources required to support those priorities, and status updates on the strategic plan goals. (Standard 1.A.3)

Through the IEP, the College has also established cycles for assessment and analyzing achievement data. Institution-set standards are also included in the IEP. Instructional departments assess and analyze student learning outcomes results each semester and report on both assessment results and achievement data in the annual department review reports. Assessment and achievement data are included in the institutional annual review report to



determine how well the College is meeting its mission, institutional goals, and strategic plan goals.

## **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard (I.A and ER 6)

## **I.B. Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness**

### **General Observations**

YACPA has made a concerted effort to create systematic planning and review processes. Through the development of the IEP, YACPA ensures that the College monitors short and long-term progress toward institutional goals that align with the College's mission and improve institutional effectiveness and student learning. (ER 19)

All departments across the campus complete a department annual review report, which includes departmental goals, assessment and/or achievement data, and resources needed to accomplish the goals. In 2016-2017, the College made improvements to the annual review templates and departments now clearly align their goals to strategic and institutional level goals. Discussion occurs within departments to create the annual reports. From these reports, the College creates and posts an institutional annual review, which aligns with the mission and goals, on the College's website. (Standard I.B.1)

The institution engages in dialogue regarding student outcomes, academic quality, institutional effectiveness, and continuous improvement of student learning and achievement. Scheduled meetings direct the dialogue of the College on continuous improvement. Departments have created course student learning outcomes and mapped these to their program learning outcomes. The program learning outcomes map to institutional goals. Faculty engage in assessment of course learning outcomes each semester, and when learning outcomes do not meet identified benchmarks, faculty act to improve student learning. While the College conducts indirect assessments through surveys for some student services, student learning outcome assessment does not seem consistently implemented across student learning and support services. (Standards I.B.2, 3)

YACPA disaggregates student achievement data within the institutional annual review and reports required by the California Bureau of Private Postsecondary Education. The College documents institution-set standards for achievement data within the IEP. While the institution has identified gaps in learning based on achievement data, analyses of achievement data do not seem consistently utilized across departments to inform planning, review, and resource allocation. Discussions of achievement data as it relates to student equity, job placement, and completion are not evident at the College.

The College has created a Policies and Procedures Handbook, provided to all employees, that describes the charges of each committee that oversees policies and practices at the College.

Regular review of the policies and procedures ensures that the College continues to work toward accomplishing its mission.

### **Findings and Evidence**

YACPA thoughtfully engages in planning and review processes to ensure the institution accomplishes its mission, institutional goals, strategic plan goals, and maintains academic quality. The IEP establishes cycles for strategic planning, program review, and annual reviews, as well as assessment of student learning outcomes and expectations for reporting and measuring achievement data against institution-set standards. While the institution has not yet completed their first comprehensive program review cycle (which will occur in 2018-19), the College has documented in the IEP the expectations for the instructional comprehensive program review to examine student learning, assessment plans, courses of study, etc. on a four-year cycle. The College does not identify non-instructional comprehensive program reviews in the Institutional Effectiveness Plan.

While the College has not yet undergone program review (scheduled for 2018-19), departments do engage in an annual department review process where they document assessment and achievement data, set goals aligned with the College's strategic and institutional goals, and request resources. The IEP outlines the leads assigned to each department annual review and ensures that structured dialogue and communication occur throughout the development of these annual reports. The College compiles department annual review reports into an Academic Program Review by the dean of instruction. From there, the College incorporates all instructional and non-instructional reviews into an institutional annual review report written by the College president. The institutional annual report includes College assessment and achievement data and documents priorities for the upcoming year, which inform goal setting for the upcoming year. The report also includes updates on the strategic plan goals and any related actions or outcomes. While dialogue and participation are apparent in the development of department-level annual review reports, broad input into the reports at higher levels of the institution is not apparent and instead these reports are primarily written by administration, as documented in the IEP. (Standard I.B.5)

Within the IEP, YACPA has set a structured cycle of student learning outcomes assessment for all courses, and the associate of arts and certificate programs. Faculty assess course and program SLOs each semester. Faculty discuss their SLO results within their departments, as well as in curriculum committee meetings. When SLO results fall below the benchmarks, the deans discuss and take action designed to improve student learning. The College closely monitors those SLOs during the next reporting period to ensure that the improvement plans are effective. In some instances, the College uses SLO results to inform goals and resource requests in department annual reviews. The College does not currently disaggregate SLO data, aside from face-to-face versus online courses. YACPA recognizes that this is due to the limited capabilities of the TK20 software, for which they are currently in the process of identifying a replacement. (Standards I.B.4, 6)

On the student services side, the College conducts assessment through surveys and evaluations of processes, based on the information within the IEP and department annual reviews. YACPA has not established student learning and/or service unit outcomes for student and learning support services. The student services department reports and analyzes satisfaction survey results within their annual department review report and use these to inform their goals, but they have not identified explicit learning outcomes or service outcomes for each of the services this department provides.

The College has set institution-set standards for course completion, retention, and persistence. YACPA has also set a stretch goal for degree completion. YACPA's mission statement describes that the College "... provides developing artists with skills, knowledge, and experiences that will be foundational for their futures as performers, teachers, and leaders." YACPA also notes that the focus of YACPA is to graduate "artist-educators who can parlay their developed skills ... to serve in whatever careers they ultimately pursue, whether these are in arts and/or education or fields such as engineering, accounting, law, or others." While the achievement data YACPA reports does align with this mission, they do not report data on or have institution set standards for transfer rates or job placement rates in alignment with the current mission.

The College reports on achievement data through their department annual review reports and in the institutional annual review report posted on the website. While a few instructional departments analyze their achievement data and use this to inform their goals, other instructional departments do not include achievement data in their reports. In the institutional annual report, data is also reported and disaggregated, and while a goal has been created in the latest institutional annual report to address an identified gap in achievement between Breadth of Knowledge and performance courses, other achievement data is not analyzed and discussions to address student equity are not occurring. (Standard I.B.6)

Department-wide dialogue is apparent in the development of the department-level annual review reports, but broad participation is lacking in the development of the institution annual report. The College annually reviews reports at the department level, which illustrates that members of the institution are working together to set goals to move student success forward. However, while a comprehensive review cycle is set to occur for instructional departments, no such review cycle has been set for non-instructional departments. (Standard I.B.7)

The College has imbedded assessment of student learning outcomes in their dialogue, planning, and review processes. Faculty engage in assessment regularly, make modifications to their courses, and adjust programs when assessment results are not as expected. While assessment occurs through surveys in student learning and support services, it is not conducted consistently across these programs and student learning/service unit outcomes have not been clearly identified to inform department and institutional goals. (Standards I.B.7, 8, 9)

The College reports on and disaggregates achievement data within annual institution and department reviews, but does not demonstrate that sustained dialogue occurs regarding

achievement data to improve student equity and inform integrated planning and decision-making. The College does not report or analyze transfer or job placement rates or set institution-set standards for these metrics in alignment with its mission. The 2018-19 comprehensive program review is being designed and will be conducted to provide the data that will fill-in the noted gaps. Once the program review is conducted and analyzed, the college will have a more robust response to the Standard. (Standards I.B.4, 6)

### **Conclusion**

The institution meets this Standard. (I.B and ER 19)

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

1. To improve, the team recommends that the College systematically utilize student achievement data to improve student achievement, including student equity, and inform integrated planning and decision-making. (Standards I.B.1, 3, 4)
2. To improve, the team recommends that the College engage in broad and substantive dialog in the development of the institutional annual report, as well as discuss and utilize program learning outcome results to inform improvements to student learning. (Standards I.B.1, 9)
3. To improve, the team recommends that the College set and implement a formal comprehensive review cycle for non-instructional departments, and improve the student services learning and/or service unit outcome assessments by including metrics, that can be utilized to better inform integrated planning and decision-making, and to better measure effectiveness. (Standards I.B.1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9; Standard II.C.1)
4. To improve, the team recommends that the College develop a mechanism for tracking transfer and job placement rates and establish institution-set standards for these metrics. (Standards I.B.1, 3)
5. To improve, the team recommends the College add refinement and assessment of SLOs by course to its self-identified need to assess PLO outcomes through key assignments, all to reinforce student learning and to further engage faculty in the SLO and PLO reporting processes. (Standards I.B.1, 2, 3; II.A.3)

### **I.C. Institutional Integrity**

#### **General Observations**

The YACPA ensures that all information provided to students, faculty, staff, and the public is clear and accurate. The primary sources of information are the website, College Catalog, course syllabi, Staff and Faculty Handbook, and the Policy and Procedures Handbook. In the catalog and on the website, the College specifies the degrees and certificates available. The College publishes clear policies and procedures related to academic freedom, codes of ethics, and codes of conduct. The YACPA also regularly reviews its policies and procedures and

updates them when necessary. The YAPCA published catalog meets all the criteria defined in ER20 as regulations defined by the California Educational Code for private postsecondary institutions. (Standards I.C.1, 2; ER 13)

The College communicates their current non-accredited status to the public via their website and to students, faculty, and staff via the College Catalog. When the Commission acted to grant YACPA eligibility status at its June 2016 meeting, YACPA updated its operating and accrediting disclosure statements on its website and in the College Catalog. Students sign an enrollment agreement, which communicates the limitations of earning credits at a non-accredited institution, as well as the total cost of education at the institution. As an institution operating under the CA Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE), the College complies with all requests by due dates set by the BPPE. (Standard I.C.2; ER 20)

### **Findings and Evidence**

The YACPA ensures that all information pertinent to the College, current and prospective students, faculty, and staff is up-to-date, accurate, and communicated publicly. The College prominently posts its mission statement on the website and within the College catalog. YACPA is forthright in disclosing policies, practices, and its intended certificates and degrees.

The YACPA's history of communication with the BPPE and with ACCJC is well documented, timely, professional, and constructive. The College has complied with the requirements, standards, policies, and guidelines of each of these agencies. The YACPA is responsive to the Commission and keeps the Commission apprised of any changes in its status. The College has worked closely with both of these agencies as it has developed, grown, and is maturing as a degree-granting institution of higher education. (Standards I.C.12, 13; ER 21)

The YACPA communicates student learning outcome and achievement data to current and prospective students. The College posts its institutional annual review report on the YACPA website, as well as in the BPPE annual report and in the school performance factsheet. The College provides admitted students with the school performance factsheet before they sign the enrollment agreement to ensure students understand previous student achievement at the institution. (Standards I.C.3, 4; ER 20)

The College maintains and posts a catalog on their website, in addition to providing it to all students. The catalog includes general information, requirements, and all major policies and procedures that will affect students. Within the catalog, as well as on the website, the College describes the degree and certificate purposes, student learning outcomes, and program requirements. The College uses the catalog, as well as the website, to inform students of the total cost of their education (including tuition, fees, textbooks, housing costs, instructional materials and any other required expenses). YACPA lists tuition and fees on the enrollment agreement, which students sign following their acceptance to the College. (Standards I.C.2, 4, 5, 6)

The institution uses and publishes governing board policies on academic freedom and academic responsibility within the Policy and Procedure Handbook and the College Catalog. The College is clear in its commitment to intellectual freedom and ensures that faculty distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views in the discipline. (Standard I.C.7)

The College promotes honesty and integrity in its policies stated on the website, and within the College catalog, the Staff and Faculty Handbook, and the Policy and Procedures Handbook. Current policies reviewed also reflect an emphasis on the expectation of staff and faculty to conduct their work with honesty and integrity. There is a code of ethics for officers and employees, volunteers, members, and students. Additionally, a student rights policy, an academic honesty policy and a faculty grievances and appeals policy exist. (Standards I.C.8, 9, 10)

As evidenced in the mission, the College is committed to student achievement and learning. YACPA operates as a non-profit organization and there are no owners or shareholders of the institution, allowing the College to focus solely on activities related to achievement of its mission and not on financial returns. To assure that programs maintain exacting standards and that there is no conflict between The Young Americans organization and YACPA, the Board has also given the College president responsibility to hire, manage, evaluate, promote, and terminate employees without influence or approval from The Young Americans, Inc. organization. (Standard I.C.14)

The institution fully discloses its affiliation with North Central Michigan College (NCMC). YACPA developed and adopted an Integrity with Accrediting Commission Policy and shared it with faculty and staff through the Policy and Procedures Handbook. This policy commits YACPA to maintaining an honest relationship with accrediting bodies. The College currently operates under BPPE and submits all required information to them by established deadlines. The College catalog and website communicate clearly the status of the College's accreditation.

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard (I.C and ER 19, 20, 21)

\*Standard I.C.11 is not applicable to YACPA.

### **Recommendation**

None.

## **STANDARD II**

### **STUDENT LEARNING PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

#### **II.A. Instructional Programs**

##### **General Observations**

The College offers an Associate of Arts (AA) in Performance with a choice of emphasis in vocal, acting, or dance, as well as a Music Outreach Tour Training Certificate. All are consistent with the missions of the College and the parent institution, The Young Americans, Inc.

The College entered into an agreement in 2010 with North Central Michigan College (NCMC), which is regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. NCMC is an associate degree granting institution that has had a regional relationship with The Young Americans outdoor, summer theater program in their area for over 40 years. YACPA provided students the opportunity to co-enroll and earn up to 60 units of transferrable credit from NCMC. These courses are primarily Breadth of Knowledge (BoK; known in CA community college parlance as “General Education,”) courses. As an unaccredited institution, YACPA’s courses do not transfer. The College clearly states this information on the YACPA website and in the catalog. (Standard II.A.10; ER 10)

Under the agreement with NCMC, YACPA adopted NCMC course outlines of record, syllabi, and approved texts. YACPA faculty conduct an annual curriculum review, but the College is currently required to submit requests for revisions to NCMC for approval. The College submits its syllabi for NCMC courses to NCMC, YACPA department chairs, and the Dean of Instruction for review and approval. NCMC reviews and approves Faculty candidates based on their qualifications and credentials prior to YACPA offering employment. YACPA faculty maintain academic freedom to determine how they teach a course to meet the learning outcomes. (Standard II.A.12; ER 10, 13)

The catalog states that the College intends to achieve accreditation by 2020 because of the recent passage of SB 1247, which requires full accreditation by 2020 for California colleges to grant degrees. In 2020, YACPA will begin offering transferrable degrees to all new students, and continuing students will be provided a teach-out for NCMC courses. Once continuing students have completed the NCMC program, the agreement between the two colleges will cease. Catalog rights include the ability for a student to graduate with the program requirements. The College has also published the Institutional Objectives, i.e., Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), and Program Level Outcomes (PLOs) in the catalog. (Standards II.A.11, 15)

YACPA regularly evaluates and improves the quality and currency of its instructional program, regardless of delivery mode or location. The institution systematically strives to improve programs and courses to enhance learning outcomes and achievement for students.

## **Findings and Evidence**

The certificate and degree programs share common program level outcomes that articulate what students can expect to have learned when completing a certificate or degree. Students can also elect to earn the Associate of Arts (AA) in Performance with an acting, dance, or vocal emphasis, but the College considers them part of the same program, with the same PLOs. Most students report an educational goal of completing the AA degree. The College reviews program effectiveness annually, and uses PLO and course SLO outcomes to plan changes to course curriculum, sequencing of courses in the program, and institutional planning. (Standards II.A.1, 2; ER 11)

The curriculum approval process ensures that courses and programs are consistent with accepted norms of higher education. All faculty are required to teach in alignment with the course outline of record (COR), and regular evaluations occur to ensure they are teaching to the COR. (Standard II.A.1)

Department chairs work with their faculty to conduct a higher-level annual review on each of the four departments, and later blend them into a single program review. The College has developed a new annual review template for implementation in the current academic year. YACPA collects and uses achievement data in analyzing its own effectiveness. (Standard II.A.2)

The College has established processes for faculty discussions for improving teaching and learning based on SLO assessment data, and student retention, persistence, and success rates. The criteria used in department and College review include relevancy, currency, appropriateness, achievement of learning outcomes, and planning. The team verified during the visit that these discussions and trainings take place. (Standard II.A.3)

The College recognizes three levels of student learning outcomes—course level, program level, and institutional level. Course SLOs are identified on the COR and on each course syllabus. Ongoing assessment of SLOs has continued since the inception of the College as a degree granting institution in fall of 2014. YACPA also “closes the loop” on courses that do not meet established benchmarks through action plans such as revision of curriculum and sequencing of courses. The team reviewed evidence that all students receive a course syllabus for every section as well as having the syllabi available in Populi and every syllabus identified the course SLOs. (Standard II.A.3)

The College offers one pre-collegiate level course, ENG 095 College Preparatory Writing, for students who place below college level writing and reading. While infrequent, the College does occasionally admit students who assess lower than this level. YACPA evaluates this course in the same manner as the college level courses. (Standards II.A.4, 5)

Faculty meet the minimum qualifications established by the California Private Postsecondary Education Act of 2009. Minimum experience and educational requirements for faculty vary depending upon the department with which they are aligned. Each BoK instructor possesses a Master's degree or higher, and performing arts faculty must possess a Bachelor's degree or



higher, or have extensive professional experience. Courses meet the standards of rigor, hours of instruction, and hours of work outside of the classroom to match those of other American Higher Education institutions. (Standard II.A.5; ER 12)

The College schedules courses to allow students to complete certificates and degrees within a two-year period. The College uses data to inform the scheduling process. YACPA has twice modified course sequencing based on the evaluation of SLO assessment data and success and persistence rates. (Standard II.A.6; ER 9)

The College schedules intensive three-week courses, such as Life Skills for Student Success, in August followed by ten-week terms in fall and spring. The College offers the full certificate program face-to-face on the Corona campus for the first-year cohort. Student introduction to online instruction occurs during this time, as the majority participate in The Young Americans Music Outreach Tours in their second year. YACPA also offers practicum and online courses during off-campus performance months in order for students to meet requirements for a two-year graduation sequence. (Standard II.A.6; ER 9)

There are two modules consisting of multiple courses (12-13 units) offered both semesters in the second year; one focuses on performance application and one on career preparation. Breadth of Knowledge courses, which are selected to complement the performance core courses to prepare students to meet the program learning outcomes (PLOs), comprise 30 units toward the 60 units required for an Associate of Arts in Performance degree. (Standard II.A.6; ER 9)

Delivery modes used by the College include face-to-face instruction, and online and hybrid deliveries. Completion rates for courses utilizing online delivery are low, especially compared to courses offered through face-to-face instruction. The courses offered online are BoK courses taken by second-year students who are on tour with The Young Americans, Inc. The College has identified challenges that students face while on tour that impact their ability for successful completion of their online courses. Further, the College has identified improvements it intends to make to better support student learning and achievement in this area, including a potential move away from online courses after the College becomes independently accredited. (Standard II.A.7)

Teaching methodologies include lectures, lab work, written evaluations, group presentations, exams, and performances. Online and face-to-face courses use instructional methods to address the learning styles of students. Some of these include student-to-student interaction, collaborative activities, discussion boards, and synchronous instruction. Instructors provide online feedback on student work using grading rubrics, typed notes, and voice memos. (Standard II.A.7)

The College provided the comprehensive visit team ample evidence that it ensures the quality of its instruction. YACPA follows the practices common to American higher education, and has policies and procedures in place to define these practices. Some of this evidence includes documentation of its course outlines of record (CORs), curriculum approval process, syllabi, and College catalog. All CORs reflect the appropriate number of contact hours per unit of

credit awarded. The CORs provide evidence of the assessments used to validate student learning. The catalog includes information about matriculation, sequence of courses, and personal and learning support services to promote student success. (Standards II.A.5, 6, 7)

The College's evidences its grading policy and policy on credit and clock hours in the College catalog. The CORs have stated SLOs, as do the syllabi. Mapped to PLOs, course SLOs assessment is part of the program review process. The College does not use standardized examinations. (Standards II.A.8, 9; ER10)

College graduation policies allow students who have demonstrated competence in artistry, leadership, global perspective, and continuous learning, as well as reading, written expression, and mathematics, to be awarded the Associate of Arts in Performance degree. The student must have satisfactorily completed 60 semester units of college work that include 30 units in Breadth of Knowledge courses, 28 units in a major, and two additional elective units. The College catalog lists the courses and PLOs required for the program of study. Students can (and some have done so successfully), transfer units from YACPA to private schools. The NCMC courses are accredited and thus have a transferability guarantee, however, it is not to the exclusion of transferring YACPA courses. (Standards II.A.10, 12; ER 12)

The faculty is in the process of integrating its BoK philosophy and SLOs interdepartmentally across the curriculum to increase student engagement with the curriculum. The College cited multiple examples of meaningful cross-curricular assignments between BoK courses, performance-based courses, and the outreach program. A majority of the BoK courses fall under the agreement between the College and North Central Michigan College (NCMC). Once independently accredited, the College would eventually discontinue its partnership with NCMC. This would give YACPA the freedom to develop and offer its own BoK curriculum geared more toward the specific needs and interests of YACPA students and the institution's mission. (Standard II.A.12; ER 12)

The College's degree program includes a performance core of 28 units, 30 units of BoK courses, and two additional elective units. The College maintains a BoK philosophy, clearly stated in its catalog, and faculty input is central to curriculum development activities. (Standards II.A.12, 13; ER 12)

The Student Learning Outcome Reporting Manual states that all faculty teaching a course must agree on the outcomes to be assessed each year, as well as the measurement instrument and criteria. Program assessment occurs through course mapping to PLOs. Faculty are required to report on a minimum of three course SLO's every academic semester. The College is not satisfied with its TK20 Assessment Solution software, and is investigating new software that will better support data collection and analysis of student learning outcomes. An Academic Advisory Board codified in the Young Americans bylaws allows for review and advises the College leadership on academic issues (Standards II.A.13, 14)

The College has a published policy regarding program discontinuance that protects students' catalog rights to guarantee them the right to finish the program through a scheduled teach-out

of courses. (Standard II.A.15)

The College provided evidence of course and department reviews, dialog that resulted, and subsequent plans developed to improve teaching and learning. YACPA has created a practice of institutional dialogue based upon the establishment of clear student learning outcomes, course and program level assessment and revisions to the course outlines. This process has led to continuous improvement at the course and program level. (Standard II.A.16)

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard. (II.A and ER 9, 10, 11, 12, 13)

### **Recommendation**

None.

## **II.B. Library and Learning Support Services**

### **General Observations**

YACPA offers standard, but non-traditional library and learning support services through its library and its learning centers. Library staff are available to students and staff online and are not available in person on campus. Faculty and staff in both areas collaborate to meet student needs and to provide excellent services. Students utilize both spaces throughout the day and those interviewed conveyed how important library and tutoring services are in supporting student success. Student services programs align with the College mission.

A Virtual Library with contracted online librarians was selected to support the new educational program to maximize student access whether on or off campus. The College has added a catalog of on-campus resources to the Populi information management system to track holdings. The College does not conduct intra-library loans with other institutions.

### **Findings and Evidence**

All students have access to two online databases: Grove (Oxford) Music Online that supports the performance courses, and the ProQuest Research Library, that supports the BoK courses. The library relies on a secure proxy-server authentication system that allows for tracking of each instance of utilization. On-campus library collections include reference materials, circulating books, course reserves and a print music and theatrical works. (Standard II.B.1; ER 17)

Learning resources include integrated TV/DVD systems in every classroom, the Virtual Library, the physical resource library, a piano lab, media equipment, a computer lab, private practice rooms and a Learning Center. These resources combine to provide support needed for students to succeed and for the College to achieve its mission. (Standard II.B.2; ER 17)

The virtual library has an established evaluation process with metrics. The College undertook an information needs gap analysis for BoK courses and an analysis of syllabi references to the library for assignments completion in 2015. This resulted in a compulsory library statement for all BoK courses. The College can track online utilization regardless of which web site a student uses to access the Virtual Library. (Standards II.B.1, 3; ER 11)

Dedicated virtual librarians assigned to each department design instructional materials in conjunction with faculty and work with faculty to embed library use into student assignments. The team verified that academic personnel are involved in identifying and integrating resources and services in support of student learning, accomplished through annual course-level SLO reports where faculty identify resources needed to support their improvement plans, and through annual reviews submitted by the department chairs. The College continues to build the library resource and collections to offer sufficient library source material for embedded assignment integration. (Standard II.B.2)

The team confirmed that the College provides literacy instruction through an annual orientation to the library and through BoK course content and assignments. Librarians work with BoK faculty to embed critical thinking tasks to support this ILO. Reference librarians are available to students seven days a week via email, and each department has its own library liaison. Targeted outcomes in the library action plan have resulted in the development of a curated virtual library, funding for commercial resources, and the development of one-step online access to library resources. The learning center's annual review correlates utilization with SLOs and student achievement outcomes. Utilization data for 2016-17 indicates the learning center's sole use is by students needing assistance with BoK courses. (Standard II.B.3)

The BoK department chair oversees a learning center staffed by paid second-year student tutors. Established in fall 2016, the center initially provided support for writing courses. Because of low utilization and SLO assessment data, the center was expanded to support business math, music theory, and piano. Efforts to increase the use of the Learning Center have included adding a mandatory use component to the business math, music theory and piano classes. (Standard II.B.3)

YACPA provides individual, group, and limited phone/web tutoring for students taking BoK and music theory courses and recently added success coaching. The College assesses the quality of student services through student surveys, course completion data, SLO assessment data, student utilization reports, and the YACPA annual report. The College provided considerable evidence to demonstrate it had planned and implemented improvements based on the assessment of data.

YACPA maintains a contract with The Virtual Librarian to provide virtual library services to YACPA faculty and students. Each year, the librarians assess the usage of the library's licensed content and other resources and services to assure that they are sufficient and continue to support the curriculum and student learning. (Standard II.B.4; ER 17)

## **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard. (II.B; ER 17)

## **Recommendation**

None.

## **II.C. Student Support Services**

### **General Observations**

The College provides a variety of student services both in person and online, with exemplary programs that reflect collaboration across student services. Equal access to those services and activities by the student population occurs. Narrative and evidence identify high standards for quality student support services for all students, including but not limited to, personal counseling, academic advising, assessment, admissions, resident advisors, and success coaching.

The YACPA Strategic Plan sets a goal of early intervention that students will have access to a success-coaching program, which will identify and intervene with any student who receives a grade of "D" on any assignment. In fall of 2017, the College will roll out its second software iteration for success coaching. The College hopes that 50 percent of the student body will avail themselves of the student services offered. In addition, the College hopes that 90 percent of the student body will participate in success coaching while enrolled in the College.

The College provides leased housing adjacent to campus, and two residence advisors are on duty nightly from 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. Students and faculty may access campus buildings Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to midnight when classes are in session, and from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. when no classes are in session and on weekends (pending rehearsal schedules) to allow students a place to study and practice their performance skills. Access to student support services, including online and phone access, is available to students at a distance.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Student support services regularly evaluates the effectiveness of their programs, services, and delivery methods. The College utilizes student satisfaction surveys for better understanding of student needs and trends; however, student services does not appear to have identified outcomes and effectiveness metrics. Student services personnel regularly participate in a variety of training opportunities including staff meetings and professional conferences. Through a combination of documents, program review reports, and announcements, a wide range of evidence supports the findings. (Standards II.C.1, 2)

A licensed mental health professional is on staff to provide counseling to students, faculty,

and staff. Services are available on a referral or walk-in basis, or by phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The counselor maintains confidential records, and works with local sheriffs to have a student evaluated by a psychiatrist when necessary. The College has been proactive in prioritizing students' mental health concerns as part of its student support programs. (Standard II.C.3; ER 15)

The dean of students is readily available to assist students on campus, and accompanies groups on tour to provide support for students involved in practicum studies. In the dean's absence, two student success coordinators are available to students and refer issues to the College president. Students taking online courses participate in an orientation and meet with student services staff. During the semester, online students meet with the dean of students via conference calls. (Standard II.C.3; ER 15)

The College maintains five resident advisors (RA) in support of the student residential life program. Two RA's are on duty each night from 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. and are provided with an emergency cell phone for which all students have the number to use in case of emergency. The RA's complete nightly reports and meet as necessary and at least monthly with the dean of student services. Through a combination of reports, plans, and community documents, a wide range of evidence supports the findings.

The College states it offers no co-curricular activities, but touring with The Young Americans, Inc. allows students to earn practicum units for their performance experience, much like cooperative work experience in the California Community Colleges. The dean of students travels with the tour 12 weeks per year to be accessible to students and staff, and students may take practicum courses during their tours along with other online courses. (Standard II.C.4)

Admissions staff provide complete student advising and transfer information, not only prior to enrollment, but throughout the students' YACPA experience. On campus, the dean of administrative services is responsible for the provision of academic advising to all students at key points throughout their program. The College and the Administrative Services Department adhere to the admission requirements and processes as dictated by the College's mission and policies. The College assesses the effectiveness of admissions requirements each year in dialog between faculty and staff. (Standards II.C.5, 6, 7; ER 16)

The College utilizes a cohort system with a defined pathway of study, and supports at-risk students through early identification and early intervention. The dean of students works closely with students to identify options to support their ability to progress through the program. As circumstances warrant, the College offers intersessions for students who need to retake courses. The creation and use of Degree Audit Reports provide clarity for students in terms of their progress and pathway to completion, as well as for the College in facilitating student completion. (Standard II.C.5)

The College utilizes standardized placement instruments using multiple measures, and conducts regular evaluations of the placement scores relative to student success in the

courses in which they place. (Standard II.C.7)

The institution maintains confidential student records electronically, with provisions for secure backup of all files. The College utilizes the Populi information management system for storing students' academic, attendance, and financial records electronically. Although faculty, staff, and students have access to Populi, user rights related to role control access. Data resides in the cloud with daily backups. Physical files are stored in locked, fireproof filing cabinets located in the administration building. The College publishes and follows policies for release of confidential student records that align with current federal and state law. Student support services and all staff personnel receive training to ensure the confidentiality of records and student information. A wide range of evidence supports the findings. (Standard II.C.8)

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard. (II.C and ER 15, 16)

### **Recommendation for Improvement**

See Recommendation for Improvement #3

## **Standard III Resources**

### **III.A. Human Resources**

#### **General Observations**

The team found that YACPA has established processes for recruiting, hiring and evaluating qualified faculty, staff and administrators. The College has a comprehensive Faculty and Staff Handbook and uses it as a guide to outline processes and procedures for human resources. Job descriptions exist for all positions. Faculty must meet requirements that demonstrate effective teaching. The College confirms requisite education and experience. YACPA performs evaluations on all personnel at systematic intervals. YACPA is a small College and the team found an adequate number of faculty, staff and administrators to support the programs. The College has a formal orientation for all full- and part-time faculty and staff. The College collects information on the diversity of their staff. The expectation of ethical conduct by College employees, including consequences for violation, exist at YACPA. The College makes professional development opportunities available to faculty as part of the regular monthly meetings. YACPA maintains confidential personnel records in a secured area.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

The team found that YACPA has a comprehensive Staff and Faculty Handbook containing the processes and procedures for hiring and faculty. Job descriptions of positions include the required education, training, and experience for a postsecondary institution. During the faculty hiring procedures, all participants in the screening and interviewing process examine each candidate against core criteria using the same applicant review template. The team confirmed through interviews with faculty and staff that the process for screening, interviewing and hiring was thorough and consistent. The team reviewed YACPA job descriptions and found they relate to the College mission and goals. Through interviews with staff, the team learned that the job descriptions accurately reflect position duties, responsibilities, and authority. (Standard III.A.1)

The College seeks faculty who have knowledge and experience in the performing arts. The team observed advertisements for open jobs at YACPA that included minimum qualifications for applicants. Job descriptions for faculty include specified qualifications for the type of faculty position that is open. The team examined personnel files of faculty and confirmed that faculty had appropriate degrees or substituting professional experience, discipline expertise, level of assignment, teaching skills, scholarly activities, and the potential to contribute to the mission of the institution. Faculty assignments have specified documentation of faculty responsibilities, including the review and development of curriculum and the assessment of learning. Through the same review of personnel files, the team confirmed that administrators and other employees responsible for educational programs and services possess education and experience to perform duties to sustain institutional effectiveness and academic quality. One faculty member holds an Australian



master's degree; however, that employee also holds a doctorate degree from a U.S. university. (Standards III.A.2, 3, 4; ER14)

The team found that YACPA has a policy and procedure for evaluating faculty at least every three years, and evaluating staff and administrators annually. The team studied detailed evaluation forms provided as evidence, including a thorough teaching observations form. The team observed evidence of a discussion at a recent faculty meeting of the outline for a template of an updated faculty evaluation. The team believes this will help the College strengthen its evaluation of faculty by employing a wider range of criteria in the review. (Standards III.A.5, 6)

YACPA is small, with approximately 200 students, and it appears they have adequate staffing to meet their needs, although at the time of the visit there were two vacancies: Counselor, and Administrative Assistant as shown on the organization chart. The team confirmed fulfillment of the counselor position. The Administrative Assistant position was an expansion position that they have decided to fill at a future date. The team observed a comprehensive faculty orientation checklist that provides thorough information on College practices, processes and policies. All staff members, including part-time faculty, are required to attend employee orientation. The College conducts professional development for faculty, held during all-faculty meetings, and made available to all faculty. (Standards III.A.7, 8)

The team found that the organizational chart of the College indicates that there are a sufficient number of faculty and staff with the required qualifications to support the effective educational and administrative operations of the institution. The parent organization, The Young Americans, Inc., manages the accounts payable and accounts receivable for the College. The College manages technological support and physical plant operations through a third party. The College provides further assistance to staff by utilizing scholarship students, who act as student workers. There is an application process for student workers that goes to the scholarship committee; the director of admissions makes a rating on their skills and the dean of administrative services determines student need. YACPA appears to have a sufficient number of administrators with appropriate preparation and expertise to provide continuity and effective administrative leadership to the College's mission and purpose. Staffing needs are determined through the annual planning process. Requests for positions are made by the areas and prioritized by the division and then by the executive team. (Standards III.A.9, 10; ER 8, 14)

The College has a Staff and Faculty Handbook with clearly written personnel policies and procedures that are available to all personnel. These policies and procedures seem fair, equitable, and consistently administered. Through its policies and practices, the institution creates and maintains appropriate programs, practices, and services that support its diverse personnel. Staff and faculty may report their ethnicity in the College Populi database voluntarily; however, most opt not to report ethnicity. (Standards III.A.11, 12)

The team found that YACPA reviewed its ethics policy, which is signed off by each employee during orientation. The policy includes consequences for any violation. (Standard III.A.13)

The College provides opportunities for professional development to all personnel. Faculty professional development woven into faculty meetings are determined based on what provides the most benefit to the largest array of faculty. Annual review now asks process evaluation questions. The College is implementing the faculty evaluation; formalizing and creating templates; making evaluations annually, except faculty; and decentralizing the evaluation and pushing it out to department chairs and deans. (Standard III.A.14)

The team observed that the College maintains secure and confidential personnel records. Each employee has access to his/her personnel records in accordance with law. (Standard III.A.15)

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard. (III.A and ER 8, 14)

### **Recommendation**

None.

## **III.B. Physical Resources**

### **General Observations**

The ISER demonstrates the College's mission to provide students with performance-based education requiring specific physical resources. Currently, all College facilities are leased on a long-term basis, and are in an industrial center with broad, tree and grass lined streets and well-kept buildings. Immediately adjacent to the College, but not directly accessible, is the apartment complex where the College rents and then sub-rents to students, approximately 30 apartments. YACPA facilities began in 2005 with the Lisle Family Studios building (7,500 square feet) and in 2009, added the administration building (7,500 square feet), and in 2011, added the academics building (10,000 square feet) that includes labs, and performance spaces. These three buildings are co-located and integrate well. The Institutional Master Plan outlines developing growth needs including facility and equipment planning. The long-time dream of the founder was to own a dedicated College campus. That dream continues, and a rendering of his vision of the future College campus is displayed prominently in the president's office. Current needs are driving changes regarding the use of existing facilities. Resulting from a generous, private donation, the College is repurposing current storage areas into a multi-purpose student lounge and additional faculty offices, and is relocating storage to a nearby offsite location. The dean of administrative services is responsible for all physical plant, equipment, infrastructure and operational issues.

## **Findings and Evidence**

The College buildings are modern and well maintained both inside and outside. Although there was remodeling construction activity while the team visited, the team could see through the dust and determine the adequacy and upkeep of the facilities. Hallways throughout the campus are adorned with colorful art and photographs. All facilities on campus are air-conditioned and during the visit when outside temperatures were unseasonably high, all facilities were cool and comfortable. The College program requires large, open spaces, as well as standard-sized classrooms. The furniture design and layout in rooms throughout the College allows for maximum flexibility of use. Classrooms are installed with equipment to allow the use of multiple learning modalities by the teachers. Restroom facilities are clean and adequate. Faculty offices are interspersed on the campus and are readily accessible to the students. Administrative offices for The Young Americans, Inc. and for the College are in the administrative office building. While not commodious, administrative offices and conference rooms are certainly adequate in size and are furnished appropriately. Each of the buildings has electronic key pads at each entrance that are operational 24/7. Students and employees are issued a security code for easy movement throughout the campus. Student codes are disarmed overnight. Total cost of ownership (TCO) is less of an issue for YACPA since the College leases all its space. For College-owned equipment however, TCO is acknowledged and utilized in the long-range budgeting process, the Master Plan, and in departmental planning.

The dean of administrative services is responsible for safety on campus and at the student residences. The team confirmed that the Campus Safety Report is up-to-date. Evidence was provided that the Fire Inspection Report and insurance policies are current. The team engaged in detailed discussion on the safety of student housing facilities, and conducted a tour of the apartments. The College is very attentive to the safety needs of its residential students. The College employs five (5) Resident Advisors (RAs), two of whom are on duty from 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. at the apartments each night to assist with any problems. Residential students are provided with an “on-duty” phone number that operates from 2:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m., seven days a week, linking them to College administrators in case of emergency (in addition to local 9-1-1 assistance). Team members toured the residential apartments on October 4, 2017, and found the apartments, accommodating up to four students each, and the large, gated apartment complex, to be more than adequate. The apartment complex location is adjacent to the campus and appears to be generally quiet and safe. (Standards III.B.1, 2, 3, 4)

Because of the small size of the student population, the administrative personnel and faculty have close relationships with the students, making students feel comfortable to discuss safety or other personal concerns. Based on the team’s observations, and on evidence provided at interviews and in the ISER, the YACPA administration seems fully engaged in providing quality physical resources that best serve the students.

## **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard. (III.B)

## **Recommendation**

None

## **III.C. Technology Resources**

### **General Observations**

YACPA students, staff, and faculty are supported with technology resources and data management throughout the campus that are required for the College to run smoothly. Technology, in its many 2017 iterations, abounds on campus and is readily accessible to students and staff. The College maintains a network system using Windows 2008/2012 across a fully switched network. There is a fiber connection to the internet. The College provides and supports both PC and Mac technology. The dean of administrative services is the chief information technology officer. A primary focus of the administrative services department is the design, acquisition, and support of information technology. Technology support is available throughout the day for students and is available 24/7 for the employees through remote connectivity. The College employs the latest system protections through firewalls, anti-virus software, and spam filters. Nightly backups of the system further protect the College data.

SIG Technologies, an independent contractor, handles security, system log monitoring, virus definition management, scheduled system audits, remote management and support, service monitoring, backup monitoring, and management and disaster recovery support for the College. The entire College campus has Wi-Fi access and students in residence are provided internet connections at the apartments. The network infrastructure is divided into two categories, student and administrative. Such a demarcation prevents College business interruptions from inadvertent student use interference. Google for non-profits is the email system used by the College. It provides the complete range of features needed for a modern college operation.

The College uses two primary software systems in its operations, Populi, the web-based information management system that is used to store student data, and provide other web resources such as access to the Library portal/Libguides, and TK20, used as the College's web-based assessment and planning software. While the College is satisfied with the Populi system, it is not satisfied with the TK20 system and is making plans to transition to a more robust software that will interface better with Populi, and will allow for improved data collection and analysis.

Wi-Fi/internet capability is available throughout the entire campus and recently has been upgraded to work faster. The Wi-Fi provided by the College is a secure system. Departmental annual reports include the opportunity for staff and faculty to make technology requests, and these requests are considered in conjunction with the College's broad-based, trickle down and end-of-life operational guidelines that squeeze the maximum use of technology from each piece of equipment before it is retired from service. (Standards III.C.1, 2)

## **Findings and Evidence**

The YACPA administration is fully engaged in providing quality technology resources that best serve the students and the employees. The College has defined processes for upgrading technology, repairing existing equipment, and developing an effective system to track students' progress and class participation. Faculty has been successful in equipping each classroom with an array of multimedia instructional technology to enhance the learning environment. The College has created a secure technology environment that safeguards the business operations, as well as the instructional programs. (Standard III.C.1)

Of note is the College's positive response to access difficulties experienced by second-year students who are on tour and continuing their degree studies through on-line instruction. Student surveys indicated that Wi-Fi connections at coffee shops and private homes were inadequate and not consistently available, thus impeding the timely and successful completion of coursework. YACPA implemented wireless hotspots, which travel with the students to ensure online access for participation in online discussions and for submitting coursework. The College also has purchased laptop computers to loan to students on tour who do not have their own computer. Another notable process improvement that came about because of the diligent nature of the College's on-going self-evaluation is the creation of tutorials for students in the successful use of the student portal features needed to be known for students to use the instructional and administrative tools at their command. (Standards III.C.2, 3)

Extensive evidence was presented to show the many training opportunities afforded faculty and staff in the use of instructional and administrative technology. These trainings are frequent and occur throughout the year. The College employs various learning modalities to provide this instruction. (Standard III.C.4)

Expectations for the use of technology and consequences for its misuse are outlined in Code of Conduct policies for students and employees. Appropriate use of technology is discussed in meetings with staff and faculty, and in student orientations. The guidelines are published in the Catalog and in the Staff and Faculty Handbook for easy reference. (Standard III.C.5)

## **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard. (III.C)

## **Recommendation**

None.

### **III.D. Financial Resources**

#### **General Observations**

The team found the College faculty, staff, students and administrators very helpful and forthcoming with information and documentation. This College shows growth and development toward a higher functioning, more formal organization, which will serve it well once accredited. The majority of the College's revenue comes from fees.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

The College adequately plans financial resources to support and sustain student learning. The College uses its mission to drive decision making relative to improvement plans for instruction and services. The distribution of resources supports the development, maintenance, allocation and reallocation, and enhancement of programs and services. The operational budget of the College is very tight. Lacking a substantial ending balance each year, the team confirmed the College operated within its budget for the past three years. The College planned its 2015 budget with only a \$50,000 ending balance; the evidence shows an ending balance of \$64,957. The College planned its 2016 budget with a deficit; the evidence shows an ending balance of \$29,951. The College planned its 2017 budget with only a \$70,000 ending balance, ending that year with \$300,401. A review of financial documents for YACPA and The Young Americans, Inc. shows sufficient resources to meet College needs. The College monitors its budget through the year to maintain fiscal solvency and integrity and make adjustments where necessary. (Standard III.D.1; ER 18)

The mission of the College is pervasive in all decisions of the College. The College disseminates financial information throughout the institution in a timely manner. YACPA departments meet to review plans and determine goals for the coming year and establish the resources needed to meet those goals. The College accumulates the requests by area and the Executive Committee prioritizes them. Guidelines and processes for financial planning and budget development are contained in the Faculty and Staff Handbook. The budget development and budget requests processes are comprehensive and inclusive. (Standards III.D.2, 3)

Institutional planning reflects a realistic assessment of financial resource availability, development of financial resources, partnerships, and expenditure requirements. YACPA has a transparent budget and financial reporting process. Those involved with the budget are provided with budget data in numerous formats showing comparative data. The College has struggled with having appropriate internal control structures because they have such a small staff. However, they have carefully distributed work to ensure a separation of duties to protect the integrity of financial transactions. They have also implemented suggestions from the auditor to improve their internal controls. The College is committed to producing reliable financial documents to the College that accurately represent the resources and the allocation of resources. (Standards III.D.4, 5, 6)

The team found evidence of the institution's annual external independent audits and its response to external audit findings. The responses were comprehensive, filed on time, and communicated with College leadership. The team reviewed the audited financial statements and the management letter. The outcomes of the two most recent fiscal year audits (2013-14 and 2015-16) were qualified opinions relative to the post-retirement benefits. The College followed up the management letter with a formal response addressing all recommendations. The team confirmed that the College addressed all the recommendations from the prior year's audit. The College's internal and external auditing incorporates the evaluation and assessment of financial and internal control systems. The institution has managed through the past several years with sufficient cash flow for operations. At the end of fiscal year 2016-17, the reserves reached 14%. This provides the College with the flexibility to maintain its academic and student support programs. (Standards III.D.7, 8, 9)

The College does not participate in any financial aid programs now, other than a small amount of privately donated funds earmarked for students in need of financial assistance. The College has a cooperative agreement with North Central Michigan College (NCMC) so that students can take college courses that transfer. The College has indicated this is the most significant contractual agreement into which YACPA has entered. Student payments for NCMC courses represent tuition revenues to YACPA. Students enrolled in NCMC classes may obtain financial aid to assist with the cost of the fees charged by NCMC. (Standards III.D.10, 15)

The team verified that the level of financial resources available to the College provides a reasonable expectation of both short-term and long-term financial solvency. When making short-range financial plans, the institution considers its long-range financial priorities to assure financial stability. The institution clearly identifies, plans, and allocates resources for payment of liabilities and future obligations. The College does not fund or account properly for pensions, according to audit indications, but has a plan to bring that accounting into compliance. A limited number of College employees have pension benefits. The institution plans for and allocates appropriate resources for the payment of liabilities and future obligations, including Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB), compensated absences, and other employee related obligations. The College has decided not to have the actuarial plan to determine Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) completed due to the expected cost of an audit, approximately \$20,000. The College's current strategy will fully fund the current OPEB obligation within four years; therefore, it is not fiscally responsible to undertake this study. The impacted employees are satisfied with this strategy. (Standards III.D.11, 12)

YACPA has very little debt. Other funding is available to the College for special resource requests and student scholarships. In the event of financial exigency, the College has the benefit of support from The Young Americans, Inc. (Standards III.D.13, 14)

Contractual agreements with external entities are consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, governed by institutional policies, and contain appropriate provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution and the quality of its programs, services, and operations. The team found one contract (Canon) governed by New York State law. (Standard III.D.16)

The College operates through a parent organization that provides support and resources to the College when needed. The College functions on a strict annual budget. The Board reviews budget reports quarterly. Audit reports indicate the need for better controls in some areas, minor improvements in accounting practices, and specifically noted a qualified opinion about the funding of the retirement obligation. The College has been very responsive and has addressed all audit recommendations and they have a mechanism to address the qualified opinion. The mission of the College drives planning and resource allocation.

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard. (III.D and ER 18)

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

6. To improve, the team recommends the College clearly show the set-aside reserve in financial documents. (Standards III.D.6, 9)
  
7. To improve, the team recommends the College develop a formal internal process to evaluate the validity of its internal control systems and use the results of this assessment to develop the department's improvement plans. (Standards III.D.7, 8, 9)



## **Standard IV Leadership and Governance**

### **IV.A Decision-Making Roles and Processes**

#### **General Observations**

In preparation to become an accredited institution, the College has created a Policy and Procedure Handbook to define the decision-making roles and processes and guide the transition from centralized decision-making processes to a formalized and more collaborative process. The Institutional Self-Evaluation Report for YACPA says that “in the early years of program and operational development, decision-making was highly concentrated in the president’s office.” To establish the authority for administrators, faculty, and staff to participate in the overall decision-making processes, the Policy and Procedure Handbook directly assigns YACPA policy approval to the College Policy and Procedure Committee (CPPC). Consequently, YACPA has the authority to develop policies and procedures necessary to support its mission and maintain institutional integrity.

Interviews with the president of the Board of Directors, and the newly hired CEO for the non-profit corporation revealed that the CEO plays the role of balancing and supporting both the artistic sector and the College sector of The Young Americans, Inc. The CEO’s primary focus is on finance, budgeting, and revenue generation for the corporation. Regarding YACPA, the ISER describes the CEO as being the equivalent of a chancellor in a multi-college district system. The College president, who reports to the CEO, is in charge of planning, overseeing, and evaluating the instructional and administrative structures of YACPA. Under the Young Americans Inc. structure, the YACPA president is equivalent to a president in a multi-college district system.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

Decision-making at YACPA has evolved in recent years and more closely aligns with the expectations of the Accreditation Standards. Various segments of the College have the opportunity to suggest innovative ideas through such processes as the preparation of annual review reports. Various committee meetings also provide opportunities for sharing potential innovations. For overall decision-making processes, the most recent version of the Policy and Procedure Handbook states “the CPPC will meet at the conclusion of each academic year under the chairmanship of the College president. Other participating members of the CPPC will include the dean of administrative services, dean of instruction, dean of students, and department chairs.” The ISER also states, “Given the 100 percent congruence between the membership of the CPPC committee and those involved in the department chair meetings, the CPPC committee adapted its procedures to merge CPPC discussions with department chair meetings.” However, the College has adapted both processes since the writing of the ISER to involve different segments of the College community at varying levels of responsibility. (Standards IV.A.1, 2, 3)

Regarding the quality of the academic programs, The Young Americans Inc. formed an Academic Advisory Committee whose purpose and charter includes providing guidance on the quality and efficiency of the academic program and on major administrative decisions. Meeting quarterly, the Academic Advisory Committee provided guidance and advice to the president and the YACPA team to align development, policy, and procedure with higher education and ACCJC Standards. Further, when it comes to curriculum development, the ISER clarifies that faculty and department chairs have the leading role and responsibility. According to the current Policy and Procedure Handbook, “the Curriculum Committee will meet two times per year under the chairmanship of the dean of instruction. Other participating members of the Curriculum Committee include the chief artistic officer, College president, and the department chair or at least one faculty representative from each major area of study.” (Standards IV.A.4, 5)

During the site visit, it became apparent that the names of various committees have changed. The former CPPC and the former Curriculum Committee have been subsumed in the new committee structure. The College now has various committees/meeting groups perform specific functions. According to the presentation delivered by the president at the time of the site visit, the College is utilizing a four-layer committee structure:

1. The Executive Committee, which is comprised of the president, dean of administrative services, dean of instruction, and dean of students, focuses on mission fulfillment. It also reviews the annual reports completed by the various sectors of the College.
2. The Department Chairs meeting, which is comprised of the Executive Committee and Department Chairs, deals with issues relating to academic programs.
3. The Core Faculty meeting, which is comprised of the executive committee, department chairs, and most full-time faculty members, works on matters of curriculum and policy that affect instructional activities.
4. The Full Faculty meeting, which is comprised of the Executive Committee, Department Chairs, and all faculty members, deals with student learning and student achievement.

Of note, YACPA is in the process of updating its Policy and Procedure Handbook in 2017-2018 to make the documentation and the practices congruent with each other. The College is working in two important areas. First, YACPA is in the process of implementing revised plans for leadership roles, governance, and decision-making processes in conjunction with the transition from a centralized decision-making process to an integrated and collaborative process. Second, the ISER notes the work that completed to create an effective four-layer committee structure, and to present and describe the structure in the Policy and Procedure Handbook during the 2017-18 review cycle. The College is paying close attention to more accurately describe the existing decision-making processes, to examine the effectiveness of student and staff involvement in decision-making processes, and to evaluate the overall plan to assure the integrity and effectiveness of the decision-making processes. (Standards IV.A.2, 6, 7)

Regarding student involvement in decision-making, no associated student organization exists. Students do not directly participate in committee meetings. However, there is an online suggestion box set up for anonymous student opinions. So far, there have been no opinions submitted by students through this venue. Due to the close contact with students, the dean of students expressed confidence in understanding and representing student interests in meetings. Staff involvement in the decision-making processes is also not apparent.

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard. (IV.A)

### **Recommendation**

None.

## **IV.B. Chief Executive Officer**

### **General Observations**

The College president has general management and administrative authority over YACPA. The Board of Directors for The Young Americans Inc. assigns responsibility to the College president to maintain rigor and standards. In doing so, the president has the authority to hire, manage, evaluate, promote, and terminate College administrators, staff, and faculty without influence or approval from The Young Americans, Inc. The College president is responsible for leading planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness. The CEO for The Young Americans provides oversight for budgeting and financing for the entire organization, including the College, but the day-to-day operations of the College fall under the purview of the president. (ER 4)

### **Findings and Evidence**

As a member of The Young Americans since 1999, the College president takes an active role in realizing and communicating the vision and mission of YACPA. The YACPA vision and mission guide all parts of the YACPA Institutional Strategic Plan and the Institutional Effectiveness Plan. The president developed, implemented, and revised as necessary the 2015-2020 Institutional Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan provides a clear sense of direction and leadership and balances the staffing structure and human resources needs with enrollment planning and budgetary planning. (Standards IV.B.1, 2)

The Strategic Plan has provided a roadmap that guides major decisions. Furthermore, the College president led the development of the Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP) that systematically reviews and assesses the quality, viability, productivity, and outcomes of the College. The IEP culminates with an institutional annual review report. The president has compiled, published, and presented the annual report to the full faculty, the academic advisory committee, and the Board of Directors. (Standards IV.B.3, 5)

The president has put important efforts into leading the College toward success in gaining accreditation. To ensure the College operates in a manner that meets or exceeds Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission Policies, the president has compiled a YACPA reference handbook for board members that includes the ACCJC Guide to Accreditation for Governing Boards, ACCJC Accreditation Standards, and a chart that identifies Standards with direct governing board responsibilities. The president also attended an ACCJC Eligibility Workshop and the ACCJC ISER training, along with several key administrators and with several members of the board. During the site visit, the president prepared a comprehensive, introductory presentation for all reviewers regarding the status of the College. (Standard IV.B.4)

As the ISER points out, the primary community YACPA serves is its student body and the members of The Young Americans, Inc. To work and communicate with this defined community, the president has taken an active role for all constituency groups. For example, the president leads both students' and parents' orientation sessions, attends almost every full-faculty, core faculty, and department chair meeting, and attends performances and in class final presentations. (Standard IV.B.6)

### **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard. (IV.B)

### **Recommendation**

None.

## **IV.C Governing Board**

### **General Observations**

The Board of Directors for the Young Americans Inc., a non-profit organization, serves as the governing board for The Young Americans College of the Performing Arts. The College is one function of the umbrella organization overseen by the Board of Directors. The board devotes a significant amount of time and provides substantial support, including financial support, to the College as it works to become an accredited institution, and provides YACPA students with opportunities to achieve a college education, as well as participation in performance touring companies. The members of the board have brought to fruition the vision of the founder of The Young Americans, Inc. to establish a College and have assisted the president in making progress toward meeting the current Accreditation Standards.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The ultimate responsibility for ensuring the academic quality and integrity of The Young Americans College of the Performing Arts belongs to the Board of Directors of the non-profit organization The Young Americans, Inc. Under the organization's bylaws, the board retains control over financial matters and long-range planning related to the College, and it provides oversight for ensuring the effectiveness of student learning programs and services. The Board of Directors also oversees the development, revision, and implementation of policies affecting the College. (Standard IV.C.1, ER 7)

Minutes from the meetings of the Board of Directors reveal a good working relationship among its members. The board tends to operate by consensus, and most formal actions by the board are unanimous. Members who have a conflict of interest regarding an issue before the board abstain from voting on that issue. (Standard IV.C.2)

The board selected the current president of the College in October 2015 and completed a search for the chief executive officer for The Young Americans, Inc. in August 2017. As a part of the CEO search process, the board identified a need to develop formal processes for the selection and evaluation of the College's president and the organization's CEO. While the College adopted an overall process and criteria, the board needs to evaluate the success of the most recent hiring processes, and now that the organization's CEO has taken office, the board will need to implement formal, regular evaluations for both the College president and the CEO. (Standard IV.C.3)

As the policy-making body for The Young Americans, Inc., and by extension, YACPA, the board has approved the mission of the College and holds the ultimate responsibility for ensuring adherence to the mission in all decision making on behalf of the College. (Standard IV.C.5)

The mission for The Young Americans, Inc. states that it does not endorse any political or religious affiliations and that it intends to include student members of varying political and religious beliefs. Minutes of the board meetings reveal that members discuss each policy revision or addition in terms of its connection to the missions of the organization and the College. (Standard IV.C.4)

The board has undergone an extensive review of its policies and procedures in recent years in anticipation of its application for candidacy as an accredited institution. Policy changes are communicated to the College community through annual distribution of the Policy and Procedures manual and, if urgent, through email and College-wide meetings. The board established a cycle for evaluating its policies on a regular basis, including several policies up for examination during the current academic year. However, due to the recent nature of the revisions to its existing policies, the College and its board of directors have yet to undergo a regular cycle of policy review. (Standard IV.C.7)

The bylaws for The Young Americans, Inc. permit members of the board of directors to serve indefinitely after approval. Three of the current seven members have served for more than 20 years and another has served for 19 years, providing consistency of service and longevity of knowledge about the College and its umbrella organization. The size of the

board and the duties and responsibilities of its members are also included within the by-laws of The Young Americans, Inc. (Standard IV.C.6)

The board meets monthly to receive updates about the College and to provide oversight of the College's functions. The president of The Young Americans College of the Performing Arts regularly updates the board on student learning and achievement, and the College's Annual Institutional Reports include the strategic goals and progress made toward achieving those goals. Through the presentation of such documents as the monthly reports, annual reports, and the Institutional Effectiveness Plan, the College president keeps the board informed about institutional quality, student learning outcomes, and other academic and fiscal matters. The Academic Advisory Committee, which includes three members of the Board of Directors, meets quarterly and makes recommendations regarding academic, curricular, and administrative issues. (Standard IV.C.8)

The addition of two new members of the Board of Directors in January 2016 revealed a need for more thorough board training. An orientation manual on the roles and responsibilities of board members and the development of a process that includes meetings with various constituencies and training on the College's mission and goals are two of the initial steps taken by the board to improve its board development program. The board has also developed a plan to conduct elections of its officers on a two-year cycle. It currently has no limits on the terms of its members. (Standard IV.C.9)

The bylaws address the need for regular evaluations of the board of directors, and the board created a self-evaluation questionnaire in October 2016. The self-evaluation process includes analysis of the members' responsibilities and duties outlined in its handbook, academic quality of the institution, and institutional effectiveness. The board contracted with two outside organizations for assistance in creating a board development program and a self-assessment instrument and process. Even though the board has approved an evaluation procedure, it has yet to conduct a self-evaluation. (Standard IV.C.10)

The board's code of ethics and its policy on conflicts of interest are available in its bylaws. Members of the board who have potential conflicts of interest provide signed annual disclosures and abstain from voting on issues that involve their conflicts of interest. The board reports never having had a violation of the code of ethics outlined in the bylaws, and minutes reveal that members with conflicts of interest abstain when voting on an issue involving their conflict. (Standards IV.C.11)

The College grants authority to the president to implement board policies at the College. The president manages the day-to-day operations of YACPA and attends the monthly board meetings to provide updates and information on College operations. The College based past evaluations of the president upon these monthly meetings and information provided in such documents as the annual report. However, the board developed a more formal process to evaluate the president that includes assessment of progress to achieving the specific goals identified by the board at the start of each new evaluation cycle. The board postponed implementation of this evaluation process while the hiring of a permanent CEO for the non-profit organization was underway. It plans to conduct regular evaluations of the College

president and the organization's CEO when the newly appointed CEO has become more acclimated to the organization. (Standard IV.C.12)

The Board of Directors has been consistently involved in the accreditation process. It has had regular reports on the progress of the self-evaluation report at its monthly meetings. Several board members participated in an ACCJC Eligibility Workshop, and they participated in the writing of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report and provided feedback on the ISER throughout the process. The College also hired an outside consultant to assist with its application for candidacy, and it has taken seriously the advice that it has received from the Accrediting Commission on how to become eligible to be an accredited institution. The Academic Advisory Committee, which has three members of the board on it, also has regularly provided recommendations on how to improve the College in order to meet the Accreditation Standards. The College has developed its own accreditation reference handbook for use by the board and the College. (Standard IV.C.13)

The Young Americans, Inc. has had a Board of Directors since its founding in 1962. As the body providing oversight to a non-profit organization, the board has had to make numerous changes to its policies, bylaws, procedures, and operations to develop a College that meets the Accreditation Standards. Its efforts in this respect have been admirable and it has done a tremendous amount of work in recent years to make adjustments that align better with the Standards. However, many of these changes have only recently been approved or adopted. In fact, full implementation of some changes was incomplete at the time of the writing of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report. For example, the College revised board policies as recently as spring 2017, and those revisions may not yet be fully implemented. The College will need to have a cycle in which it can evaluate the effectiveness of the changes and adjustments made in recent years to determine how effective those changes have been and whether the revisions have helped better align with what the Accreditation Standards require.

## **Conclusion**

The College meets the Standard. (IV.C and ER 7)

## **Recommendations for Improvement**

8. To improve, the Board of Directors for The Young Americans College of the Performing Arts must implement its approved processes for conducting regular, formal evaluations of the College president, the organization's CEO, and itself. (Standards IV.C.3, 10, 12)

9. To improve, the Board of Directors for The Young Americans College of the Performing Arts must implement its timeline for review and possible revision of board policies and procedures, including the recent CEO selection process and development of board training programs. (Standards I.B.7; IV.C.7, 9)

## Response to Quality Focus Essay

The quality focus project identified by YACPA centers on “executing a comprehensive curriculum revision for Breadth of Knowledge (BoK) courses with a focus on increased student engagement through cross-curricular strategies and course options that are aligned with the mission and student goals (pillars), resulting in improved student achievement and learning.” Through its self-evaluation processes, the College has identified low completion rates for its degree program despite consistently high course completion rates. As discussed in the ISER and as evidenced through interviews with members of the executive committee and the department chair of the Breadth of Knowledge department, and a review of institutional planning and reporting documents, the College is making a concerted effort to address this issue.

The College attributes low degree completion rates to the challenges students face in successfully completing the three BoK courses delivered online to second year degree students while they are on tour with The Young Americans, Inc. In addition, the College has found that courses with non-performance based subject matter tend to be more challenging to its students. The ISER notes that obtaining an AA degree was identified as being students’ least important goal based on a survey administered to students at the beginning of their programs. It was discovered; however, that the survey asked the relative importance of five separate goals for the student, rather than the importance of each of the five options to the student independently. The College said it intends to revise the survey to gather more accurate information about how students value the attainment of a degree.

The QFE indicates that the College intends to expand cross-curricular integration among the disciplines; examine the sequencing of BoK courses and the alignment of student services; and explore the elimination of courses that are delivered solely online. In addition, the College intends to discontinue its partnership with NCMC and offer its own Breadth of Knowledge curriculum geared more toward the specific needs and interests of YACPA students and the institution’s mission.

The QFE includes a high-level list of action steps it intends to take, along with responsible parties and a general timeline. As expressed in interviews with members of the executive committee at the College, much of the planning and the timeline for achieving their goals is dependent upon the College attaining ACCJC candidacy and accreditation, and eventually becoming a Title IV institution. Because of this, an actual plan of action has not yet been created. A significant amount of work is underway in terms of incorporating cross-curricular assignments interdepartmentally in support of the breath-of-knowledge philosophy. The ISER discusses steps the College has taken to integrate Breadth of Knowledge goals interdepartmentally across curriculum. Interviews at the College and a review of supporting documentation affirm that progress is being made. The president has opened a dialog with NCMC to make them aware of YACPA’s intention to transition away from the partnership



the two institutions share. The targeted date to begin the transition is 2019-20. It was confirmed that the Executive Committee will create a specific plan that will be shared with faculty and staff for their participation and input. Based on the planning information provided in the QFE, it is recommended that the actual plan include specific deliverables and measurable outcomes that are closely tied to the student learning and achievement challenges related to the BoK curriculum and the strategic goals noted in the body of the report.

The College notes that as a small institution, YACPA has a limited number of faculty and staff resources. In addition to the goal stated in the QFE, the College has set several ambitious goals for itself on top of maintaining its focus and high standards of student learning and support. The College intends to take advantage of the time in between semesters to schedule development work to help balance of employees' workloads and bandwidths. The College has affirmed its intent to ensure that its faculty, staff and students are kept well informed and are offered the opportunity to provide their input and feedback, and that its policies, procedures, and other related documentation are clearly stated and easily accessible.

## **Federal Regulations and Related Commission Policies**

### **Public Notification of an Evaluation Team Visit and Third Party Comment**

#### **Evaluation Items:**

The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comment in advance of a comprehensive evaluation visit.

The institution cooperates with the evaluation team in any necessary follow-up related to the third party comment.

The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions* as to third party comment.  
[Regulation citation: 602.23(b).]

#### **Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

#### **Narrative:**

The College solicited third party comment and provided evidence showing it met all the criteria for this Regulation.

### **Standards and Performance with Respect to Student Achievement**

#### **Evaluation Items:**

The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance across the institution, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. Course completion is included as one of these elements of student achievement. Other elements of student achievement performance for measurement have been determined as appropriate to the institution's mission.

The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance within each instructional program, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. The defined elements include, but are not limited to, job placement rates for program completers, and for programs in fields where licensure is required, the licensure examination passage rates for program completers.

The institution-set standards for programs and across the institution are relevant to guide self-evaluation and institutional improvement; the defined elements and expected performance levels are appropriate within higher education; the results are reported regularly across the campus; and the definition of elements and results are used in program-level and institution-wide planning to evaluate how well the institution fulfills its mission, to determine needed changes, to allocating resources, and to make improvements.

The institution analyzes its performance as to the institution-set standards and as to student achievement, and takes appropriate measures in areas where its performance is not at the expected level.

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(i); 602.17(f); 602.19 (a-e).]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative:**

In accordance with the USDE regulations, the College has established standards and performance on student achievement. The College provided evidence that it has established institution-set standards for its student achievement for course completion rates, student certificate completion, and degree completion. The College provided evidence that demonstrated the seven measures it uses to substantiate that it has established student achievement benchmarks.

**Credits, Program Length, and Tuition**

**Evaluation Items:**

Credit hour assignments and degree program lengths are within the range of good practice in higher education (in policy and procedure).

The assignment of credit hours and degree program lengths is verified by the institution, and is reliable and accurate across classroom based courses, laboratory classes, distance education classes, and for courses that involve clinical practice (if applicable to the institution).

Tuition is consistent across degree programs (or there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition).

Any clock hour conversions to credit hours adhere to the Department of Education's conversion formula, both in policy and procedure, and in practice.

The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits*.

[Regulation citations: 600.2 (definition of credit hour); 602.16(a)(1)(viii); 602.24(e), (f); 668.2; 668.9.]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

\_\_\_\_\_The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative:**

The assignment of credit hours and degree program lengths are including the course credit calculations and are described in Article VII of the Board Rules. The College adheres to the commonly accepted minimum semester programs. There is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates hours of instruction. Enrollment fees are the same for all courses.

**Transfer Policies**

**Evaluation Items:**

Transfer policies are appropriately disclosed to students and to the public.

Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to accept credits for transfer.

The institution complies with the Commission *Policy on Transfer of Credit*.

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(viii); 602.17(a)(3); 602.24(e); 668.43(a)(ii).]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

\_\_\_\_\_The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

\_\_\_\_\_The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative:**

The College is not yet accredited, and its courses do not transfer at this time. YACPA has an agreement with North Central Michigan College (NCMC) and offers students concurrent enrollment in NCMC courses at this time, so that the units earned, and the degree can be transferrable. Transfer information is accurately portrayed on the College's website and in the catalog.

**Distance Education and Correspondence Education**

**Evaluation Items:**

The institution has policies and procedures for defining and classifying a course as offered by distance education or correspondence education, in alignment with USDE definitions.

n/a There is an accurate and consistent application of the policies and procedures for determining if a course is offered by distance education (with regular and substantive interaction with the instructor, initiated by the instructor, and online activities are included as part of a student's grade) or correspondence education (online activities are primarily

“paperwork related,” including reading posted materials, posting homework and completing examinations, and interaction with the instructor is initiated by the student as needed).

The institution has appropriate means and consistently applies those means for verifying the identity of a student who participates in a distance education or correspondence education course or program, and for ensuring that student information is protected.

The technology infrastructure is sufficient to maintain and sustain the distance education and correspondence education offerings.

n/a The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education*.

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(iv), (vi); 602.17(g); 668.38.]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative:**

Courses reviewed meet USDE standards, but are under exclusive control of NCMC until the College is able to offer them.

**Student Complaints**

**Evaluation Items:**

The institution has clear policies and procedures for handling student complaints, and the current policies and procedures are accessible to students in the College catalog and online.

The student complaint files for the previous six years (since the last comprehensive evaluation) are available; the files demonstrate accurate implementation of the complaint policies and procedures.

The team analysis of the student complaint files identifies any issues that may be indicative of the institution’s noncompliance with any Accreditation Standards. 5 Rev. July 2015

The institution posts on its website the names of associations, agencies and governmental bodies that accredit, approve, or license the institution and any of its programs, and provides contact information for filing complaints with such entities.

The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Representation of Accredited Status* and the *Policy on Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions*. [Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(ix); 668.43.]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.

\_\_\_\_\_The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

\_\_\_\_\_The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative:**

The institution has clear policies and procedures for handling student complaints. The College spells out the process in the catalog and online. The College conducts a student survey, analyses student complaints, and identifies issues that need institutional attention.

**Institutional Disclosure and Advertising and Recruitment Materials**

**Evaluation Items:**

  X   The institution provides accurate, timely (current), and appropriately detailed information to students and the public about its programs, locations, and policies.

  X   The institution complies with the Commission *Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status*.

  X   The institution provides required information concerning its accredited status as described above in the section on Student Complaints.

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1))(vii); 668.6.]

**Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):**

  X   The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.

\_\_\_\_\_The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

\_\_\_\_\_The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

**Narrative:**

The YACPA accurately communicates information about the College’s programs, policies, and location to the students and the public via the College Catalog and the College website.

**Title IV Compliance**

**Evaluation Items:**

  n/a   The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program, including findings from any audits and program or other review activities by the USDE.

  n/a   The institution has addressed any issues raised by the USDE as to financial responsibility requirements, program record-keeping, etc. If issues were not timely addressed, the institution demonstrates it has the fiscal and administrative capacity to timely address issues in the future and to retain compliance with Title IV program requirements.

n/a   The institution's student loan default rates are within the acceptable range defined by the USDE. Remedial efforts have been undertaken when default rates near or meet a level outside the acceptable range.

  n/a   Contractual relationships of the institution to offer or receive educational, library, and support services meet the Accreditation Standards and have been approved by the Commission through substantive change if required.

  X   The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations* and the *Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV*.

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(v); 602.16(a)(1)(x); 602.19(b); 668.5; 668.15; 668.16; 668.71

et seq.]

**Conclusion Check-Off:**

  X   The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

       The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.

       The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

**Narrative:**

The College does not currently participate in Federal or State financial aid programs. It has and appropriately discloses contractual agreements with the North Central Michigan College and for its online library resources, as well as its affiliation with The Young Americans parent organization.