

December 29, 2021

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary  
California Natural Resources Agency  
715 P Street, 20th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Wade Crowfoot,

In accordance with the State Leadership Accountability Act (Leadership Accountability), the California Conservation Corps submits this report on the review of our internal control and monitoring systems for the biennial period ending December 31, 2021.

Should you have any questions please contact Dawne Bortolazzo, Deputy Director, Admin, at (916) 341-3137, [dawne.bortolazzo@ccc.ca.gov](mailto:dawne.bortolazzo@ccc.ca.gov).

## GOVERNANCE

### Mission and Strategic Plan

#### Mission and Strategic Plan

**Mission:** To protect and enhance California's natural resources and communities while empowering and developing young adults through hard work and education.

**Executive Summary:** The California Conservation Corps (CCC) transforms lives while simultaneously making California a better place to work, recreate, and live. Founded in 1976, the CCC is the oldest and largest conservation corps in the country. The CCC is a State of California program offering young adults a paid opportunity to advance their career and educational horizons while engaging in and providing important environmental and community services to state and local communities.

The CCC stands apart from other corps because we fulfill our role as an emergency response entity and our commitment to developing productive young adults who can make substantial contributions as California workers and citizens through hard work, accountability, and a high level of training. When the CCC commits to a job and assignment, our Corpsmembers and staff work together to ensure the job is completed to our sponsor's specifications.

Our Corpsmembers are the pride and purpose of our organization. We insist that each person's year of service is filled with opportunities for growth and personal development. As Corpsmembers succeed, California communities become stronger, more vibrant, and safer.

**Strategic Focus:** Our strategic focus centers around three key elements: (1) Purpose, (2) Core Values, and (3) Vision.

1. **Purpose** - The CCC develops young adults into productive, responsible citizens through a year or more of hard work and service with the aim of protecting and restoring California's natural resource, responding to natural and human-made disasters, and making California an even

- better place to live.
2. **Core Values** - Inclusiveness, accountability, hard work, education, and stewardship for California's environment are values the CCC strives daily to operate and live by.
  3. **Vision** - The CCC is the leader in the corps movement and will continue to improve the quality of our program and work product, develop long-term and sustainable models, and continue to provide service opportunities for thousands of California's young adults to advance their career and educational prospects by enhancing and protecting the state's natural environment.

There are no other entities under our reporting responsibilities. However, pursuant to California Public Resources Code section 14507.5, the CCC evaluates whether certain entities ("nonprofit public benefit corporation[s] formed or operating pursuant to Part 2 (commencing with Section 5110) of Division 2 of Title 1 of the Corporations Code, or an agency operated by a city, county, or city and county") meet certain enumerated criteria so as to qualify as "Community Conservation Corps."

## Control Environment

### Control Environment

The CCC's management establishes and demonstrates integrity and ethical values by, among other things, clearly communicating the CCC's mission and management's expectations to employees, participants, and partners and providing multiple avenues to receive and consider feedback and input from the CCC's employees, participants, and partners. CCC management encourages robust two-way communication by publicizing and adhering to non-retaliation policies in all areas of operation and oversight (e.g., EEO, Workplace Safety, Labor relations, participant grievances, etc.).

Consistent with its commitment to an ethical and integrity-oriented culture, the CCC hires, trains, and retains qualified employees who are dedicated to public service, the CCC mission, and the people of California. The CCC's Human Resources Branch participates in every aspect of the hiring process and that process is regularly reviewed and monitored by the CCC's EEO Officer. The CCC is upgrading its Training Unit (by, among other things, bringing on more staff, implementing and expanding the use of a CalHR-approved LMS, and making the LMS's online learning functions available to all of its employees) and its Upward Mobility Program and developing its Workforce Plan.

The CCC's efforts to establish and maintain a competent workforce continue beyond the hiring stage. Newly hired staff are required to complete a comprehensive New Employee Orientation (NEO), the completion of which is tracked by the CCC's Training and Human Resources Units and regularly reviewed by the CCC's Executive Policy Team. Part of the NEO requires new employees to review their job duty statement within five (5) days of their start date. That is followed by an expectations memo and HR monitored and tracked probation reports. After an employee's probation period, they are regularly evaluated and reviewed and careful attention is paid to their career development. Thus, employees are provided with multiple training opportunities. At the same time, the CCC uses progressive discipline, as necessary, to correct poor performance and to dismiss those individuals whose continued employment threatens the department's mission and/or the safety of the State and/or its citizens.

To monitor its operations and to ensure internal control systems are working as intended, the CCC employs processes include, but are not limited to: regularly scheduled meetings; an Operations Manual with a dynamic, easy-to-use change request system; a readily available IT Help Desk integrated with an auditable issue ticket log; a centralized training unit; and, a recognized chain of command that

encourages open and honest communications.

**MEETINGS:** Each of the main operational HQ units within the CCC (Accounting, Budgets, Business Services, Program and Operations, Information Systems, Human Resources, Recruitment, and Program Development) have regular meetings to discuss their ongoing operations including the risks therein. The results of, and topics raised at these meetings are monitored by the CCC HQ and field managers. The field managers, known as District Directors, also meet monthly with the CCC's Region Deputy Directors (who, in turn, meet individually with the Deputy and/or CCC Director at least once per month). The CCC Region Deputy Directors, along with the heads of each of the HQ units, are members of the CCC's Executive Management Team (which meets weekly). The CCC's Director holds regular weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly meetings with each of the following: (1) the CCC's Equal Employment Opportunity Officer; (2) the CCC's Legislative Affairs Analyst; (3) the Senior Deputy Director (or while pending appointment each Region Deputy); (4) the Lead (formerly "Chief") Counsel; (5) the Director of Corpsmember & Program Development; (6) the Director of Communications, Outreach, Recruitment and Enrollment (CORE), and, (7) the Administrative Deputy Director. The CCC's Lead Counsel and Administrative Deputy Director typically meet no less than monthly with the CCC's Information Officer. The CCC's Deputy Director typically meets bi-weekly with the CCC's Lead Counsel. The results of the foregoing meetings are funneled into the regular meeting of the CCC's Executive Policy Team (composed of the CCC's Director; Senior Deputy Director; Administrative Deputy Director; Lead Counsel; Director of Corpsmember & Program Development; Director of Capitol Outlay; and, CORE Director. The CCC's Executive Policy Team meets at least once every other month. During these meetings, specific risks are addressed and the means to monitor and correct them are delegated to subunits with an Executive Policy Team sponsor.

**OPERATIONS MANUAL:** The CCC has created an online Operations Manual that is available to all of its employees through the CCC's Intranet. Users can submit requests to change any aspect of the Operations Manual by filling out a readily available Change Request form which is automatically routed to a central mailbox. The mailbox is monitored daily. The CCC has adopted procedures for handling standard, temporary (interim), and expedited change requests. The Operations Manual is overseen by a committee composed of the CCC's Lead Counsel; Deputy Regional Directors, Administration; Program Development Manager; Human Resources Manager; Enrollment and Eligibility Manager; Health & Safety Manager; Human Resources Policies Analyst; and, EEO Officer. That committee meets monthly. The CCC has documented the rules governing the Operations Manual and updates that documentation as necessary.

**IT HELP DESK:** The CCC's Information Systems and Services (ISS) maintains a dedicated email address where any CCC employee can send requests for IT services. The Help Desk uses a ManageEngine ServiceDesk to log all such issues. The CCC's Chief Information Officer regularly issues a report detailing the number and types of issues and their resolution status. The report also provides an update on IT Activity at every CCC location, statewide issues and projects assigned to ISS, Network Outages, Data Management, and IT Procurement.

**TRAINING UNIT:** The CCC maintains a training unit that, among other things: provides training reminders; assists managers with identifying, preparing, and providing trainings; and, tracks employee compliance with mandated training requirements. In 2020, the CCC's Training Unit rolled out a CalHR-approved Learning Management System (LMS) built on a Cornerstone platform. The training unit continually builds out and troubleshoots features on the LMS. A baseline function that is being

implemented is notifying both an employee and their supervisor when a mandatory training is coming due and then notifying the employee, their manager, and manager's manager if a scheduled or mandatory training is missed. Managers are encouraged to review individual training compliance and training plans as a part of each employee's annual performance evaluation. Delivery of performance evaluations is tracked by the CCC HR branch.

**COMMUNICATION PRACTICES:** The CCC encourages open and honest communications among its staff and takes ensures issues are elevated up the chain of command.

### Information and Communication

As noted above, the CCC's regularly occurring meetings play an integral role in communicating and collecting relevant and reliable information needed for operational, programmatic, and financial decision making. In addition to the aforesaid meetings, the CCC's internal communications are bolstered by various units within the CCC that send out regular emails to all managers. These regular emails include, but are not limited to: (1) HR Branch Monthly Newsletter (which includes reminders from the Health & Safety Unit); (2) ISS Monthly Update; (3) Program Development Digest (a bi-weekly publication documenting developments in, and resources available for, Corpsmember Development); (4) a monthly Training Bulletin (with helpful tips and reminders regarding training tools and requirements); (5) EAP Wellness tips. Information that cannot wait for inclusion in a regularly scheduled email is sent out as needed and posted on the CCC's intranet (which is the launch page for any application accessing the Internet, i.e., Microsoft Explorer, Chrome, etc.); and, (6) a quarterly newsletter produced by CORE that highlights project work completed by centers, CCC staff participating in special and community events, and a message from the CCC Director.

Additionally, a number of the CCC's units and processes utilize simple methods to collect information and/or feedback. For example, the CCC's Operations Manual Oversight Committee has created a one-step form that allows users to quickly and easily recommend changes to policies and/or procedures documented in the CCC's Operations Manual. Similarly, the CMD, Communications, and the Training units promote the use of a generic email box where stakeholders can send questions, comments, concerns, etc. Units also increasingly use customized SharePoint sites to provide easy access to important information and to monitor the use of the resources provided thereon.

Over the last several years, the CCC has been enhancing its cloud-based operations software solution known as C-Cubed. All of the CCC's most critical Corpsmember tracking and outcomes information, as well as project data, is captured in C-Cubed. This allows users to quickly pull pre-made reports or develop their own reports. In addition to the series of reports that are collected into, and distributed as, an Executive Policy Team Dashboard on a monthly basis, individual operational units also provide tailored reports to end users. Fiscal information is largely captured and reported through the CCC's Fiscal System and FI\$Cal. Regular reports about the CCC's, and its individual operational units', fiscal status and budgetary issues are distributed to the Executive Management Team and designated staff. The LMS is starting to provide another suite of reports regarding training compliance and staff professional development.

The CCC's Communications and Outreach Unit carefully monitors communications between the CCC and outside parties. The Communications and Outreach Unit ensures that the CCC's external facing communications are consistent and accurate and that communications received from the community and stakeholders are processed quickly, routed to appropriate internal units, and responded to in a

timely fashion. In addition, the CCC's Legal Unit has worked with the CCC's Budget & Accounting Teams and the CCC's field units to prepare a number of standardized contracts and information letters for distribution to, and use by, CCC Sponsors (i.e., third parties who contract with the CCC for Corpsmember work and/or training projects).

## MONITORING

The information included here discusses the entity-wide, continuous process to ensure internal control systems are working as intended. The role of the executive monitoring sponsor includes facilitating and verifying that the California Conservation Corps monitoring practices are implemented and functioning. The responsibilities as the executive monitoring sponsor(s) have been given to: Dawne Bortolazzo, Deputy Director, Admin; and Jeffrey Schwarzschild, Lead Counsel.

Monitoring of CCC operations and controls is widely distributed throughout the Department. Various documents define monitoring roles and responsibilities. For example, each staff position has a duty statement describing that position's job requirements. Supervisors review duties statements with each new hire as part of the CCC's New Employee Orientation process (which is documented). Additionally, supervisors review duty statements and provide expectation memoranda on an as-needed basis. To the extent a duty statement might address some roles and responsibilities in general terms, the CCC provides detailed descriptions of position roles and responsibilities in each of its policy and procedure documents. These policy and procedures are contained in the CCC's Operations Manual and/or located on the CCC's searchable intranet. The CCC has a documented process in place for requesting, making, and announcing changes to the Operations Manual. This process allows for continual information flow to, and availability for, staff regarding changes to their roles and responsibilities. Moreover, at each of its monthly meetings, the CCC's Operations Manual Oversight Committee identifies any tasks to be completed, assigns a lead person responsible for their completion, and a due date. Progress on each assigned task can be reviewed in real time on the Ops Manual's SharePoint site and is reported at subsequent meetings until the task has been completed.

Additionally, individual units prepare position-specific job aids and standard operating procedures (SOPs) documents to promote uniform delivery of critical services. Both the job aids and SOPs are subject to regular review through their repeated use and can be quickly revised as needed.

As noted above, the CCC's regularly occurring meetings play an integral role in identifying and addressing organizational and operational vulnerabilities and inefficiencies. Agenda for many of these meetings include standard items to ensure issues are raised, addressed, and monitored.

The CCC's Executive Management Team also sets and reviews progress toward operational goals such as reimbursement, budget limits, Corpsmember competencies, Workers' Compensation incidents, and other factors the CCC's Executive Management Team identifies as needing special emphasis in the fiscal year. The CCC's Executive Management Team regularly seeks input from field personnel about the customer service provided by HQ Units.

In addition, the CCC Executive Policy Team receives a monthly Dashboard of data covering a complete spread of the department's operations. Specialized reports are delivered in real time or near-real time for end users.

Many of the CCC's operations are subject to external review (for example, the CCC's participation in

various AmeriCorps programs are regularly audited by third party grant-making entities; the CCC's Information Security Officer is provided by the California Natural Resources Agency [CNRA]; the CCC's bonds and grants are audited by CNRA; and, DGS and CalHR regularly review areas under their purview). The CCC welcomes such reviews, participates in them fully, and makes changes as required.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The following personnel were involved in the California Conservation Corps risk assessment process: executive management, middle management, front line management, and staff.

The following methods were used to identify risks: brainstorming meetings, ongoing monitoring activities, audit/review results, other/prior risk assessments, questionnaires, consideration of potential fraud, and performance metrics.

The following criteria were used to rank risks: likelihood of occurrence, potential impact to mission/goals/objectives, timing of potential event, potential impact of remediation efforts, and tolerance level for the type of risk.

The CCC's Executive Team reviewed information related to the 2021-2023 SLAA Reporting Cycle in advance of a regularly scheduled Executive Policy Team Meeting. Each member of the Executive Policy Team asked their subordinates to review their internal controls, processes, and operations to determine if they observed any vulnerabilities or inefficiencies. Each Executive Policy Team member then created a list of risks (risk being defined as "things that constrain (or could constrain) the CCC's ability to accomplish its goals, missions, and/or objectives") and, for each risk, identified any mitigation measures currently in place, potential mitigation measures, and the extent to which potential mitigation measures (if fully implemented) would reduce the risk. Each Team member's feedback was incorporated into a single document that was then distributed to the entire Team. The Executive Policy Team members then rated the identified risks, on a scale from one to ten, using the following specific factors for each risk: (1) likelihood of its occurrence [with 10 being that it is already occurring and 1 being almost no chance since nothing like it has ever happened before]; (2) Impact on the CCC's ability to achieve its goals, mission, and/or objectives [with 10 being end the CCC's ability to operate and 1 being fiscal impact of less than 1% of operating budget]; and, (3) velocity, i.e., the time in which the risk, if unmitigated, will likely occur [with 10 being that it is already occurring and 1 being more than 3 years away]. The Executive Policy Team Members were also afforded an opportunity to provide additional commentary about each risk. The Executive Policy Team then met to discuss the results of the risk ratings (both mitigated and unmitigated), clarified the descriptions of the risks, and identified the risks that should be included for monitoring and/or mitigation in the 2021-2023 SLAA Reporting Cycle.

## **RISKS AND CONTROLS**

### **Risk: Staff Recruitment**

The CCC's main services - Corpsmember development, public service work projects, and emergency response operations - ultimately are delivered by the CCC's residential & non-residential centers (and through special field operations, such as tent camps and the Backcountry Trails Program). The immediate supervisors, leaders, and mentors of the CCC's Corpsmembers are Conservationists (a distinct civil service classification). Conservationists report to Conservation Supervisors (ConSup) who also are tasked with developing project work for CCC crews. Additionally, important Corpsmember

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support services are provided by Cook Specialists (who provide culinary services at the CCC's nine residential centers) and Maintenance Mechanics (who make sure that CCC facilities and equipment are safe and functional). The CCC has identified all of these positions as "hard to fill" and recognize that prolonged vacancies in any of them interfere with the Department's ability to effectively fulfill its mission.

While the CCC recognizes that additional research is necessary, it has identified several reasons why recruiting for these positions is a challenge; including: (1) potential candidates for the positions are unaware of them and/or have insufficient knowledge about the benefits associated therewith; (2) potential candidates are challenged by the state application process; (3) CCC staff are insufficiently trained on advertising the positions and/or completing the state application process; and, (4) minimum qualifications for the jobs are not realistic for the candidate pool.

**Control: A Research why the CCC has challenges recruiting for certain civil service positions**

The CCC plans to develop surveys for, and then conduct surveys of: (1) current employees; (2) former employees; and, (3) prospective employees for hard to fill positions. The CCC will utilize the findings from these surveys to help identify new and/or revise existing controls to this risk. Implementation of this control will allow the CCC to use more than just anecdotal information in developing controls for this risk.

**Control: B Improve Quality of Advertisements**

The CCC will revise the language used in its job advertisements. The CCC has already formed a working group charged with addressing this risk. A subsection of that working group will review job advertisements posted by other state departments and by private sector businesses and report its findings to the full working group as well as the CCC's Communications team. The CCC's Human Resources Unit will work with the CCC's Communications team to develop and implement new and improved job advertisement templates. The CCC anticipates that improved messaging in job advertisements will encourage more qualified candidates to apply for jobs with the CCC.

**Control: C Concerted Effort to Inform Target Audiences About the Hard to Fill Positions**

The CCC will undertake a concerted effort to increase and improve the quality, quantity, and distribution of information about the attractiveness of what it has identified as hard to fill positions (Conservationist I, Supervising Cook, Conservationist II, Conservation Supervisor, and Maintenance Mechanic). In addition to the creation of short video pieces, this also will involve the creation of mixed media (flyers and posters) aimed at Corpsmembers, Staff, and External Audiences. The mixed media pieces will be distributed to Centers as templates so that Center staff can insert information specific to the location of the job being advertised.

Additionally, the CCC will integrate the promotion of hard to fill positions into its operations by, among other things: (1) making sure that CCC Navigators who help Corpsmembers with post-CCC job placements are trained in helping Corpsmembers qualify and apply for the jobs; (2) making sure that hard to fill positions are discussed during regular staff meetings; and, (3) encouraging staff to refer individuals for these positions.

The CCC expects that by providing targeted audiences with more useful information about its hard to fill positions it will see an increase in qualified applicants.

### **Control: D Increase Circulation and Ease of Posting of Job Openings**

The CCC will increase the circulation and ease of posting job openings by:

1. Developing information and tools that make advertising easy for Center staff, for example:
  1. Templates and promising practices for how to advertise jobs
  2. Template for a binder that each Center can build so that information about local partners who can host or disseminate job announcements is stored, updated, and maintained in one place.
  3. Providing standardize guidance about how to access and use statewide advertising partners and/or platforms
2. Creating a standardized, easy-to-use system for posting job openings to online websites
3. Designating one position at each District (and, where feasible, each Center) as the Job Posting Lead
4. Providing training and support for Job Posting Leads
5. Holding regular meetings for Job Posting Leads
6. Improving the visibility and usability of the Staff Jobs Page on the CCC's Public Website

The CCC anticipates that by making it easier for staff to advertise job openings in more venues, the job openings will be viewed by a wider audience and lead to an increase in the number of qualified candidates applying for the CCC's hard to fill positions.

### **Control: E Reduce Barriers to Entry into Hard to Fill Positions**

The first step in this process will be to research possible revisions to the minimum qualifications of the CCC's hard to fill positions. The next step will be to prepare position papers related to potential changes for each hard to fill position. A review of the position papers will determine if further action will be taken in regard to this control.

### **Risk: Staff Retention**

The California Conservation Corps (CCC) has observed an increasing number of civil service staff leaving the department to take jobs with other State departments or public entities. This trend has been particular acute in a few mission-critical positions (Conservationist, ConSup, and Navigator) and generally among newer hires (employees in the first year or two after completing probation). Every individual who leaves creates a disruption by causing the CCC to engage in the time and resource-intensive processes associated with hiring and training new staff (i.e., advertising a position, reviewing applications, conducting interviews, checking references, completing onboarding paperwork, providing New Employee Orientation and other required trainings, etc.). Staff departures also disrupt operations by requiring remaining staff to cover and perform the work associated with vacant positions. This, along with the stresses associated with integrating new staff into the work environment, negatively impacts employee morale; which, in turn, can make it more difficult to retain qualified staff.

While additional research is necessary, the CCC has initially identified several factors that hinder staff



retention; including, but not limited to: (1) Employees believe that they have limited or no opportunities to advance their professional development while working for the CCC; (2) Internal and external pressures create wellness challenges that adversely impact staff morale; (3) new staff feel they are not sufficiently supported and/or are intimidated by steep learning curve; and, (4) employees feel other positions provide better benefits than those available to them at the CCC.

### **Control: A Start Tracking and Reporting on Data Related to Employee Job Satisfaction**

The CCC will take several steps to start tracking and reporting on data related to employee job satisfaction with an eye to using such data to refine existing and/or create new mitigation measures targeting employee retention. As a first step, the CCC will consult with subject matter experts to determine some useful measurements of employee job satisfaction. Concurrently, the CCC will continue (and revise as necessary) its pilot project of conducting exit interviews and/or surveys of departing staff. The CCC expects that it will then survey a sampling of current and former staff. The CCC will take the information gleaned from this research effort to develop new Performance Measures that will be tied to staff and/or managers taking actions and/or engaging in activities linked to promoting high employee job satisfaction.

The CCC expects that an increase in employee satisfaction will result in increased staff retention rates.

### **Control: B Develop and Implement Individual Employee Personal Development Plans in LMS**

The CCC has become increasingly proficient in using its relatively-new Learning Management System (LMS) to (1) deliver more and improved trainings to its staff; and, (2) better track training-related information. The CCC will further develop its LMS capabilities (as well as associated trainings and user guides) with the aim of each employee will, with the assistance of their supervisor, having the opportunity to develop a unique personal development plan (or pathway). The CCC will then be able to track employee progress along their pathway and assist the employee (and their supervisor) with barriers encountered along, and/or adjustments needed in, their unique pathway.

The CCC believes this control will demonstrate its commitment to its employee's individual success and growth and, by allowing employees to see next steps in their professional development, motivate them to seek out opportunities in and stay employed with the CCC.

### **Control: C Create Desk References for Knowledge Capture and Transfer**

The CCC's unique mission and structure means that it has multiple positions with responsibilities and skills not found in other departments. Many of these positions are held by a single or sometimes only a few employees. Therefore, when an individual leaves such a position, the CCC loses their unique knowledge and experience and must adjust its operations accordingly while having to bring new staff slowly up to speed. To minimize the impact of this knowledge loss, the CCC will have its unique positions prepare desk references that will allow new employees to quickly operate at a level of effectiveness close to that of the departing employee.

The CCC expects that in addition to minimizing the impact of knowledge loss, this control will also improve the morale of employees who need to takeover positions previously held by a long tenured incumbent.

### **Control: D Improve Quality and Quantity of Benefits Offered to and Used by Employees**

The CCC aims to inform its employees of the benefits associated with working for not only the state, but also the CCC. The CCC will also work to improve the benefits offered and the frequency of their use. To do this, the CCC will:

1. Identify both the pay-related and non-pay-related benefits associated with state and/or CCC employment;
2. Actively research the development of new benefits;
3. Create a Clearinghouse where these benefits can quickly be viewed and accessed;
4. Create a mechanism for tracking the use of both the Clearinghouse and the benefits listed thereon;
5. Develop and provide training regarding how to use the Clearinghouse; and,
6. Include reminders about the Clearinghouse in regular staff communications.

The CCC expects that improving employee knowledge of and access to an attractive and growing set of pay-related and non-pay-related benefits will improve employee morale and lead to increased staff retention rates.

### **Risk: Corpsmember Retention**

Joining the CCC is voluntary, and once an individual joins they may leave at any time. Thus, retention rates can be influenced by a number of factors, such as: the strength of the economy (typically low unemployment correlates with a drop in applicants and a decrease in retention times); increases in minimum wage (which are scheduled to be \$15.00/hour in 2022); increased High School graduation rates (which means less corpsmembers and students available to participate in the CCC's ADA-funded High School programs); the quality of the CCC's program and partners (and the opportunities they present); the CCC's image (i.e., the public's awareness of the CCC, how potential recruits perceive the CCC, etc.); and, the delivery of the CCC's program (is it being delivered as promised during recruitment efforts). While the views, needs, and desires of the state's population -- especially young adults -- have changed, the CCC often does not make significant and/or sufficient adjustments to its program design or delivery to adopt to the aforesaid changes.

Any vacant Corpsmember position means that the CCC is not providing its unique opportunities to an eligible young Californian. This results in a drop in the CCC's ability to accomplish its core mission. Lack of Corpsmembers also reduces the CCC's ability to earn reimbursement funding and respond to the many demands of our historical sponsors as well as increased emergency response requests. Additionally, the CCC's Charter High School program is dependent upon ADA funding. Thus, decreases in the population of Corpsmembers attending the CCC's Charter High Schools reduces the resources available to support this important component of the CCC program.

### **Control: A Research - Gather Defensible Data About Why Corpsmembers Leave the Program When They Do**

The CCC will use surveys and focus groups to solicit information from current and former Corpsmembers about what barriers they face or faced in the CCC program, why they stayed in the program, why they left the program when they did, and what the program could do better to retain them and/or their peers. The CCC will also review existing data to determine which of its Centers and/or program areas have the best retention and if there is anything about those Centers' and/or programs' operations that can be distilled to "best practices" for implementation throughout the Department. The CCC will use the results of this research to revise existing or create new mitigation measures targeting the retention of Corpsmembers.

### **Control: B Create More Dynamic and Engaging Program and Transition Pathways**

The CCC three-year-old Transition Navigator Initiative has incrementally increased Corpsmember retention rates and led to improved Corpsmember outcomes. Now that the Transition Navigator Initiative has received permanent funding, the CCC wants to build on its early successes by:

1. Revising its Corpsmember Pathways Model to allow for:
  1. Corpsmembers to start on their Pathway as close to their first day as possible; and,
  2. Early and frequent accomplishments to be had and tracked (thereby allowing Corpsmember to more quickly recognize and be acknowledged for the progress they are making);
2. Revising and upgrading the tools, materials, and opportunities that compose the Corpsmember Transition Pathways.
3. Developing new Corpsmember transfer policies that allow for Corpsmembers to experience multiple centers and programs during their enrollment.
4. Revising the Corpsmember Extension Policy so that it can start earlier in a Corpsmember's enrollment.

The CCC anticipates that a more dynamic program with more variation will keep Corpsmembers more engaged in the program and focused on their progress along their unique transition pathway.

### **Control: C Review and Revise Policies and Procedures that Inhibit Retention**

Over the past year, the CCC has been identifying policies and procedures whose application may correlate with inequitable outcomes and/or may inhibit Corpsmember progress toward successful post-CCC employment or educational placements. Policies and procedures of primary concern are: (1) Alcohol and Drugs; (2) Corrective Action; (3) Leave of Absences; (4) Second Chance; and, (5) Personal Leave Credits/Unpaid Leave. The CCC intends to review these policies to determine if they indeed inhibit retention, and, if so, revise them (and their associated procedures and trainings) so that they foster equitable outcomes and promote, instead of inhibit, retention.

The CCC expects that this process itself, not to mention the result thereof, will help it provide a more inclusive and welcoming program environment which, in turn, will improve Corpsmember retention.

**Control: D Create More Opportunities for Corpsmembers to Feel Ownership of and Belonging in their Program Environment**

To better allow Corpsmembers to grow in and feel ownership of and belonging in their program environment the CCC will develop and implement several new initiatives:

1. A mentorship program for Corpsmembers;
2. A cultural affinity groups program; and,
3. Corpsmember-conducted location beautification and improvement program.

The CCC expects that by increasing the Corpsmembers' opportunities to connect to their fellow Corpsmembers, members of the community, and physical environment, that Corpsmember morale will improve and they will want to stay engaged in the CCC program for longer periods of time.

**Control: E Integrate/Systematize Promising Retention Practices Statewide**

The CCC will take a multi-pronged approach to identifying and implementing promising retention practices across its operations. The three prongs of this control are:

1. Researching:
  1. Evaluating what Centers have the best retention rates and determining what, if any aspects of those Centers operations can be replicated across the department.
  2. Consulting with Corpsmembers, staff, and subject matter experts to determine what are the most important skills for front line staff to have to help Corpsmembers deal with issues that frequently lead to Corpsmembers separating from the CCC.
  3. Determining what types of conduct and activities are most closely linked to Corpsmember retention.
2. Developing:
  1. A tool for District Directors to be able to quickly assess the progress each of their District's Corpsmembers is making on their transition pathway.
  2. Performance Measures to track and encourage staff engagement in conduct and/or activities linked to improved Corpsmember retention.
3. Implementation: In addition to implementing the outcomes from this control's Research and Develop efforts, the CCC will also incorporate more reminders about the CCC's Mission and Program objectives in all its communications to staff and Corpsmembers.

**CONCLUSION**

The California Conservation Corps strives to reduce the risks inherent in our work and accepts the responsibility to continuously improve by addressing newly recognized risks and revising risk mitigation strategies as appropriate. I certify our internal control and monitoring systems are adequate to identify

and address current and potential risks facing the organization.

**Bruce Saito, Director**

CC: California Legislature [Senate (2), Assembly (1)]  
California State Auditor  
California State Library  
California State Controller  
Director of California Department of Finance  
Secretary of California Government Operations Agency